

A Newspaper for China?
Power, Identity, and Change in Shanghai's
News Media, 1872-1912

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News Media, 1872–1912

Barbara Mittler

Published by the Harvard University Asia Center

Distributed by Harvard University Press

Cambridge (Massachusetts) and London 2004

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Printed in the United States of America

The Harvard University Asia Center publishes a monograph series and, in coordination with the Fairbank Center for East Asian Research, the Korea Institute, the Reischauer Institute of Japanese Studies, and other faculties and institutes, administers research projects designed to further scholarly understanding of China, Japan, Vietnam, Korea, and other Asian countries. The Center also sponsors projects addressing multidisciplinary and regional issues in Asia.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Mittler, Barbara, 1968-

A newspaper for China? : power, identity, and change in Shanghai's news media, 1872-1912 / Barbara Mittler.

p. cm. -- (Harvard East Asian studies monographs, ; 226)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-674-01217-8 (hardcover : alk. paper)

1. Press--China--Shanghai--History--19th century. 2. Press--China--Shanghai--History--20th century. 3. Chinese newspapers--China--Shanghai--History--19th century. 4. Chinese newspapers--China--Shanghai--History--20th century. 5. Shen bao. I. Title. II. Series.

PN5369.S52M58 2004

079'.51132--dc22

2004001615

Index by the author

⊗ Printed on acid-free paper

Last figure below indicates year of this printing

13 12 11 10 09 08 07 06 05 04

Ein verspäteter Gruß zum sechzigsten Jahr.

Für einen Vater wie keinen anderen:

Elmar Jakob Nikolaus Mittler

Acknowledgments

For many reasons, this book has been rather long in the making. I conducted my research between 1994 and 1997 and was able to put the finishing touches on a first draft manuscript in 1998. I was subsequently successfully diverted from starting revisions by my promotion to Associate Professor at the University of Heidelberg and the birth of my first son, Thomas Adrian. Years later, and just before his brother, Carl Benjamin, came into this world, in late February 2002, I eventually finished revisions for the book that has now come into print.

It would have been much wiser to write this book today rather than almost ten years ago. Many useful publications and research tools have appeared in the meantime. For one, I would have saved many hours of work going through the early *Shenbao*, had I been able to use the electronic *Shenbao* index now made available by Andrea Janku (<http://sun.sino.uni-heidelberg.de/database/Shenbao>). And I could have simply quoted all the useful information amassed in Andrea Janku's and Natascha Vittinghoff's dissertations rather than searching for it myself. But this was not to be.

I have tried to incorporate as much of the new literature on Shanghai's newspapers as possible, but in the meantime, I have started to work on entirely different areas in Chinese cultural history, and thus, I may have missed some of the more recent titles (not just in the field of the Chinese news media, but, especially in gender studies), for which I apologize. Apologies are also due for some of the perhaps rather inelegant translations. They have changed every time I went through them—these newspapers are not an easy read. I do hope that as the field of Chinese media studies opens up, we will see more at-

tempts to grapple with these texts, which will serve to contextualize (and falsify) these clumsy first attempts of mine.

In the course of these many years, I have amassed enormous debts to an ever-growing number of people. It is with pleasure that I take this opportunity to thank those who have made this endeavor possible and enjoyable. The first person I wish to thank is Rudolf G. Wagner, who—I now acknowledge gratefully—somehow pushed me into the world of Chinese newspapers in early 1994. What began as a leap into the dark, facing up to a seemingly insurmountable number of pages of news written in a rather unfamiliar type of Chinese, has become an exciting adventure in Chinese cultural history. Throughout, and to the present day, I have been able to count on him as an incredibly resourceful, and never quite predictable, critic and—above all—an inspiration.

To find sources for this project was never a problem, since Rudolf G. Wagner has established an exhaustive resort for the study of early Chinese newspapers at the Institute of Chinese Studies in Heidelberg. He was supported by Zhu Junzhou of the Shanghai Library, to whom I owe special thanks for fulfilling many of my wishes and for opening doors for me to work at the Shanghai Library, even while it was on the move in the summer of 1996.

Not only did the Heidelberg-Shanghai connection supply material sources, it also provided a critical mass of scholars and researchers working on different aspects of Shanghai print culture. Insightful courses were given for our research group “Development of a Chinese Public Sphere,” founded by Rudolf G. Wagner and active between 1994 and 1999, by Zhu Junzhou, and Xiong Yuezhi and Luo Suwen from the Academy of Social Sciences in Shanghai. I have profited greatly from being able to share my work in progress with and read the work in progress by members of this research group, dedicated scholars and, what’s more, very good friends. Four of these in particular have been an invaluable help: Andrea Janku, Nany Kim, Natascha Vittinghoff, and Catherine V. Yeh.

I have learned a lot from presenting my work at different institutions both in Germany and abroad and am grateful for invitations by Dietmar Rothermund at Heidelberg; Robert Bickers at Oxford; Joan Judge and Josh Fogel, Ted Hutters, and Wen-hsin Yeh at the University of California at Santa Barbara, Los Angeles, and Berkeley, respectively; Sherman Cochran at Cornell; and Nicola di Cosmo and Leo Ou-fan Lee at Harvard.

To Leo, especially, I owe more than a word of thanks for his support during my stay at Harvard, for his insightful (and never easy-to-answer) questions and his humorous comments, for his critical readings of many *Shenbao* editorials, and for asking me to participate in his class "Print Culture and Popular Literature." I am indebted to the members of this class, too, for sharing their knowledge and enthusiasm. I also thank my own students for their enthusiasm and critical suggestions in the classes I have taught on aspects of newspaper history at Heidelberg University. Their input was crucial in the formulation of this study.

I am more than grateful to those who have carefully read earlier versions of this book and have been helpful in the task of reformulating some of my thoughts by their astute comments: Rudolf G. Wagner, Marianne Bastid-Brugière, Susanne Weigelin-Schwiedrzik, Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom, Ted Hutters, Paola Zamperini, Barend ter Haar, Chan Hing-yan, and especially Natascha Vittinghoff.

My research was supported in the first two years of this project by a grant from the German Research Foundation (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, DFG) in an interdisciplinary program entitled "Transformations of European Expansion." The DFG also paid for a number of trips to attend conferences and to present my work in the United States; funded the Heidelberg Workshop "Press, Reader and Market in China and Asia"; and granted me a *Habilitationsstipendium* to put a preliminary finish on this study in Cambridge, Massachusetts, under the auspices of Harvard University in early 1998. Many thanks to them!

Last, but surely not least, there are a few people who probably deserve more gratitude than I can articulate here: my parents and brother for their faith in me and for many an encouraging phone call, my two sons for their smiling endurance of a working mother, and their wonderful nanny, Ursula Evers, for making this possible. Finally, I would like to bow to my husband, Thomas A. Schmitz—a kind and kindred spirit who made me see the light again so many times when I felt I was drowning in the dark. He, too, went through every line of this book during its making, taking me to task for some of its major weaknesses and inconsistencies. It is a little sad to say that all remaining faults are, nevertheless, mine.

Barbara Mittler

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Conventions and Abbreviations

Dates in citations of the *Shenbao* and other newspapers are given in the format "day.month.year." For example, "17.10.1887" is 17 October 1887.

The following abbreviations are used in the footnotes and bibliography:

<i>AJCA</i>	<i>Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs</i>
<i>BJOAF</i>	<i>Bochumer Jahrbuch zur Ostasienforschung</i>
<i>CSWT</i>	<i>Ch'ing-shih wen-t'i</i>
<i>EAH</i>	<i>East Asian History</i>
<i>FNZZ</i>	<i>Funü zazhi</i> 婦女雜誌
<i>HJAS</i>	<i>Harvard Journal of Asian Studies</i>
<i>IEAWPS</i>	<i>Indiana East Asian Working Papers Series</i>
<i>j.</i>	<i>juan</i> 卷
<i>JAS</i>	<i>Journal of Asian Studies</i>
<i>JQ</i>	<i>Journalism Quarterly</i>
<i>l(l).</i>	line(s)
<i>LIC</i>	<i>Late Imperial China</i>
<i>MC</i>	<i>Modern China</i>
<i>NCH</i>	<i>North China Herald</i>
<i>NLZB</i>	<i>Nuli zhoubao</i> 努力週報
<i>NYGB</i>	<i>Nanyang guanbao</i> 南洋官報
<i>NZSJ</i>	<i>Nüzi shijie</i> 女子世界
<i>PFEH</i>	<i>Papers on Far Eastern History (continued as EAH)</i>

<i>RC</i>	<i>Republican China</i>
<i>SB</i>	<i>Shenbao</i> 申報
<i>SHXB</i>	<i>Shanghai xinbao</i> 上海新報
<i>SSXB</i>	<i>Shishi xinbao</i> 時事新報
<i>THB</i>	<i>Tubuabao</i> 圖畫報
<i>THRB</i>	<i>Tuhua ribao</i> 圖畫日報
<i>XWB</i>	<i>Xinwenbao</i> 新聞報
<i>XWYJZL</i>	<i>Xinwen yanjiu ziliao</i> 新聞研究資料
<i>YXB</i>	<i>Youxibao</i> 遊戲報

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INTRODUCTION

The Chinese Public Sphere and the Power of the Press

The modern journal wields great power—the greater, the more shrewdly and broadly it is managed.

—Julian Ralph, 1903

In the summer of 1872, James Gordon Bennett (1795–1872) was buried with pomp and ceremony. Four decades earlier, he had founded what was to become one of the most successful American penny papers, the *New York Herald*, one of the first newspapers to proclaim itself an “independent” mouthpiece of the “public voice,”¹ a paper so comprehensive in content that it was commonly called a “department store of news.”² A few months later, Horace Greeley (1811–72) also died. As editor of the *New York Tribune*, a “forum for intellectual discussion and moral challenge,” he had been Bennett’s foremost rival.³ To some, the passing of these two giants of the New York press signified the end of the foundational era of modern journalism.⁴ And yet, on the

EPIGRAPH: Ralph, *The Making of a Journalist*, 124.

1. See Schiller, *Objectivity and the News*, 48.

2. Weisberger, *The American Newspaperman*, 97, uses this expression: Bennett reached a popular audience not just through local news, trivia, sensation, and vulgarity, but through political essays, foreign intelligence, and commercial and financial news (see Irwin, *Propaganda and the News*, 45).

3. Weisberger, *The American Newspaperman*, 104.

4. *Ibid.*, 121. By the 1920s, Greeley and Bennett along with Charles Dana (1819–97) of the *New York Sun* and Joseph Pulitzer (1847–1911) of *The World*, had become household names even in China, as an article “近六十年間美國新聞紙的趨向”

other side of the globe—in the treaty port-city of Shanghai—1872 marked not the end, but a beginning. That year, one of the longest-lived and most successful modern Chinese-language newspapers, the *Shenbao* 申報, soon to be accepted and praised as a “department store of news,” a “forum for intellectual discussion and moral challenge,” and an “independent mouthpiece of the public voice,” was established by a British merchant, Ernest Major (美查, 1841–1908).⁵

The premodern Chinese public sphere in which this foreign-style newspaper appeared was “peopled mostly by officials” or those with the educational qualifications to become such. The most powerful voice, however, belonged to the court.⁶ Indeed, the Qing court had established a firm hold over the Chinese public sphere that left little room for independent voices even though an easy flow of information, the openness of the so-called *yanlu* 言路, the “road of speech,” was a classical ideal that the court as well as officials and the educated elite upheld.⁷ Due, however, to the “secret-memorial system”⁸ which

(The direction of American newspapers in the last 60 years) in *努力週報 Nuli zhoubao* 14.5.1922 shows.

5. Ernest Major is the subject of an extensive biography in the making, entitled “First Encounter,” by Rudolf G. Wagner.

6. See Wagner, “Early Chinese Newspapers,” 10. Accordingly, my use of the term “public sphere” is only loosely related to the Habermasian concept of an educated public learning to engage in rational public debate. I contend that the premodern Chinese public sphere was a field in which actors both from the top and from the bottom of the hierarchy appeared as players. Yet the Chinese state played the most important role. This remained so, even when foreign-style newspapers in the treaty ports began to “intervene” and broke into the structures of traditional public communication. It is my contention that it was state recognition alone that made public opinion in the treaty ports a force: without the Chinese state and its actions, the “modern” Chinese public sphere as it came into being through treaty port newspapers could never have accomplished what it did. Nevertheless, the forces of this public sphere remained largely restricted to the treaty ports themselves. My conception of the public sphere is thus very much in agreement with Wagner, “Early Chinese Newspapers,” 14.

7. According to this philosophical ideal, not just official censors but all members of the educated elite and even the public at large were allowed and encouraged to have a say in politics. The concept is discussed below; see pp. 28–30. For a number of studies of how this belief in the *yanlu* would be translated into action by players in the Chinese public sphere and on the pages of the *Shenbao*, see Janku, “Nur leere Reden.”

8. For this system, see Silas Wu, “Memorial Systems”; Bartlett, *Monarchs and Ministers*; and Ocko, “Peking Gazette,” esp. 44 and note 16.

peaked during the waning years of the Qing, most officials were not privy to much important information, and the general public was completely unaware of politics at the center.⁹ Although the court published its own gazette, the *jingbao* 京報, this publication contained only as much or as little information as the court deemed fit. In other words, by the late Qing, the “road of speech” was blocked.

Within this context, the *Shenbao* entered (and succeeded) as an outsider—or so it seemed.¹⁰ China did not have a free press before foreign missionaries and merchants founded and propagated newspapers. The *Shenbao* came to China as a distinctly foreign medium, and—even after Ernest Major had left China in 1889—it remained a foreign-owned firm until 1908.¹¹ Extraterritoriality was the clue to its existence: the International Settlement in Shanghai did not fall under Qing jurisdiction. It was governed by the Municipal Council, a body made up of unpaid members elected by the landowning segment of the Shanghai population, responsible neither to the members’ respective national consulates or embassies nor to the Chinese government. Therefore, no state entity had a real regulatory impact on the Shanghai press. Paradoxically perhaps, the *Shenbao*, operating within a public sphere characterized by extremely rigid circumscription, was one of the world’s most independent papers at that time.¹²

Moreover, as a purely commercial venture, the *Shenbao* was free of the ideological burdens associated with missionary or advocacy papers published in China during the second half of the nineteenth

9. See the introduction to Janku, “Nur leere Reden”; and Wagner, “Early Chinese Newspapers,” 6. For a succinct description of communication structures in the late Qing, see Polachek, *Inner Opium War*.

10. Indeed, it can be argued that the foreign commercial and editorial control of the *Shenbao* “became the institutional and public guarantee of its abiding by foreign rules of reliability and impartiality” (Wagner, “Early Chinese Newspapers,” 20; and Wagner, “*Shenbao* in Crisis.”).

11. See Ge, *Zhongguo baoxueshi*, 78; Janku, “Nur leere Reden” 22; and Vittinghoff, “Am Rande des Ruhms,” chap. 3, pt. 1.

12. See Wagner, “Early Chinese Newspapers,” 4. For a thorough discussion of the complicated legal situation, see Vittinghoff, “Am Rande des Ruhms,” chap. 7, pt. 2. She contends that the Qing court consciously decided not to interfere too strongly with the press in the concessions and quotes a memorable sentence by Prince Gong, who in one early communication (30.II.1866) remarked that the Chinese government was “far from desiring to interfere with the *fair and just discussion by the public of public events*” (*ibid.*, 327; italics added). See also Wagner, “Early Chinese Newspapers,” 24; and Britton, *Chinese Periodical Press*, 102.

century. On the other hand, it lacked the subsidies that allowed these papers to continue publishing in the absence of sufficient market support. The foreign *Shenbao* depended on acceptance by lettered Chinese, who would write for it, read it, and, most important, buy it.¹³ This book sets out to analyze the ways and methods used by Shanghai's newspapermen to make their alien product acceptable to Chinese readers and to show how foreign-style newspapers such as the *Shenbao* managed to constitute alternative structures of communication that would soon become accepted as a new "road of speech," thus making *Shenbao* into a powerful player in a changed Chinese public sphere. In short, this book describes how the foreign *Shenbao* became a newspaper for China.

An outstanding number of thorough and well-informed histories of the early Shanghai press, including the *Shenbao*, have been written in China and abroad in the past decade.¹⁴ Most of these histories emphasize the institutional development of the newspapers they study and provide data on their editors and contributors, financial management, circulation figures, and political affiliations. These histories tend to stress the context in which and for which these newspapers were written. This book takes a different approach. It is a study of the *Shenbao* as a text.¹⁵ I am interested primarily in the newspaper as a cultural phenomenon, as a novel form and collection of writings introduced to the Chinese during the nineteenth century. My intent is to look at the rhetorical practices of journalism in the late Qing and define its powers of persuasion. My approach—which must be read as a response to and can only be understood in conjunction with these other studies—complements their method of enquiry. I emphasize not context but text.

13. Cf. Walker, *Powers of the Press*, 2–3: "Press influence is the power, by right of publication, to impose a newspaper's values and concerns upon society's attention—at the risk of commercial failure."

14. To mention just a few: Fang Hanqi, *Zhongguo jindai baokan shi*; Ma Guangren, *Shanghai xinwen shi*; Qin Shaode, *Shanghai jindai baokan shilun*; Judge, "Print and Politics"; Xu Zaiping and Xu Ruifang, *Qingmo sishinian "Shenbao" shiliao*; Song Jun, *Shenbao de xingshuai*; Narramore, "Making the News in Shanghai"; Ye Xiaoqing, "Popular Culture in Shanghai"; Vittinghoff, "Am Rande des Ruhms."

15. For a similar approach, see A. C. Smith et al., *Paper Voices*, 17; Janku, "Nur leere Reden"; and idem, "Der Leitartikel der *Shenbao*."

Certainly, newspapers are not supposed to be read cover to cover like a book, and it may appear artificial to treat them as objects of anything but an inattentive reading, but the testimony of some Chinese readers of newspapers such as the *Shenbao* suggests otherwise. Ge Gongzhen, in his seminal history of early Chinese newspapers, remarks on the fact that the Chinese read newspapers from beginning to end, without missing a single word.¹⁶ I will argue that as an unknown medium in China, the newspaper first had to be convincing as a text. The *Shenbao* intended to make a difference in China; it hoped to reach new readers and create new values. Whether it made such a difference is discussed in the following pages. In uncovering how editorials, news reports, and even advertisements were cleverly and poetically written, argued, narrated, quoted, presented, and constructed, I attempt to explain the appeal of the newspaper to Chinese readers. Thus, in the first part of this book, I look at the power of the newspaper text as a literary creation: Why was it convincing? What methods, forms, allusions, and tropes did it use? I will argue that, as a text, the press acquired considerable symbolic power by adapting to Chinese styles of writing, by speaking “in the words of the sages” and in the pose of the remonstrating official, and by exploiting the authority of the Chinese court gazette, the *jingbao*. In the second part of the book, I turn from form to content and examine the implied and the actual audiences for the newspaper. Who was included in it—women, city dwellers, Chinese nationalists? How were they to read the text and react to it? To what extent was the perusal of Shanghai newspapers empowering, restricting, disturbing, uplifting? By reading *Shenbao* texts and comparing them with historical evidence, I attempt to explain their social and historical force (or lack of it), and to uncover the somewhat tenuous relationship between textual and actual realities, for in this tension lies the power of the press. To what extent was this newspaper a motor or a mirror of reality? Was it successful in introducing new characters, new protagonists, new themes, to its audience? In reading the text, do

16. Ge Gongzhen, *Zhongguo baoxueshi*, 221. In a study of a Shanxi villager's newspaper-reading habits, Henrietta Harrison (“Newspapers and Nationalism,” 95) finds evidence for this behavior. The editorial advertising a book collection of favorite *Shenbao* articles, “選新聞紙成書說” (On selecting from newspapers to make a book), SB 28.3.1877, and the fact that edict editorials would refer back to edicts published months earlier in the newspaper (copies of which could not have been discarded immediately, therefore) also point in this direction.

we find evidence for the claim that the newspaper served as a tool in the “remaking” of the Chinese public sphere and the creation of a civil society?¹⁷ Did it foster Chinese nationalism? Did the foreign medium create a Chinese identity? (How) did the *Shenbao* become a newspaper for China?¹⁸

The text I will be dealing with is rather peculiar. As an alien medium packaged to suit Chinese tastes, the *Shenbao* was a hybrid, multicultural product: a Chinese-language editorial, for instance, although inspired by the institution of the editorial in foreign newspapers, attained a particular Chinese meaning as it appeared in the form of a discursive “essay” *lun* 論 or an emotional “record” *ji* 記. Similarly, foreign-style advertisements were translated into Chinese terms by using the language and visual conventions of traditional Chinese shop signs, for example.¹⁹ The connection between “translated” or mediated editorial or advertisement and the original idea was no more, and perhaps no less, than a “trope of equivalence,” as Lydia Liu would call it. Its meaning had no more, and certainly no less, to do with either that of the original foreign editorial or advertisement or that of the original *lun* or *ji* or shop sign.²⁰ The foreign-style Chinese-language newspaper was thus a new type of text, fundamentally different both from the Chinese and from the foreign models that inspired it.²¹ In juxtaposing the originals from both traditions with the derivative, this book is not interested in confirming dichotomies of new and old, traditional and modern, foreign and Chinese, even if it makes use of them. It does so only to uncover the process of adaptation and trans-

17. See, e.g., Judge, *Print and Politics*, 11–12, who reinterprets Habermas for the Chinese case and argues that “whereas the development of the public sphere in Europe was premised on the existence of civil society, . . . in China it was the organs of publicity that served as the impetus for the creation of the institutional infrastructure that constitutes a civil society.”

18. In asking these questions, this study takes up three points that have attracted increasing scholarly attention in the past few years: the question of identity and its agents (see, e.g., *Narratives of Agency*) and the importance of treaty ports such as Shanghai (Murphey, *Shanghai*; Lee, *Shanghai Modern*; Rowe, *Hankow*) and the printing press situated there in China’s modernization process (Judge, *Print and Politics*; Leo Lee and Andrew Nathan, “The Beginnings of Mass Culture”).

19. See Patrick Hess, “Anzeigen.”

20. Liu, *Translingual Practice*, 60.

21. See also Vittinghoff, “Am Rande des Ruhms,” chap. 6.

formation necessary to make the foreign medium a text acceptable to a Chinese readership—to make it a newspaper for China. It does so, in Bakhtinian terms, to uncover the powers of the alien medium's carnivalistic intrusion into Chinese territory.²² It argues that this text could be powerful precisely because it was neither wholly foreign nor totally Chinese: thus, the newspaper itself epitomized change.

Apart from being a multicultural product, the newspaper was a polygeneric text as well,²³ consisting of many different types of texts: advertisements, editorials, news reports, poems, and illustrations. Oftentimes, these different genres would not only speak in their own voices but also argue their very own (sometimes contradictory) cases. Accordingly, the newspaper is not univocal: it is a congeries of texts engendered by multiple authors, often only loosely connected with the management and editorial staff. This is clear in the cases of advertisements written by the firms that paid for them and of letters to the editors, which were printed in the news section or even in place of an editorial.²⁴ It is also true of the early reprints of the court gazette, which were verbatim copies of publications printed in the capital by a company that specialized in the publishing of this official paper. Accordingly, this book treats the newspaper as a polyphonic text in the Bakhtinian sense: a phenomenon multiform in style and in speech and voice, an accumulation of several heterogeneous stylistic unities, often situated on different linguistic levels and subject to different stylistic controls.²⁵ I juxtapose separate studies of each of these polyphonic

22. According to Bakhtin, "Carnival liberates from the power of the official orthodoxy, it enables us to see the world in a different manner. . . . Carnival opened up the rich material principle of the world: creation and change and the invincible and eternal triumph of the new" (*Rabelais and seine Welt*, 316). This is so because "laughter, is a 'second revelation'; it promulgates a 'second Truth' about the world." (*Rabelais und seine Welt*, 14, see also 9). Accordingly, carnival can be eye-opening: "Carnivalization does not simply add a rigid structure to a particular content. To the contrary, it is an unusually flexible form of artistic seeing. . . . Thus, it allows to see what is new and what has never been seen before" (Bakhtin, *Probleme der Poetik Dostoevskijs*, 188). It is precisely in this manner that the foreign-style newspaper functioned.

23. See Ming, "Scholars in Wonderland," 17. See also David Wang, *Fin-de-Siècle Splendor*.

24. Vittinghoff, "Am Rande des Ruhms," chap. 6.

25. Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination*, 259.

messages in order to make sense of them as a whole and thus uncover the semantic powers of the newspaper as a text.²⁶

A closer look at definitions of the newspaper itself will serve as a first illustration of this text-based approach to the Shanghai news media. I begin by considering the newspaper in its foreign guise, as it was being defined and explained in the West during the nineteenth century. Why was it considered so powerful? I then compare these descriptions with explanations of the newspaper in China: How did the Chinese-language medium define itself? This juxtaposition illustrates how the foreign medium attempted to make itself understood by a

26. Apart from being multicultural and polygeneric, the newspaper is a text manifold in appearance: it is published day in and out for years on end. To treat the newspaper as a text means to drown, literally, in a sea of characters. It has been impossible to read every single page of the *Shenbao* from 1872 to 1912. Nevertheless, my observations of certain characteristics and argumentative tendencies are based on a body of writings that is representative. I have followed a number of different tactics to choose my sample. (Unfortunately, when doing this research in the early 1990s, the useful data base and index for the early years of the *Shenbao* [1872-98] now available at <http://sun.sino.uni-heidelberg.de/database/Shenbao>, had not been launched.) The first was to go through an entire year of the *Shenbao* looking for editorials, news reports, and advertisements on the different topics that my chapters deal with. Thus, I surveyed a full year of the *Shenbao* at a regular interval of five years. The resulting sample is rather extensive compared with usual sample sizes in studies of journalism (see, e.g., Guenin, "Women's Pages," which surveys only the Tuesday and Thursday editions of four papers for the month of April in one year). Second, I augmented this sample with writings from intervening years that I came across in more incidental readings, as well as articles discussed in the secondary literature or pointed out to me by my colleagues in the Heidelberg research group. Third, I surveyed, if less thoroughly, other newspapers such as the *Xinwenbao*, the *North China Herald*, the *Shibao*, the *Shishi xinbao*, the *Minbu ribao*, the *Shanghai xinbao*, and several women's journals and pictorials in order to compare and contextualize my findings. And fourth, for my last chapter, I took a different approach and worked in a different time frame in order to check whether my assumptions had been dependent on a certain type of selection procedure and chronology. For that chapter, I focused on a number of important events between 1900 and 1925 and surveyed the texts surrounding these events in the weeks that immediately preceded and followed them. Each of these tactics created a different and potentially contradictory body of text, and in drawing my conclusions, I used these different sets of texts as a check on one another. It is on this basis that I have made a number of confident assumptions about the *Shenbao* as a system of meaning, even if I have only read less than 10 percent of the *Shenbao* as a text between 1872 and 1912.

Chinese readership and brings us back to the question of the tangible powers of the press: Did the news media in China ever do what everybody apparently believed them to be doing?

Defining the Newspaper: The Foreign Paradigm

Four hostile newspapers are more to be dreaded than a hundred thousand bayonets.

—Napoleon Bonaparte (1769–1821)²⁷

By the nineteenth century, the newspaper already had a history that went back several centuries. Much of this history had been dominated by official interventions: stamp acts and legal charges of libel, blasphemy, or sedition had been the rule rather than the exception. Publishing from official sources or under official supervision had formed the mainstream of newspaper production since its beginnings.²⁸ Although the historical record would support only a guarded evaluation of the independence of newspapers even as late as the nineteenth century, since the authorities continuously and actively intervened to use this “dangerous instrument” for their own purposes by putting journalists and publishers on their payroll, establishing censorship procedures, and publishing official newspapers, the potential use of newspapers to manipulate and to become a powerful and even monopolistic instrument of state propaganda appears only in passing and certainly does not dominate the contemporary idealized standard discourse as reflected, for example, in the great encyclopaedias of the

27. Cited in Stephens, *History of News*, 185.

28. Examples are the foundation of Rénaudot's *Paris Gazette* under Richelieu in France (1631), the imposition of the stamp tax in England (1712–1855), or the Bismarckian press law (valid as late as 1919), not to mention censorship and dictatorial management of the press in the twentieth century. A recent authoritative study on global journalism argues: “While on the surface there appears to be adequate information moving through most parts of the world, governmental pressures, secrecy, censorship, and propaganda impede the meaningful and free flow of news” (*Global Journalism*, 3). Irwin (*Propaganda and the News*, 9–10) makes this point succinctly: “Most of us assume that the ‘freedom of the press,’ for which so many men went to prison, lost their ears or stood in the stocks, involved only the right to express opinion—unaware that the struggle for the right to publish the news was just as bitter and even more hardly won.” According to many newspaper historians, the history of the press is therefore the history of its suppressions; see, e.g., Cranfield, *Development of the Provincial Newspaper*, 1; and Salmon, *The Newspaper and the Historian*, esp. 256ff.

nineteenth century.²⁹ To the contrary, it was the ideal of the free press, espoused by Denis Diderot (1713–84) in the *Encyclopédie*³⁰ and supported in editorial statements in the inaugural editions of many newspapers, that became the core definition of the press in these encyclopaedias. They confirm that “liberty of the press is the rule in most European states”³¹ and that anything but a free press is a “disgrace to civilization.”³² This general acceptance of the need for a free press was accompanied by a heightening of the moral status of its practitioners—namely, journalists and editorialists—and an equally dramatic enhancement of the proclaimed usefulness of the free press for the proper functioning of government and society, if only within the pages of the encyclopaedias.³³

At least five important reasons are given for the beneficial effects of a free press: it is a “department store of news,” rapidly spreading a wide range of entertaining and instructive information. This is part of a double agenda of general enlightenment and progressive change, the second and third functions of a free press. Fourth, it serves as an “independent mouthpiece of the public voice,” especially concerning the performance of the state and its servants. Last but not least, as a “forum for intellectual discussion and moral challenge,” the press contributes to the prosperity of the nation by providing a mediating space and thus serves as a channel of communication between high and low.

The idea of offering a broad variety of news, domestic and foreign, serious and entertaining, was among the earliest promises of newspapers. The *Grand dictionnaire universel du 19ième siècle* cites an early seventeenth-century rhymed gazette that promised:

29. See my “Domesticating an Alien Medium” for a thorough reading of articles on the press in the *Grand dictionnaire universel du 19ième siècle* (Paris, 1865ff; hereafter cited as *GD*) and the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (London, 1875–78; cited as *EB*) of which the following paragraphs are only a very short summary.

30. Other thinkers who developed the libertarian philosophy on which the concept of a free press is based were John Milton (1608–74), Thomas Jefferson (1743–1826), and John Stuart Mill (1806–73). They, too, thought of it in terms of ensuring a free exchange of information and opinion. See Hulteng and Nelson, *The Fourth Estate*, 26.

31. *EB*, s.v. “Press Laws,” 19: 712.

32. *EB*, s.v. “Newspapers,” 17: 426.

33. See Janku, “Nur leere Reden,” 17–18; and Vittinghoff, “Am Rande des Ruhms,” chap. 1. Vittinghoff shows that the general view of the journalist remained consistently condescending throughout the nineteenth century.

The Gazette in these verses
 satisfies the brains:
 for from all over the universe
 she gets her news

 here and there,
 from Orient to Occident
 and from all the parts of the globe
 not leaving a single matter out
 be it edicts, or commissions, or wars

 whatever it is, nothing is forgotten
 for the Gazette multiplies
 without reposing postillions
 and is fast like an eagle.³⁴

These lines emphasize the diversity of geographic coverage and subject matter and stress the incredible speed with which the gazette delivers news to its readers. Implicitly, these verses allude to the second function attributed to newspapers: their educational value. In the *Grand dictionnaire*, the press is described as “the most powerful means of spreading enlightenment” (“le plus puissant moyen de diffusion des lumières”).³⁵ A very similar claim was made in an editorial for the *New York Herald* by its founder, James Gordon Bennett: “A newspaper can be made to take the lead . . . in the great movements of human thought and human civilization.”³⁶ The enormous influence of the newspaper evoked here is echoed in articles “Presse” and “Journal” in the *Grand dictionnaire*. Charles Dana (1819–97), manager and editor of the *New York Sun*, too, called the press a “great civilizing engine.”³⁷ As

34. The translation is mine; the rhymes could not be reproduced. See *GD*, s.v. “Journal,” 9: 1044: “La Gazette en ces vers / Contente les cervelles: / Car de tout l’univers / Elle recoit nouvelles / La Gazette a mille courriers / Qui logent partout sans fourriers / Il faut que chacun lui réponde, / Selon sa course vagabonde, / De cà de là diversement, / De l’orient en l’Occident / Et de toutes parts de la sphère, / Sans laisser une seule affaire / Soit d’édits, de commissions, / De duels. / De pardons pléniers et de bulles / Elle racontera aussi / Les malheurs, les prospérités. / Quoi que ce soit, rien ne s’oublie; / Car la Gazette multiplie, / Sans relasche des postillions, / Viste comme les Aquillons.”

35. *Ibid.*, 1037.

36. Cited in Weisberger, *The American Newspaperman*, 98.

37. Dana, *The Art of Newspaper-Making*, 29. For a similar contemporary view, see Yarros, “The Press and Public Opinion.”

an expedient and powerful means of enlightenment, the press is comparable to other achievements of modernization: it is "electricity applied to matters of the mind" ("l'électricité appliquée aux choses de la pensée").³⁸ In the normative discourse of the nineteenth-century encyclopaedias, then, newspapers are both tools and manifestations of modernization.

According to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, the press also provides a record of popular feeling and is responsible for the "shaping of public opinion."³⁹ The *Grand dictionnaire* states that it is "capable of exercising . . . a supervision over the government";⁴⁰ indeed it might become "a weapon of opposition."⁴¹ Therefore, it is vitally important for any government to read newspapers.⁴² Any government failing to do so is at risk: the *Grand dictionnaire* stresses that a "government is obliged to consult public opinion" because "the authority of public opinion is invincible."⁴³ Only the press can keep the government informed about the concerns, thoughts, opinions, discussions, and grievances of society.⁴⁴ The press thus becomes an important channel through which governors and governed may learn about each other and communicate.

38. *GD*, s.v. "Presse," 13: 93.

39. *EB*, s.v. "Newspapers," 17: 412. The *Grand dictionnaire* contends that "while contributing to the development of intellectual life, [the press] also teaches [readers] to be informed about and rationally judge everything to do with public life" (*GD*, s.v. "Presse," 13: 107-8). See also Stephens, *History of News*, 9.

40. *GD*, s.v. "Presse," 13: 108: "Elle seule peut exercer, en dehors des assemblées créés à cet effet, un contrôle sur le pouvoir. Elle seule peut tenir les citoyens au courant des affaires publiques et les éclairer sur leurs intérêts. Elle seule, enfin, peut porter à la connaissance du public, ce souverain juge, les réclamations qu'un citoyen peut avoir à adresser à tel ou tel agent du pouvoir."

41. *GD*, s.v. "Journal," 9: 1037, calls the press "une arme d'opposition."

42. Otherwise, a government might find itself in trouble, as *GD*, s.v. "Publique," 13: 387, argues: public opinion may "overthrow and subject all kinds of despotism" ("renverse, subjugué toute espèce de despotisme").

43. *GD*, s.v. "Presse," 13: 110. *GD*, s.v. "Opinion," 11: 1385: "Un gouvernement est tenu de consulter l'opinion. . . . Il faut d'autant plus s'en féliciter que l'autorité de l'opinion publique est invincible et s'impose, vraie ou fausse, à ceux qui font profession de la dédaigner."

44. *GD*, s.v. "Presse," 13: 110: "On répète sans cesse que la liberté de la presse sert au gouvernement à obtenir des renseignements exacts, soit sur la situation de l'opinion à l'intérieur, soit, à l'extérieur, sur l'état des autres puissances." Joseph Pulitzer (1847-1911) once put this thought rather beautifully: "A journalist is the lookout on the bridge of the ship of state. He notes the passing sail, the little things of interest that dot the horizon in fine weather. He reports the drifting

Defining the Newspaper: The View from China

Although public opinion arises from many sources, the most powerful among the organs that produce it are newspapers.

—Liang Qichao 梁啟超 (1873–1929), 1910⁴⁵

Not surprisingly, given the indebtedness of Chinese-language newspapers such as the *Shenbao* to foreign models, the core elements of this functional description of the press in nineteenth-century European encyclopaedias reappear in Chinese editorials on the uses and necessity of newspapers. Yet they also become major arguments in programmatic discussions by Chinese statesmen and intellectuals and would soon even be reprinted in official teaching materials.⁴⁶ Obviously, these ideas were accepted by the general public and reflected representative concepts and notions in China of the functions and benefits of the press.⁴⁷

In its inaugural issue on 30 April 1872, the *Shenbao* announced that the primary purpose of the paper was the transmission of news. The *Shenbao*'s business, the editor declared, was to record all matters from China and abroad.⁴⁸ A few days later, an editorial stated that the main reason for founding the newspaper was to provide both rich and poor everywhere in China with news and thus to remedy a situation in which only the court was receiving sufficient information.⁴⁹ The newspaper intended not just to entertain but, more important, to ed-

castaway whom the ship can save. He peers through fog and storm to give warning of dangers ahead. He is not thinking of his wages, or of the profits of his owners. He is there to watch over the safety and the welfare of the people who trust him" (quoted in *Education in Journalism*, 34).

45. Liang Qichao, "Guofengbao xuli," 21: "輿論之所自出隨不一途而報館則其造之機關最有力者也。"

46. For a collection of 1901, made up of newspaper editorials, the *Fenlei geguo yixue ce* 分類各國藝學策 (Classified examination questions on the arts and sciences of the countries in the world), see Vittinghoff, "Am Rande des Ruhms," 276.

47. For a fuller discussion, see Mittler, "Domesticating an Alien Medium." Vittinghoff, "Am Rande des Ruhms," chap. 7, also analyzes many of these editorial statements.

48. "本館告白" (Announcement by our company), *SB* 30.4.1872.

49. "申江新報緣起" (The origins of the *Shenjiang xinbao*), *SB* 6.5.1872. *Shenjiang xinbao* (New paper for the Shanghai area) was the long name of the *Shenbao*. On choice and origin of the name, see *Shenbao shi bianxiezhu*, "Chuangban chuqi de *Shenbao*."

ify and instruct its readers.⁵⁰ One article even compared the newspaper with the “explanations of the Grand Historian” (that is, the *Shiji* 史記).⁵¹ Moreover, the *Shenbao* promised to use easy-to-understand language in its inaugural statement, and its publishing house began issuing a newspaper in the vernacular in 1876 and a pictorial magazine in 1884, all for the purpose of instructing readers.⁵²

Newspapers such as the *Shenbao* hoped to serve as a “guide” to their readers.⁵³ They, too, aspired to become the media through which change and modernization were instigated, to become the “electricity applied to matters of the mind.”⁵⁴ In its inaugural issue, the *Shenbao* claimed that it was interested in supplying the “newest” and most “up-to-date” knowledge, in order to “renew the people” 新人.⁵⁵ Indeed, as a later prose-poem put it: “The *Shenbao* is a *xinbao* [literally, a “new paper”]. It advocates the new. Whatever is not new, it eliminates,” because its foremost aim is to “renew all the people” 新眾人.⁵⁶ These articles spell out the third function of newspapers: they are both tools and manifestations of modernization. The contents of editorials in the first few months of the *Shenbao* publication bear out this agenda;

50. In 1877, it was reported that sales of the *Shenbao* were rising increasingly because the *Shenbao* was read by many for entertainment and, in particular, for instruction (“論本報銷數” [On the sales of the *Shenbao*], *SB* 10.2.1877).

51. “邸報別與新報論” (On the difference between the official court gazette *di-bao* and the new[s]paper), *SB* 13.7.1872.

52. “本館告白,” *SB* 30.4.1872. An advertisement for the obscure vernacular *Minbao* 民報 appears in *SB* 19.5.1876. Pictorials such as the *Dianshizhai buabao* 點石齋畫報 were praised in the editorial “論畫報可以啓蒙” (Illustrated journals can enlighten), *SB* 29.8.1895. Both papers are discussed in more detail in Chapter 4 below. As late as 1905, the *Shenbao* reiterated that “everyone who knows newspapers understands that they open up knowledge”; see “本館整頓報務舉例” (An itemized list of reforms in our company’s newspaper), *SB* 7.2.1905, ll. 1–2.

53. For this programmatic description of the educational function of the newspaper, compare the first editorial of the *Shibao* on 12.6.1904, which argued that “China needs a guide of the right kind.”

54. For this metaphor, see *GD*, s.v. “Presse,” 93. For modernization and the *Shenbao*, see Xu and Xu, *Qingmo sishinian “Shenbao” shiliao*, 42, 44; for other newspapers, see Henriot, “Nouveau journalisme,” 5, 64.

55. “本館條例” (Our company’s regulations), *SB* 30.4.1872

56. “申報館賦” (A prose-poem on the *Shenbao* Publishing House), *SB* 15.2.1873. Similar claims were made in May 1872, when the backward-looking nature of Chinese historical writings was condemned and the timeliness and forward-looking direction of news in newspapers praised (“申江新報緣起,” *SB* 6.5.1872).

among other things, they discussed railways, water systems, foreign medicine, steamships, and the cruelty of footbinding.⁵⁷

Newspapers are also characterized in the *Shenbao* as the voice of public opinion: by 1910, statements such as “The newspaper is the mouth of the citizenry” 報紙爲民之口 and “Newspapers are the general expression of public opinion” 報紙者，輿論之公言也 or “The journalist propagates public opinion and supervises the government” 新聞記者鼓吹輿論，監督政府⁵⁸ make explicit the fourth and pivotal aspect in foreign notions of the free press.⁵⁹ But the idea is much older. Already in February 1873, an editorialist claimed that his argument was not personal opinion 私說 but *communis opinio*: 眾人之公言。⁶⁰ Another early article stated that “all citizens ought to have their opinions” and that the foreign-style newspaper was the perfect means to voice them.⁶¹ Indeed, public criticism by newspapers was necessary and beneficial: “Everything that is bad for the country should be reported with a clear voice and without excuse for harsh words and without fear that it will offend the ears. . . . Once [this is] accomplished, the power will flourish daily more and more, and this has been the case in every foreign country that has used this (method)” (ll. 5-7).⁶²

57. For an overview of some of these editorials, see Xu and Xu, *Qingmo sishinian* “*Shenbao*” *shiliao*, 10-12; and Janku, “Nur leere Reden,” 18-19.

58. For the first statement, see the report (*SB* 7.9.1910) on a speech given at the first meeting of Chinese newspaper circles in Nanjing; for the second, see “說報” (On newspapers), *SB* 19.9.1909, for the third, see the section “Pure Deliberations” (*qingtan* 清談) in *SB* 18.3.1912. The *qingtan* in *SB* 7.3.1912 also states: “Supervising the government is the heavenly duty of newspapers” (監督政府報紙之天職).

59. This aim was also mentioned in the February 1905 statement of reforms for the *Shenbao*: reporters will be sent to all the different provinces to talk to the people, “to hear public opinion” 以聽輿論 (“本館整頓報務舉例,” *SB* 7.2.1905). The idea also appeared in the names of newspapers such as the *Public Opinion Daily* 輿論日報, founded in 1906. This paper announced that it intended to be “an organ representing public opinion” 代表輿論之機關 (see the advertisement in *SB* 20.11.1907). Several other newspapers with roughly the same name were founded around the turn of the twentieth century.

60. “論女堂官周小大結案事” (On closing the case of Zhou Xiaoda, director of a girls’ school), *SB* 12.2.1873, ll. 18-19.

61. “申江新報緣起,” *SB* 6.5.1872.

62. “論新聞紙之益” (On the benefit of newspapers), *SB* 11.8.1886. See also “論本館作報本意” (On the original purpose of our company in making a newspaper), *SB* 11.10.1875. For a similarly strong advocacy of critical writing in newspapers, see

The press was seen as a tool, a transmission belt for public opinion, a marketplace of ideas. It was the platform for public discussion of issues of local as well as national importance.⁶³ Hence, the Chinese government "is well advised to consult public opinion" through newspapers.⁶⁴ Pictorial evidence from November 1907 ironically underlines this point. A huge pot is filled with a burning substance labeled *yulun* 輿論, "public opinion." The characters on the lid read: "The power is with the court." It is apparent, however, that the fire inside the pot will not easily be controlled. Public opinion seethes visibly in spite of attempts to "put a lid on it": clouds of smoke and flames escape not just through the gap between the pot and the lid but also from a hole at the bottom (see Fig. 1.1).

The critical function of the press had been (and is) considered dangerous and problematic by many governments outside China; in China informed and critical participation in policy discussions by a larger public outside officialdom was decidedly not established procedure.⁶⁵ For the government, the fact that Chinese-language newspapers such as the *Shenbao* reprinted lengthy excerpts from or even entire issues of the official court gazette, the *jingbao*, and published articles taking issue with these official emanations exposed the potential danger of newspapers, as well as their power.⁶⁶ On the pages of these foreign-style newspapers, the one-way communication from those above to those below was openly subverted. An 1872 editorial

“論各國新報之設” (On the establishment of newspapers in different countries), *SB* 18.8.1873. The editorialist complained that none of the newspapers in China was really doing its proper job, i.e., being critical.

63. For an editorial dealing in detail with the newspaper as a platform for discussion, see “本館辨誣論” (Our company discriminates erroneous arguments), *SB* 31.7.1872.

64. See *GD*, s.v. “Opinion,” 11: 1385, cited above in note 43.

65. Rudolf G. Wagner’s survey of “discussants,” the 言者 and 論者 to be found in the dynastic histories, points to the varied activities of a small and more or less “officially assigned” public. It is not clear, however, who constitutes this public and it may well consist of officials or officials-in-waiting, too. How threatening even this literati public was in the eyes of the government is seen in the court reactions to (by the late Qing mostly conservative) *qingyi* (pure discussion) debates (see Eastman, “Ch’ing-i”; Rankin, “Qingyi”; Polachek, *Inner Opium War*, chap. 2; and especially Janku, “Nur leere Reden,” chap. 2, pt. 2. On *qingyi*, see note 101 to this chapter.

66. For a discussion of the *jingbao*, see Chapter 3.



Fig. 1.1 The brewing of public opinion
(*SB* 10.11.1907)

explained this capacity of the foreign-style newspaper by ridiculing the shortcomings of the court gazette:⁶⁷

The court prints all the edicts it issues and all the memorials it receives in the court gazette to create a standard for the people. But not a single event or a single piece of news from the people reaches the ruler by this means. . . . Now as concerns the court gazette, it can be used to understand the views and opinions of the state, but the citizens also have ideas, of course. Yet if the views and opinions of the people have no way of reaching the above, how could the political rationale used above accord with their wishes?⁶⁸

67. A similar point is made in “選新聞紙成書說,” *SB* 28.3.1877, which talks of attempts by officials to keep the news from the people. And yet, with the appearance of the newspaper, they have learned that basically one can and ought to talk to people “in all matters” (ll. 6–7).

68. “申江新報緣起,” *SB* 6.5.1872. See also “招刊告白引” (Searching for advertisements), *SB*. 7.5.1872, which argues that the publishing of newspapers guarantees that the ruler will be informed about the conditions of the ruled. I thank Natacha Vittinghoff for pointing this article out to me.

In another editorial, the foreign-style press was lauded as an important channel through which governors and governed may learn about each other and communicate. Only a ruler who reads the newspaper "can get to know about the true circumstances in his territory," and thus serve his country to greatest benefit.⁶⁹ Indeed, "the basic intent in the establishment of newspapers in Western countries is to connect the affairs of those above and those below. . . . If one wishes to read something about the situation of the people, nothing is as good as the newspaper."⁷⁰

In the upbeat language of *Shenbao* editorials, the newspaper appears in its ideal form. It is attributed with the five functions and powers also established for the press in contemporary European encyclopaedias. It is able to spread a wide range of entertaining and instructive news to readers as part of the double agenda of general enlightenment and progressive change. It also serves to articulate the public's voice on the performance of the state and its servants and it contributes to the prosperity of the nation by opening a channel of critical communication between high and low.⁷¹

In its self-definitions, the *Shenbao* embodied these foreign standards of the functions and powers of the press perfectly. It constantly quoted the foreign press as a model and indeed the only panacea for China. If the *Shenbao* had been alone in advocating the emulation of the foreign newspaper, one could argue that this particular newspaper was really a foreign paper in Chinese guise, a paper that, although in the hands of a Chinese editorship, was still very much under the yoke of its foreign management.⁷² And yet, Wang Tao 王韜 (1828–97) openly acknowledged the foreign model when he stated that his *Xunhuan ribao* 循環日報 (Universal circulating herald), founded in Hong Kong

69. "論新聞紙之益," *SB* 11.8.1886, l. 21.

70. *Ibid.*, ll. 29–31.

71. These five functions are also mentioned in "整頓報紙芻言" (A few modest words on the reform of newspapers), *SB* 15.8.1898. I thank Andrea Janku for drawing my attention to this article.

72. These kinds of arguments were in fact used against the *Shenbao* many times during its early years. They are discussed in more detail below; see also Vittinghoff, "Am Rande des Ruhms," chap. 5, pt. 2. These arguments are also the reason that newspapers such as the *Shenbao*, which are classified as foreign and commercial undertakings, have been neglected by Chinese newspaper historians. See the bibliographical discussion in note 87 to this chapter.

in 1874 and the first foreign-style newspaper in Chinese hands, ought to become "what the *London Times* is in England."⁷³ More implicitly, the *Xinbao* 新報,⁷⁴ the first quasi-governmental Chinese attempt at a foreign-style newspaper, initiated by the Shanghai circuit intendant (*daotai* 道台) in 1876, only a few years after the foundation of the *Shenbao*, appealed to these same functions in its inaugural statement:

It is necessary that both Mandarins and Merchants should be kept well informed of all that is going on in the world. . . . There are affairs of state in the Capital itself, the changes and appointments of officials in the provinces, the politics of Western nations, and the state of commerce generally, the prospects of agriculture all over the country, the fluctuations in foreign goods, shipping intelligence, in fact, whatever may constitute the news or the rumour of the day all are matters in which officials and commercial men are alike interested, and which, therefore, should not be overlooked. . . . Matters of lesser importance, affecting the interests of the people generally, will also have a place in our newspaper, so that those who stay at home will be as well posted as if all the occurrences were written in the palms of their hand.⁷⁵

The *Xinbao* described itself as an informative, educational, progressive paper interested in all that concerned both those above and those below. Thus, it, too, claimed to be a perfect match of the foreign ideal of the newspaper.⁷⁶ Similar ideas can be found in the writings of two influential statesmen and intellectuals, the liberal Liang Qichao and the conservative Zhang Zhidong 張之洞 (1837-1909).⁷⁷ They formu-

73. Vittinghoff, "Am Rande des Ruhms," 196. For a discussion of the *Xunbuan ribao*'s self-introduction to its readers, which was very similar in tone to that of the *Shenbao*, see Vittinghoff, "Am Rande des Ruhms," chap. 7, pt. 1.

74. On the history of the *Xinbao* 新報, and some of its predecessors, the two *Huibao* (匯報 and 彙報) and the *Yibao* 益報, see Vittinghoff, "Useful Knowledge and Appropriate Communication" and "Am Rande des Ruhms," chap. 3.

75. Translation from "Prospectus of the *Sin-Pao*," NCH 1.12.1876. I have profited from Andrea Janku's thorough search for articles on the Chinese press in the *North China Herald*.

76. The much earlier missionary paper *Jiaobui xinbao* 教會新報, too, founded by Young J. Allen (1836-1907) in 1868, had very similar aims and purposes (see the inaugural statement on 5.9.1868).

77. For Zhang's influence, resting largely on the popularity of the *Quanxue pian* 勸學篇 (Encouragement to study), to be discussed below, see Britton, *Chinese Periodical Press*, 99: "Through the wide currency of the *Ch'üan Hsueh P'ien*, the opinions in the essay tended to largely shape the new public conception of the

lated their opinions on what a newspaper should be in China several decades after the foundation of the first influential foreign-style newspapers in Chinese, in the late 1890s.⁷⁸ Their writings testify to the authority and popularity the medium had acquired by then and provide evidence that by the turn of the twentieth century some of the daring positions on the power of the press propagated in the *Shenbao* and other early newspapers⁷⁹ had become rather commonplace presumptions among widely different circles within Chinese society.⁸⁰

Several million copies of Zhang Zhidong's *Quanxue pian* 勸學偏 (Encouragement to study) of 1898 were distributed, by imperial order, to the governors-general, governors, and provincial-level examination officials, who were, in turn, to redistribute it in the areas under their jurisdiction. The book was enthusiastically received.⁸¹ The section "Yue bao" 閱報 (Reading newspapers), which deals with the foreign-style press, begins with a quotation from the *Laozi* (chap. 47): "Without leaving one's own house, one knows of the world" 皆不出戶庭而知天下.⁸² Newspapers are said to provide such a wealth of informa-

press." For Liang's influence, see *Shanghai jindai wenxue shi*, 143: a memoir reports that when the *Shiwubao* was flourishing, Liang Qichao was a household name not just among the literati and officials, and not just in the big cities, but even in the most out-of-the-way villages. Similar evidence is given in Li Liangrong, *Zhongguo baozhi wenti*, 33, which quotes Guo Moruo to the effect that all youngsters of his time had been influenced by Liang Qichao, be they for or against his views.

78. On the controversy between Zhang and Liang concerning the *Shiwubao*, see Vittinghoff, "Am Rande des Ruhms," chap. 9.

79. I have not read much of the earlier missionary press, but, I would suspect, it used some of the same arguments on press power. The missionary press had also adapted Chinese formats, included the *jingbao*, and used extensive quotations from the Classics. It thus predated *Shenbao* practice by several decades.

80. Xu and Xu, *Qingmo sishinian "Shenbao" shiliao*, 17, argues that Liang Qichao was heavily influenced by early Chinese newspapers and that his perusal of them made him into the reformer he became.

81. Kuo Ping-Wen, *The Chinese System of Public Education*, 71.

82. The quotation is a commonplace in late Qing writings on the newspaper. It appeared, for example, in the inaugural statement of the *Shenbao* ("本館告白," *SB* 30.4.1872, ll. 19-21): "Since the world is extremely vast, matters are extremely diverse. But the people are spread across many different areas and cannot see each other. Who can see everywhere and know everything? Since the newspaper started appearing, everything can be transmitted, and there is not one single matter that is not spread all over the globe. Since the newspaper has started appearing, everybody who glances at it can know of the world without even leaving his house." Liang Qichao, in his essay on newspapers discussed next, repeated this

tion that leaving one's house (except, perhaps, for going out to buy a paper) is no longer necessary. Zhang also mentioned the importance of the newspaper for raising consciousness and creating "forward-minded" literati and officials (ll. 17-18). According to Zhang, the newspaper is an educational tool of change and modernization. Moreover, it allows for discussion and is the ideal link between those above and below. Only in China, where there are few newspapers, are the people not allowed to know what is happening, and "even if they know something, they do not dare to talk about it in detail" (ll. 25-26). With newspapers, the situation changes, and people are able to remonstrate their rulers whenever there is a need for it!⁸³

Zhang's arguments echo in many ways the descriptions given in Liang Qichao's seminal essay "On the Benefit of Newspapers to State Affairs" ("Lun baoguan you yi yu guoshi" 論報館有益與國事), which appeared in August 1896 in the *Shiwubao* 時務報. Liang's writings became widespread for a few months in 1898 when it was decided that officials would receive a copy of the *Shiwubao* along with their order of the *jingbao*. His views are representative of a group of officials interested in radical reforms for China. In the article, Liang warned of myopia:

[In China] even the prefect and magistrate with their proximity to the people have no opportunity to know of all the affairs of the people whom they reign, let alone the court.⁸⁴

thought. It was common in contemporary Japan, too. Most probably alluding to the identical quote, Fukuzawa Yukichi described newspapers as tools of education that could bring the world to the reader "though he remains indoors and does not see what goes on outside, and though he is far from home and cannot get word from there" (quoted in Altman, "*Shinbunshi*," 52).

83. Zhang concluded his piece on the benefits of newspapers with two historical examples (ll. 31-32). Zhuge Liang, he said, "had been looking for someone who would harshly attack his weaknesses. Zhouzi had been very unhappy about the fact that it was withheld from him that disease was destroying his body. The ancients said: 'The wise have friends who remonstrate with them.'" Zhang argued that it was evident from the respective failures and successes of these figures, well-known paradigms from Chinese history, that there was a need to be informed and even more to be criticized. He ascribed this faculty to newspapers.

84. Liang Qichao, "Lun baoguan you yi yu guoshi," 102.

This situation contrasts with the state of affairs in the West where newspapers report the proceedings of parliaments, national budgetary records, death and birth rates . . . and the employment conditions of the people . . . [as well as] legal reforms, new scientific theories, and mechanical inventions. . . . Thus, those who are responsible do not need to fear that anything could be obstructed from them or held back from them. . . . The more the people read the newspapers, the more educated these people become; the more newspaper companies are established, the stronger the country. And I say this is so only because of the open communication 爲通之故 between high and low [guaranteed by the newspapers].⁸⁵

In this succinct paragraph, Liang summarized the core functions of a newspaper: it records all affairs of the people and the state and thus increases knowledge and enlightens both ruler and ruled. By providing a channel for communication and even critical dialogue between ruler and ruled, it becomes the key factor in strengthening and modernizing the country.⁸⁶

The vocabulary and contents of *Shenbao* editorials were echoed by these statesmen. What both Liang and Zhang singled out for praise in newspapers were the very tropes common in foreign normative writings about the ideal newspaper. This similarity shows that the alien discourse on the powers of the newspaper—to be found in the *Shenbao* among others—had become an important and typical way of thinking about news media at the end of the Qing. This unity also shows that the rising political journalism of the late 1890s, usually associated with the likes of Liang Qichao and repeatedly cited by newspaper historians as the beginning of a new-style press in China, was nothing radically new, indeed no more than an echo of views

85. *Ibid.*, 101. A decade later, Zou Rong 鄒容 (1885–1905) argued in a similar vein that in foreign countries “societies are founded and speeches made, newspaper offices are opened, and there are people who advocate discussion about society. Let us now examine in our turn China to see if we have any of these. The answer is, there are none” (Tsou Jung, *The Revolutionary Army*, 73).

86. These ideas echo those found in the memorial by Kang Youwei 康有爲 (1858–1927) and the examination candidates of 1895, which compared newspapers to the inspectors mentioned in the *Rites of Zhou* (*Zhouli* 周禮) who traveled throughout the country to uncover grievances. Kang mentioned that the press provides news of everyone above and below, that it serves a didactic function, and that it increases the intelligence of all readers.

found in the foreign-inspired missionary and commercial press, which had provided both the models and the language to describe the new medium several decades earlier.⁸⁷

Understanding the Newspaper in China

The past is being drafted (consciously or unconsciously) into the service of present needs and purposes.

—Paul Cohen⁸⁸

A cartoon that appeared in the *Shenbao* in October 1907 depicts the role of that alien medium, the newspaper: the caricature shows two buildings, an elaborate one labeled *gongting* 宮庭, “the court,” and a much simpler one named *minjian* 民間, “the people.” From the court, *mimi xiaoxi* 秘密消息, “secret news,” is being transferred by telegraph to the people—but not directly. The node at which the telegraph line from the court and that leading to the people meet is labeled *waiguo* 外國, “the West” (see Fig. I.2). This image echoes a declaration made by the *Shenbao* in its first issue: “The making of

87. The idealized view of the political press after 1895 can be found in many Western writings. A typical example is Nathan’s assessment of the *Shiwubao* (Nathan, “The Late Ch’ing Press,” 1284): “In the years after 1895, to hold such a journal in one’s hands was an intensely exciting experience for hundreds of thousands of literate Chinese who had never before considered national government policy a legitimate (or interesting) matter of concern, had never had the means to learn about it, and had never been exposed to stirring summonses to form their own opinions about it.” By 1895, commercial papers had for at least a quarter of a century provided just such information (which was also available and read in the *jingbao*, as Chapter 3 will show) as well as the exciting criticism that he claims to be a novelty. For similar assessments, see Britton, *Chinese Periodical Press*; Nathan, *Chinese Democracy*, 138–40; Peake, *Nationalism and Education*, 19; Henriot, “Nouveau journalisme”; M. C. Liu, “Liang Ch’i-ch’ao”; and most recently, Leo Lee, “Critical Spaces,” esp. 2. The argument is part of Liang Qichao’s self-constructed myth and was developed further in Chinese histories of the press. For ideological reasons—until recently a history of foreign and commercial enterprises could not be written with praise—this myth was perpetuated. Ge Gongzhen’s *Zhongguo baioxueshi* marks the beginning of this trend, which remains widely accepted within China and abroad (see Fang Hanqi, *Zhongguo jindai baokanshi*; and Li Siyi, “Qingmo 10 nian yue bao jiang bao”). For a critical discussion, see Vittinghoff, “Unity vs. Uniformity”; and Wagner, “Early Chinese Newspapers,” 25–26.

88. Paul Cohen, *Between Tradition and Modernity*, 89.

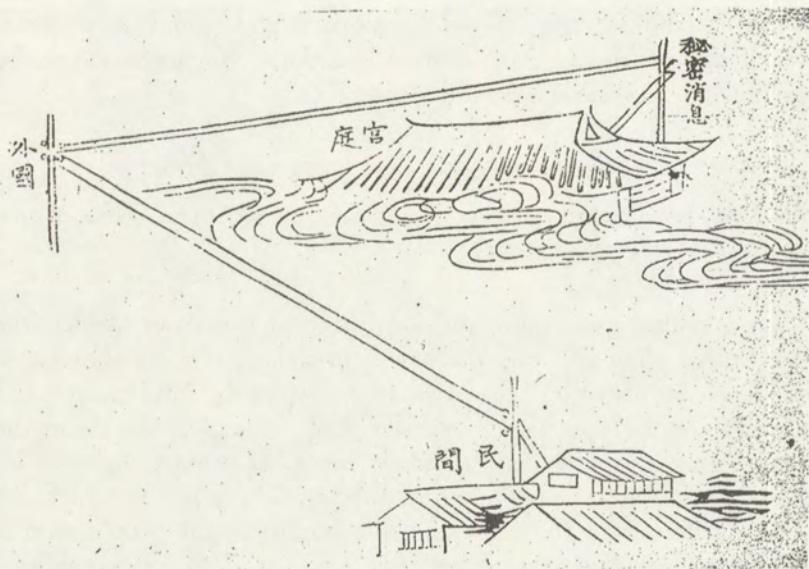


Fig. I.2 Intercommunication by way of the West
(SB 9.10.1907)

newspapers has been transmitted by Westerners to Chinese lands” 新聞紙之制創自西人傳與中土 (ll. 7-8).⁸⁹

This statement was reiterated in Chinese newspapers and in writings by Chinese statesmen. In the typical description, the newspaper is a powerful innovation (to be) copied from the West, even though the Chinese had an institution that could be called the world's oldest press.⁹⁰ Since the Han (206 BCE-220 CE), *di* 邸 officials had transmitted the news of the court to the provinces and vice versa. The *dibao* 邸報 (announcements of the *di*) were officially renamed the *jingbao* 京報 (capital/court gazette) in 1723 during the reign of the Yongzheng em-

89. “本館告白,” SB 30.4.1872. The argument returns in the first line of “選新聞紙成書說,” SB 28.3.1877, and in “與西友論報紙體例” (Talking with a foreign friend about newspaper styles), SB 17.10.1897. As late as 1905, an article in the paper claimed: “In olden times China did not have the newspaper business” (“本館整頓報務舉例,” SB 7.2.1905). See also “論各國新報之設,” SB 18.8.1873: “At first, it was all the Western countries who established newspapers” (l. 4). “論新聞紙之益,” SB 11.8.1886, was the first article I found that questioned this assumption (discussed below).

90. Henriot, “Nouveau journalisme,” 5. Cf. also Patterson, “The Journalism of China.”

peror of the Qing.⁹¹ They recorded summonses to office, promotions, and demotions as well as edicts and memorials. Some writings preceding the period surveyed here do mention this “indigenous newspaper”: Wei Yuan 魏源 (1794–1856), then secretary of the Grand Secretariat, in a letter written in the 1830s, advocated the (secret) translation of Western newspapers, which he equated with the court gazette—in his view both were written and circulated primarily for the purpose of disseminating information. And he was not alone in using this direct equation.⁹²

Since the foreign *xinbao* 新報 (= new *bao*) was a *bao* 報 just the same, it was bound to be seen as akin to the *jingbao* 京報 (capital *bao*). Foreign-style newspapers were aware that their audience’s perception of the newspaper was conditioned by their familiarity with the *jingbao*. They were quick to exploit this expectation: among other things, they reprinted the court gazette, imitated its format and punctuation, and adopted a name (*xinbao*, literally new announcements) formed in analogy to that of the court gazette (*jingbao*, literally capital announcements). They evidently felt that this foreign medium needed some “Chinese” legitimation. Why, then, did they not pursue the potentially convincing argument that the newspaper was really just a continuation of an indigenous Chinese tradition? Since by the late Qing finding Chinese origins for Western knowledge to be introduced to China (*Xixue Zhongyuan* 西學中原) had become a well-established rhetorical practice, would this not have been a striking argument?⁹³

In editorials comparing the foreign-style press with the Chinese, however, it is evident that the new medium took pains to distinguish itself from the old-style Chinese press.⁹⁴ Although acknowledging that the court gazette fulfilled some of the same functions as the foreign-

91. For a more detailed discussion of these early Chinese newspapers, see Chapter 3.

92. The letter is reprinted in Ge, *Zhongguo baoxueshi*, 99n1. For a similar memorial, see Mary Wright, *Last Stand of Chinese Conservatism*, 240. See also Liu Kwang-ching, “Confucian as Patriot,” 18. Xu and Xu, *Qingmo sishinian* “*Shenbao*” *shiliao*, 14; and Flessel, “Early Chinese Newspapers,” also construct an organic relationship between the old-style Chinese press and the foreign-style newspaper.

93. This practice first appeared in the late Ming but was most prominently used during the late Qing (Xiong, *Xixue dongjian*, 275–76 and *passim*). See also Levenson, *Confucian China and Its Modern Fate*.

94. “邸報別與新報論,” *SB* 13.7.1872, ll. 17–18.

style newspaper (ll. 19–20), such as spreading information, for instance, the editorialists are never quite satisfied: “The *dibao* is made to disseminate court politics . . . exclusively. It does not record . . . distant matters from the smallest hamlets. And that is why those who read it are mostly literati and officials. Peasants, workers, merchants, and businessmen are not among them” (ll. 17–18).

The principal difference, then, between foreign papers and their indigenous counterparts is the fact that the newspapers spread news by everyone from everywhere, whereas the Chinese papers report only official news.⁹⁵ Naturally, the number of its readers was small and continued to dwindle.⁹⁶ Moreover, the increasing centralization of politics, which peaked during the Qing and which was accompanied by a rigid system of secrecy laws (preventing the spread of all the “secret news” hinted at in Fig. I.2), confined the *jingbao* to only the most commonplace court news and thus rather “boring” information.⁹⁷

If the *jingbao* had indeed been so dreadful, the new papers would have refused to include it on their pages and would have abstained from adapting some of its formal features. Moreover, they would surely have adopted a name that did not suggest similarities with the discredited court gazette. Instead, they consciously put themselves into the same league as the *jingbao* and borrowed its cultural capital, the prestige of its name, while portraying it as a degenerate product, asserting its unpopularity, and claiming to supersede it. There is an ambiguity of purpose here: even as they plagiarized the *jingbao* in format, text, and name, they proclaimed it the negative foil to the foreign-style newspaper. The very use of *xin* 新 (new) to characterize the alien medium, an epithet that came to stand for everything cultured and civilized in the final years of the Qing reign, can be interpreted as

95. This point is indeed more than mere polemics. It was true of Chinese-style newspapers before the nineteenth century in general, as Huang Zhuoming, *Zhongguo gudai baozhi tanyuan*, shows masterfully: all news throughout Chinese history, even in those papers that were more or less in private hands, originated in official sources. This fundamental difference between Western and Chinese papers is not acknowledged in Flessel, “Early Chinese Newspapers.”

96. Cf. “論中國京報異與外國新報” (On the difference between the Chinese *jingbao* and the Western newspaper), *SB* 18.7.1873, ll. 3–4. It would be difficult to prove this claim of a decline in readership—this is no more than a polemical statement. See the discussion in Chapter 3.

97. Cf. “論中國京報異與外國新報,” *SB* 18.7.1873, l. 22. For a very similar argument, see “Steamers and Newspapers in China,” *NCH* 31.1.1879.

a polemic against the old-style, outdated paper of court announcements. Accordingly, a commemorative editorial celebrating the 10,000th issue of the *Shenbao* on 14 February 1901 reminded readers of the *dichao* 邸抄 (another name for the court gazette) but emphasized the importance of the foreign newspaper for awakening “China, seemingly sound asleep” 昏昏如眠之中國。⁹⁸

There was a method behind the selection of certain elements both of foreign and of Chinese descent to legitimate the new medium. Some of the statements defining the newspaper supply further evidence of this. Zhang Zhidong’s essay on the newspaper begins with a hackneyed quote from the *Laozi* to illustrate the all-inclusive, informative, educational function of the foreign newspaper, oblivious to the fact that even in the West, newspapers often printed only the news provided for them by official sources.⁹⁹ The celebration of the medium’s critical powers is supported with examples of positive rulers in Chinese history.¹⁰⁰ It neglects to mention that many foreign newspapers only blew the ruler’s trumpet. Similarly, Liang Qichao encouraged the reading of newspapers by citing Zhuangzi’s frog who knew only the patch of sky visible from the well in which it lived, missing out on the fact that even in the West, the lack of a connection between most small villages and the grand world of communications left both officials in the cities uninformed about what was happening there and their inhabitants condemned to ignorance. In some of his articles for the *Shibao* 時報, which was founded in 1904, Liang compared the critical functions of the newspaper to those of *qingyi* 清議 (pure, i.e., unprejudiced discussion)¹⁰¹ and turned the *yanguan* 言官 (remonstrat-

98. “本館第一萬號記” (Record of the 10,000th issue of our paper), *SB* 14.2.1901.

99. In nineteenth-century China, the West was the acknowledged model supposedly imbued with a 200-year-old tradition of a free press (cf. *Shenbao* shi bianxiezhu, “Chuangban chuqi de ‘Shenbao,’” 134). An awareness of the official tradition in the West arrived rather late. As late as July 1911, a short editorial (時評 “current criticisms”) explained that the official newspaper (*guanbao* 官報), operating within a structure of vertical, one-way communication from above, had existed both in the East and in the West since time immemorial (Xu and Xu, *Qingmo sishinian* “Shenbao” *shiliao*, 289).

100. See notes 83 and 86 to this chapter.

101. Eastman, “Ch’ing-i,” 596, glosses the meaning of *qingyi* for the late Qing as: (1) “expressions of opinion by low or middle ranking officials” and thus (2) “a political tool with which [these officials] . . . sought to advance their careers, to give some vent to animosities, or otherwise to advance narrow interests.”

ing official) into a predecessor of the journalist, again failing to note that many journalists in the West worked not just on the payroll but at the orders of their ruler.¹⁰² Liang had begun his 1896 essay on the press with the aphorism “The strength or weakness of a country depends on the openness or obstruction [of the channels of communication].”¹⁰³ Indeed, intercommunication between ruler and ruled 上下之通, a concept that had early precedents in China, was proclaimed a key function of the foreign newspaper; left unmentioned was the fact that quite a number of foreign newspapers communicated only in one direction. Sun Jia'nai 孫家鼐 (1827–1909), one of the more influential court officials in Beijing and, among other posts, president of the Censorate and director of educational affairs, stated in an 1898 memorial that during the reigns of legendary emperors Tang and Yu or more generally during the Golden Age of the three dynasties, Xia (2205–1767 BCE), Shang (1766–1123 BCE), and Zhou (1122–249 BCE), “it never happened that [the ruler] was not in connection with the situation of the ruled” 未有不通達下情. He concluded that it was unpardonable that the channels of communication (*yanlu* 言路) were obstructed in China. What he left unsaid is that this was not entirely different from the situation elsewhere.¹⁰⁴

102. Judge, “Public Opinion,” 67, shows, that Liang disagreed on this point with other *Shibao* editors and journalists, who were not all convinced that the *yanguan* had been effective in Chinese history and should thus be used as a comparison.

103. Liang Qichao, “Lun Baoguan you yi yu guoshi,” 100. He argued that this obstruction led to a situation in which one had eyes, ears, a throat, and a tongue yet practically did not have them, because they could not be put to proper use.

104. *Wuxu bianfa ziliao*, 2: 432 (hereafter *WXBFLZ*). The need to open up channels of communication is perhaps the most frequently encountered trope in late Qing writings on the newspaper. “論中國京報異與外國新報,” *SB* 18.7.1873, ll. 4–7, gives three examples of such communication in China’s Golden Age and equates them with the functions of the *xinbao*: “(1) The reigns of Tang and Yu during the Three Dynasties were detailed in what they recorded and transmitted and thus are distinguished from later generations. (2) In the ‘Hongfan’ [洪範, ‘Great Plan,’ a chapter in the *Book of Documents*, *Shangshu* 尚書], it is said: ‘If you have important queries, consult your heart, consult the officials and ministers, and consult the masses.’ (3) In the ‘Wangzhi’ [王制, ‘Kingly Rules,’ of the *Record of Rites*, *Liji* 禮記], it is said: ‘The Son of Heaven went on the imperial inspection tour once in five years. He held audience for the feudal princes and searched for those who were 100 years old to call on them. He ordered that the master of music present the songs and poetry so that he could observe the habits of the people. He ordered that the princes

Chinese analogies—if not references to the Chinese court gazette—thus punctuate writings on the press in late Qing China. As Joseph Levenson noted in a different context, antiquity is here summoned to sanction innovation.¹⁰⁵ With most of the analogies, these later commentators adopt the same tropes and examples discussed incessantly and for decades in early Chinese newspaper editorials. The foreign “tradition” of the free press was matched with elements from an idealized tradition in Chinese thought, a tradition that formed a potential dialectic, latent most of the time, within the mainstream of Chinese philosophical thinking and that—although frequently invoked by martyrs, hermits, dissidents, and rulers alike—was only seldom practiced.¹⁰⁶ This critical tradition was associated with the sage’s legitimate withdrawal from political life under a bad ruler and with theories of *minben* 民本, *yanlu* 言路, *tianting* 天聽, and *tianming* 天命, which argued that a ruler’s power was based on the Mandate of Heaven alone and that this mandate could be withdrawn if the ruler lost popular support by neglecting communications with the people. In writings on newspapers, the glorious past in which this critical tradition was supposedly vital and intact was juxtaposed with a miserable present in which these virtues were lost. This argument had been used by essayists appealing for the opening of the *yanlu* al-

be recorded in the market in order to find out what the people liked and disliked.” See also “申江新報緣起,” *SB* 6.5.1872, l. 20; and “與西友論報紙體例,” *SB* 17.10.1897, l. 22. A *Shenbao* editorial of 17.9.1898 on the evil of secrecy and lack of information among the bureaucracy (translated in Janku, “Der Leitartikel der *Shenbao*”) invoked the trope again, and Wang Tao mentioned it in his critical essays on the evils of the time (Paul Cohen, “Wang T’ao,” 565–66). For further examples from other newspapers, see Vittinghoff, “Am Rande des Ruhms,” chap. 7, pt. 1; and Sinn, “Voice from the Margins,” 5. Cf. *Shibao* 27.12.1907: “Even in the Zhou dynasty officials consulted the masses” (cited in Judge, “Public Opinion,” 73). In some of the reform edicts proclaimed by the late Qing government, which led to the increased interest in the formation of official papers, the trope again plays a pivotal role (Li Siyi, “Qingmo 10 nian guanbao huodong gairong,” 131, 140; the proclaimed aim of the *Beiyang guanbao* 北洋管保 (1901) was, for example, “to broaden the experience, to enlighten the manners, and to connect above and below” 廣見聞開風氣而通上下). Similar arguments are also used to introduce the newspaper to Confucian Japan; see Altman, “Shinbunshi,” esp. 57.

105. See Levenson, *Confucian China and Its Modern Fate*, 3: 70.

106. Among the figures invoked are Yao and Shun, Qu Yuan and Hai Rui, Wang Mang and Wu Zetian; see Arthur Wright, “Introduction,” 13–18; Hirth, “Beamtenwesen,” 185; and Holcombe, “The Exemplar State.”

most from time immemorial.¹⁰⁷ The new twist was the invocation of the foreign-style newspaper as the one medium that could save the situation. The comparison served to accentuate the analogy between this new medium and the methods of the Golden Age: the archetype for the foreign newspaper (not the court gazette, to be sure) had been developed in the Chinese Golden Age, thus preceding foreign developments by millennia, and must simply be revived. As one editorial put it: "When countries in the West first established newspapers, they had a deep and intuitive understanding of this virtue of our ancients" 初泰西諸國之設新聞紙也蓋亦深明古人此義也。¹⁰⁸ In using the new medium, the foreigners understood an ancient Chinese practice, long lost in China itself. Indeed, one editorial reached the despairing conclusion: "In the West everyone uses the ancient Chinese method. . . . Why is it that China alone cannot achieve the perfect method of the ancient kings?"¹⁰⁹

An interesting phenomenon emerges. As many have observed, innovations that are acknowledged as imitations of foreign models often trigger the impulse to find an indigenous source.¹¹⁰ This happened, with a particular twist, in the case of the introduction of the newspaper in China: writings on the press argue that this recourse to a foreign "tradition" in reality resuscitates an indigenous Chinese model. The semantic remake of the foreign-style newspaper in Chinese hands

107. Henriot ("Nouveau journalisme," 62) concludes that there was a lack of proper channels of communication throughout Chinese history. He writes that to "demand reforms was nothing new in China: all ages had had their reformers. . . . The fundamental problem was the lack of communication channels to transmit subversive political thought." For the concept of *yanlu*, see further Eastman, "Ch'ing-i"; and Wagner, "The Chinese Public Sphere."

108. "論各國新報之設," *SB* 18.8.1873, l. 4. For a detailed analysis of this editorial, see Chapter 1. Similarly, an editorial in the *Shibao* (21.9.1909) suggested that "the establishment of newspaper offices was the original intention (if not realized) of the ancient sages" (Judge, "Public Opinion," 71).

109. "論新聞紙之益," *SB* 11.8.1886, ll. 31-32. For the frequency of such conclusions in newspaper editorials, see Li Liangrong, *Zhongguo baozhi wenti fazhan gaiyao*, 23-24.

110. The sinological classic on this question is Levenson, *Confucian China and Its Modern Fate*. Cf. Hijiyā-Kirschner, *Selbstentblößungsrituale*, 33, on the process of literary modernization in Japan. For a similar argument, see Arensberg and Niehoff, *Introducing Social Change*, esp. 63ff; and Salmon, *The Newspaper and the Historian*, 336: "The newer is the commodity to be put on the market the more insistent is the appeal to the past."

for a Chinese readership, which included a translation of its idealized description into Chinese terms, was the beginning of a creative process in which the status and function of the alien medium were fundamentally changed. The foreign-style newspaper, conceived primarily as a method of intercommunication between ruler and ruled, was depicted as an organic and integral part of the ancient Chinese public sphere, a distinctly Chinese tradition long lost and forgotten. Accordingly, the article just cited began: "In ancient times no mention was made of *xinwenzhi* 新聞紙 [the newspaper]. When [the word] appeared, [it was said] that it had come from the West. It is not known, however, whether [the newspaper] was really created in the West."¹¹¹

A 1902 editorial makes an even stronger claim. Although "the making of newspapers has been transmitted by Westerners to Chinese lands,"¹¹² the connection between ruler and ruled provided by the newspaper "was not engendered in Western countries" 並非創自泰西 but in China instead.¹¹³ Whether the Chinese journalists or the Chinese readers of such statements believed them cannot be determined. It is possible to show, however, and it is the purpose of this book to do so, that the *xinbao*, the new(s)paper, was neither sold nor perceived as a foreign import. Instead, there was a strong tendency to domesticate it for Chinese use and Chinese understanding, for only thus—so it must have appeared to China's newspaper makers—could it be an effective agent of change.¹¹⁴ China's foreign-style press was critical of

111. "論新聞紙之益," *SB* 11.8.1886, 1. 1.

112. "本館告白," *SB* 30.4.1872.

113. "書本報紀議員格鬥事後" (Written after this newspaper recorded the matter of the parliamentarians' fight without weapons), *SB* 17.12.1902, 1. 2. The article makes an even more radical argument by calling the Chinese tradition of communication between ruler and ruled since the Qin and Han the tradition of the 議員, "deliberative officials" or, in contemporary terms, "parliamentarians."

114. Even the *Xunhuan ribao* in Hong Kong, whose format was much more Westernized than the *Shenbao*, cited the great sage-kings of antiquity in its self-explanatory editorials (Vittinghoff, "Am Rande des Ruhms"). Interestingly enough, even Western-language papers in China also made an analogy between the Western-style newspaper and Chinese institutions such as the Censorate. "The 'Censorate' at Shanghai," an article in the *North China Herald* (11.9.1880) claimed: "Shanghai boasts the possession of a 'Censorate' of prodigious power; the Settlement is a fulcrum supporting two levers which are moving the Middle Kingdom to its periphery. These are the *Hsin Pao* (*News Reporter*) and the *Shenpao* (*Shanghai Reporter*), two daily Chinese newspapers."

many elements of Chinese civilization, the *jingbao* foremost among them. But rather than declaring war on this civilization, newspapers such as the *Shenbao* deliberated and negotiated with it, taking advantage of its national appeal.

Indeed, however much the *Shenbao* may have profited from its foreign background, more often than not it had to defend itself against charges that it was a foreign medium or that it was pro-Western.¹¹⁵ This is the reason for its insistence that it relied on a Chinese readership and was thus written in Chinese by Chinese¹¹⁶ according to Chinese customs to be sold to Chinese.¹¹⁷ Like many other foreign-style papers, the *Shenbao* took pains to adapt to Chinese “idiom” (*kouqi* 口氣). In the process, it created a “new” language with a “new” syntax that made the newspaper an acceptable and understandable means of communication.¹¹⁸ As this book will show, foreign-style newspapers such as the *Shenbao* were not just explained in terms of Chinese analogies, they were also printed in the manner of a Chinese book, written in forms reminiscent of Chinese persuasive prose, the *lun* 論 and *shuo* 說; or “stories of the strange,” the

115. See, e.g., “本館自敘” (Self-explanation of our company), *SB* 9.9.1872; “論新報體裁” (On the format of the newspaper), *SB* 8.10.1875; and “論本館作報本意,” *SB* 11.10.1875, esp. l. 5–6, for some defensive remarks. Vittinghoff, “Am Rande des Ruhms,” esp. chap. 5, shows that the *Shenbao* was equally attacked for being pro-Chinese by foreigners, who complained, for example, that in contrast to the treatment of the Chinese emperor, no honorary spaces were used before mentions of the Queen of England and that certain vocabulary such as 夷 (barbarian) was used for foreigners. For related difficulties during later years, see Narramore, “Making the News in Shanghai,” 257, who sees the double bind of the *Shenbao* as a major drawback for its development.

116. It is known that Ernest Major wrote some of the early editorials in the *Shenbao*. The inaugural editorial, for example, is signed “*Shenbao* guan zhuren” 申報館主人 (manager of the *Shenbao* publishing house). For most of its articles, the newspaper relied on its Chinese editors, however. “本館自述” (News from our company), *SB* 8.5.1872, introduces the entire Chinese staff of the newspaper.

117. These arguments are mentioned in “本館自敘,” *SB* 9.9.1872; “主客問答” (Dialogue between host and guest), *SB* 28.1.1875, l. 4; “與申報館論申報紙格式鄙見” (My unworthy views in talking with the *Shenbao* company on the formal arrangements of the *Shenbao*), *SB* 13.3.1875 (my thanks to Natascha Vittinghoff for pointing this article out to me); and “論本館作報本意,” *SB* 11.10.1875, ll. 4–5.

118. The expression *kouqi* appears in Fang Hanqi, *Zhongguo jindai baokanshi*, 38. See also Li Liangrong, *Zhongguo baozhi wenti fazhan gaiyao*, 1–2. For the concept of new media as new languages, see Carpenter, “The New Languages,” 35.

zhiguai xiaoshuo 志怪小說, and framed in quotations from the Chinese Classics. Thus, on its journey east, the medium adapted to its environment and took on a new, sinified guise. It changed in its outer makeup as well as in its interior decoration. To explain newspapers, on the one hand, as an important ingredient in foreign political power and to state, at the same time, that something quite equal to the newspaper was an integral part of the ideal Chinese polity was to provide newspapers with a double legitimation. Journalists could thus thrive in the twofold pleasure of upholding traditional political legitimacy and wielding the secret devices underlying foreign power. Even though the Chinese press must be considered a sibling of the foreign press, fashioned after and deeply influenced by its foreign character,¹¹⁹ it aspired to become a force in the Chinese public sphere precisely by making itself—an alien product—palatable to Chinese readers, by becoming a “newspaper for China.”

The Power of the Press

A “hot story” is not necessarily one that pleases the powers-that-be.

—Michael Schudson¹²⁰

Although the idea of the power of the press had to be imported into China, it found supporters immediately. In acts of well-calculated self-aggrandizement, Chinese newspapers portrayed themselves as mighty forces. Self-styled journalists such as Wang Tao or Liang Qichao voiced their conviction that newspapers, when “well-edited and widely circulated,” could “influence events and provide an effective curb on the excesses of those in power.”¹²¹ It is the purpose of this book to uncover the dynamics of this credo and the justifications for it. There is much evidence that not just China’s newspaper makers but Chinese officials, the Chinese court, foreign governments, and China’s citizens believed the story of the power of the press created by the newspapers with their alien—but Chinese—aura.

119. Britton, *Chinese Periodical Press*, 67.

120. Schudson, *The Power of News*, 5.

121. Paul Cohen, *Between Tradition and Modernity*, 80; see also Sinn, “Fugitive in Paradise,” 70. Britton (*Chinese Periodical Press*, 61) argues that the missionary newspapers, too, were begun with an—in his view—“exaggerated notion of the power of the press.”

Accordingly, local officials and the Qing court tried to interfere with the Chinese press in Shanghai and elsewhere,¹²² not only when it printed anti-Manchu tracts such as Zou Rong's 鄒容 (1885–1905) *Revolutionary Army* (*Geming jun* 革命軍) of 1903,¹²³ but also when it supposedly leaked information that was to be kept secret or that was unfavorable to the government.¹²⁴ The newspapers were quick to pick up on this fear of the officials and insinuated, as early as 1873, that they hated newspapers and hoped to burn the newspaper companies down and persecute their editors.¹²⁵ Some of the caricatures in *Minbu ribao* 民呼日報 (May–August 1909) illustrate the prevalence of this perception until 1909. A series of them shows a reporter with a huge brush “offering” it to an official: “What do you think of this pen?” In the next picture we can see the official trembling helplessly (see Fig. I.3). Even though newspapers such as the *Shenbao* hardly ever “made the revolutions”—the 1911 Wuchang uprising, for example, which eventually led to the fall of the Qing, was first reported in the *Shenbao* three days after the event—these papers were perceived to endanger the government.¹²⁶

122. For a thorough study of developments before 1900, see Vittinghoff, “Am Rande des Ruhms,” chap. 2, pt. 3. Guo Songtao's 郭嵩燾 (1818–91) reaction to a *Shenbao* report (see Wagner, “*Shenbao* in Crisis”) or the Yang Naiwu 楊乃武 case (discussed in detail in Vittinghoff, “Am Rande des Ruhms,” chap. 7; Dong, “Communities and Communication”; and Xu and Xu, *Qingmo sishinian* “*Shenbao*” *shiliao*, 92–96) have become well-known points of contention. Even earlier fears about possible press libel are mentioned in the *North China Herald* (“The ‘Press’ in China,” *NCH* 5.1.1867). For the situation between 1900 and 1949, see Ting, *Government Control of the Press*. See also Hok-lam Chan, *Control of Publishing*.

123. It is ironical that this tract never actually appeared in a newspaper but was merely a political pamphlet published by the newspaper *Subao*'s 蘇報 press (see Lust, *Revolutionary Army*, 21).

124. The editorial “選新聞紙成書說,” *SB* 28.3.1877, ll. 1–5, alleges that the court was rather fearful about the spread of secrets. See Xu and Xu, *Qingmo sishinian* “*Shenbao*” *shiliao*, 90–92, for incidents in which the *Shenbao* was accused of leaking military weaknesses or of misrepresenting the truth. Court reactions to the foreign-style papers are discussed in more detail in Chapter 3, esp. pp. 219–20.

125. For this allegation, see the editorial “論各國新報之設,” *SB* 18.8.1873, discussed in Chapter 1.

126. Cf. “The China ‘Press,’” *NCH* 29.3.1871: “Local officials actually do care somewhat for press criticism, and especially regard the Chinese newspaper with horror.” The Chinese court was, of course, not the only government in the world to believe in the powers of the press; see Cranfield, *Development of the Provincial*

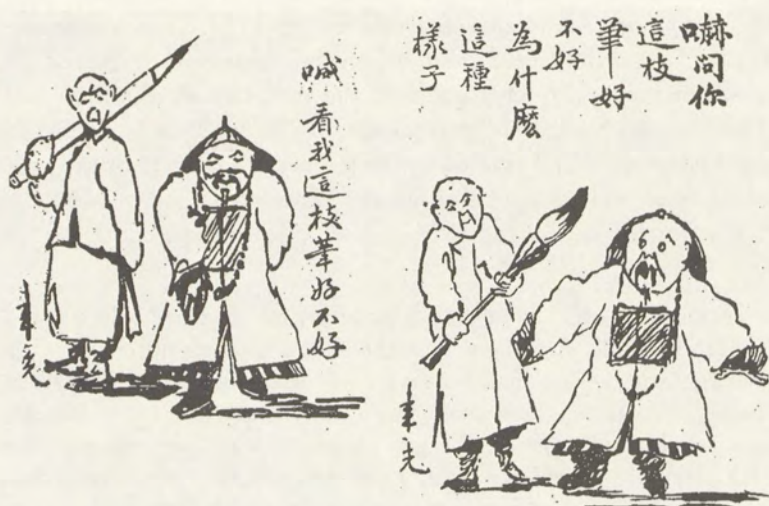


Fig. I.3 An official's fear of the press
(*Minhu ribao* 3-4.10.1909)

On the other hand, the Qing court used the press for its own purposes¹²⁷ and read it avidly: Lin Zexu 林則徐 (1785-1850), an official famous for his anti-opium activities in Canton in the late 1830s, was not the only one who did so to learn about foreigners. He even suggested the creation of a translation bureau: foreign-language papers should be translated into Chinese for the perusal by court officials. Prince Gong 恭親王 (1833-98), founder of the Zongli yamen 總理各國事務衙門, which was responsible for foreign affairs, suggested, in 1867, that foreign newspapers should be distributed to all high officials, especially

Newspaper, 141; Reinalter, "Französische Revolution und Öffentlichkeit in Österreich," 19; and Jäger, "Enthusiasmus und Schabernack," 402.

127. An incident (the truth of which remains to be proved) related in Lanning, *Old Forces in New China*, 263, illustrates the perception of government awareness of (and interest in) the foreign-style press: "A few years ago [his book was published in 1912], when the Chinese Government had become sufficiently awake to the power of the press to be very anxious to have its influences as an ally rather than as an enemy, subsidies were forthcoming on rather a liberal scale, and four of the most important of the journals already mentioned, the "Shen Pao," "The Universal Gazette," "Public Opinion," and "The China Times" were, it is said, actually bought from their proprietors by the Shanghai Taotai."

in the treaty ports.¹²⁸ High court officials read the Chinese-language press, too.¹²⁹ And they attempted, on several occasions, to harvest the fruits of newspapers by creating new and qualitatively different official gazettes, now called "official papers," *guanbao* 官報.¹³⁰ Thus, the court acknowledged and reacted to the (perceived) powers of the press in defensive as well as offensive moves. The blatant ambivalence in court reactions is nicely captured in the following anecdote from a 1912 publication:

Open criticism of officials in plain characters for all the world to read! This was unbearable, and many were the efforts made to uproot so stinging a journalistic nettle. That, however, was impossible. . . . Minor officials fumed, Taotais anathematized, and Viceroy's appealed to Peking. But a curious reply came thence, the gist of which was 'Suppress the *Shen Pao*!' 'O dear no! we are learning more of the goings-on in Shanghai than ever we knew before. The *Shen Pao* is extremely useful. Let it be!'¹³¹

Ambivalence characterized the foreign reaction to the Chinese-language press, too. Its might was acknowledged and admired by foreigners in China throughout the period under discussion in this

128. For references to the frequent perusal of the newspapers by Chinese officials, many of which are recorded in the *Chouban yiwu shimo* documents on handling barbarian affairs, see Vittinghoff, "Am Rande des Ruhms," chap. 2, pt. 3. An indirect piece of evidence is the report that allegedly it was a *Shenbao* article, on 2 April 1873, that first alerted the Qing court to Japanese war preparations on Taiwan. A recently published study on the *Shenbao* (Xu and Xu, *Qingmo sishinian "Shenbao" shiliao*, 125) concludes: "This may well be taken as testimony for the need to establish newspapers to ensure the modernization of China."

129. Wagner, "*Shenbao* in Crisis," 117, cites from several officials' diaries and mentions (*ibid.*, 123) that even the Hanlin Academy had a subscription to the *Shenbao*.

130. Apart from Yuan Shikai's 袁世凱 (1859–1916) famous *Beiyang guanbao*, the earlier local and the later national *guanbao* (*Zhengzhi guanbao* 政治官報, 1907; *Neige guanbao* 內閣官報, 1911) have not been extensively studied. Thompson uses some of the local *guanbao* in his *China's Local Councils*. Wagner, "*Shenbao* in Crisis," and Vittinghoff, "Am Rande des Ruhms," deal with the short-lived and rather unsuccessful semi-official newspapers *Xinbao*, *Yibao*, and the two *Huibao* founded in the 1870s with the help of Yung Wing (Rong Hong 容闈, 1828–1912). For further discussion, see Chapter 3. Apparently, the Japanese, with no indigenous model such as the *jingbao*, were more successful in introducing official patronage for the *shinbunshi* in different prefectures (Altman, "Shinbunshi," 64).

131. Lanning, *Old Forces in New China*, 263.

book:¹³² the medium they themselves had introduced, once in the hands of Chinese reporters and editors, appeared to be quickly turning against them. In the eyes of foreign governments, the Chinese had learned to use the alien medium too fast, overtaking their own teachers.¹³³ Charges of libel against Chinese-language newspapers occurred rather frequently.¹³⁴ Each of the numerous anti-foreign movements around the turn of the twentieth century evoked hysterical responses in the foreign press in China, which attributed an enormous power over Chinese emotions to Chinese-language newspapers.¹³⁵ Even though the Chinese newspapers only rarely engaged in anti-foreign propaganda,¹³⁶ in the eyes of many foreigners, the Chinese press fueled Chinese nationalism. Soon after introducing the newspaper to China, foreigners began to fear its (potential) influence and danger (some of them perhaps out of an inability to read these newspapers) as a force promoting xenophobia.

A third player, the people, also acknowledged the power of the press. The feverish publishing activities among intellectuals, their writings, letters, and diary entries, provide evidence for their belief in

132. For a contemporary view, see Alcock, "The *Peking Gazette*": "A newspaper and a periodical press is undoubtedly an engine of real power."

133. As early as 1874, the *North China Herald* acknowledged that the Chinese were beginning to understand the "power of the press" ("A Native Press," *NCH* 19.2.1874). Soon after the introduction of telegraphic transmissions, for example, in the 1880s, the Chinese-language papers took advantage of the technique, which was not without its own difficulties. As late as 20 June 1900, the *North China Herald* related with admiration that the *Hubao* 滬報 (1882) had issued an extra on the preceding Sunday announcing the capture of the Dagu Forts, which had been captured earlier that day: since "there was only telegraphic communication from Shanghai as far as Chefoo, this was a remarkably good piece of journalism."

134. Vittinghoff, "Am Rande des Ruhms," chap. 7, pt. 2. See also note 122 to this chapter. There were charges of libel against the Chinese government as well.

135. Rockhill, the American minister plenipotentiary in Beijing, for example, blamed the anti-American boycott of 1905 on the "inflammatory press" in Shanghai (see Chapter 6). Similarly, the Japanese consul-general reacted to the force of public opinion as embodied by the papers (Iriye, "Public Opinion and Foreign Policy," 229).

136. See Chapter 6 for examples from a number of Chinese papers in Shanghai. Vittinghoff, "Am Rande des Ruhms," finds a similar lack of evidence for anti-foreign sentiments in the *Xunbuan Ribao*. See also Xiaoqing Ye, "Shanghai Before Nationalism."

the strength of this public organ.¹³⁷ And there are further indications that other parts of the public were growing convinced that it was not only useful but necessary to read the "mighty newspaper."¹³⁸ The French consul in Shanghai, M. Imbault-Huart, reported that by 1892 "in the large cities, the newspaper has already become a necessary and indispensable element in the life of the mandarin, the merchant, the shopkeeper, and the barber."¹³⁹ Various facts testify that newspapers were accepted by a reading (looking or listening) public everywhere, a public that appeared convinced of and interested in the press's power to educate and to form opinion: for example, the continually growing number of readers for newspapers such as the *Shenbao* (which proclaimed in June 1872 that there was "no literatus or merchant who does not read it in Shanghai"),¹⁴⁰ the increasing number of circulation

137. As examples, see the diaries and reminiscences by Wang Kangnian 汪康年 (1860-1911), Zhang Binglin 章炳麟 (1868-1936), and Bao Tianxiao 包天笑 (1876-1973). For other examples, see Henriot, "Nouveau journalisme"; Vittinghoff, "Am Rande des Ruhms"; and Janku, "Nur leere Reden."

138. In absolute numbers, this public is still minute, only some 10-20 percent of the urban population and no more than 1 percent of the entire population (Nathan, "The Late Ch'ing Press," 1295; Patrick Hess, "Anzeigen," 70). But from the sketchy circulation figures we have, readership calculations can be only rough estimates. The figures given above include an estimation of multiple readers of the newspapers, which could be as many as 20 per copy (cf. Cranfield, *Development of the Provincial Newspapers*, 258).

139. Imbault-Huart, "Le Journal et le journalisme en Chine," 63. See also vilager Liu Dapeng's diary, studied in Harrison, "Newspapers and Nationalism." Further anecdotal evidence occurs in a report by customs commissioner Hirth who writes of a town near Shanghai in 1891: "What in 1881 was the exception is now the rule in all good families in Chinkiang as well as in the interior—that is, for every intelligent adult to take a glance at the Chinese daily paper brought here from Shanghai" (quoted in Nathan, *Chinese Democracy*, 145). See also "Progress in Chinese Journalism," *Inland Printer* 3.12.1910: "The poverty of the people often makes original methods of circulation necessary. In some places the same editions are successively distributed to different sets of subscribers, boys being employed to gather up the papers as soon as they have been read and carry them to another set of readers."

140. The self-congratulatory statement appears untitled in *SB* 11.6.1872. "Reaching the scholar class" had been the proclaimed aim of the missionaries such as Young J. Allen, who had started the *Jiaohui xinbao*, but the envisaged readership of the early *Shenbao*, as evident from its inaugural statements and, more tangibly, from its advertisements (Patrick Hess, "Anzeigen," 70), which explicitly addressed them, were not just literati, gentry, and merchants but workers and women, too (see Chapter 4). For a thorough discussion of circulation figures for the *Shenbao*,

outlets for ever more “national” papers such as the *Shenbao*, the “letters to the editor” sent by individuals from all walks of life and from all over China,¹⁴¹ the introduction of newspaper reading rooms,¹⁴² and the flourishing of more and more and different forms of specialized publications such as pictorials, women’s magazines, scientific magazines, entertainment and literary magazines, and the like, for ever different and wider audiences.¹⁴³ The foreign-style newspaper in China, too, was able to bring audiences of widely divergent origins together and unite them over its pages.¹⁴⁴ Whether in its manifold and often contradictory forms and statements it was able to create a Chinese identity, however, is a question for further discussion in this book.

Whatever its “real” power, the press succeeded in creating an image of its might. Different players in the Chinese public sphere—the court, foreigners, and the Chinese public—believed in it, if for different reasons and out of different feelings of fear, superiority, or despair. The medium itself stood for certain intangible powers, even if its message was not necessarily one of public, nationalist, or revolutionary force. This book sets out to show more clearly how tangible these powers could be. I will contend that although everyone may have “heard of” the press and its might in China, no one had actually “seen it.”¹⁴⁵ In the course of this book, I will argue that recognition of the press’s power by different players in the Chinese public sphere had less to do with what was actually recorded in these publications and more with what could and would be expected to be reported in them.

see Vittinghoff, “Am Rande des Ruhms,” 69–70. She extrapolates that during the 1870s, probably one of every four Chinese residents of Shanghai read the *Shenbao*. Her comparison of the *Shenbao* with other papers of the time shows that the paper was clearly the most widely read press product in the late nineteenth century.

141. For masterly studies of letters to the editor, see *ibid.*

142. Jacobi, *Bedeutung der Presse für die Kultur*, 24, mentions that by 1905 there were already six such reading rooms in Tianjin. For the interest in reading and discussing newspapers since the turn of the twentieth century, see also Li Siyi, “Qingmo 10 nian yue bao jiang bao.”

143. See the discussion in Chapter 4.

144. See Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.

145. Matthews, “The Power of the Press?” 185.

PART I

Creating the Medium

CHAPTER I

An Alien Medium Domesticated

Transformations of the New(s)paper in China

Both Chinese and foreigners have described the coming of the newspaper to China as the introduction of an alien medium. In a country with a long tradition of domesticating alien rulers, institutions, and paraphernalia, however, it was unlikely that Chinese political culture would leave the newspaper untouched. Even in a cosmopolitan city such as Shanghai, with a population open to the unknown and with a special affinity to the West and “things alien,” it was inconceivable that newspapers could be simple replicas of a foreign model alone.¹ Although foreign newspapers—much like foreign music, art, literature, and philosophy—may have been admired and imitated for their novelty and strangeness, in order to be integrated into the new environment, they had to change and adapt.

The Introduction has discussed such adaptations in normative writings on the press in China. This and the next two chapters explore further the conditions that made possible the successful transfer of the newspaper to China, taking a closer look at the exterior and interior makeup of Chinese newspapers. In the course of this chapter, I will unmask key concepts such as rationality, objectivity, and factuality in the production of newspapers and news as cultural constructs. I will argue that in China, newspapers and the news they contained appealed first and foremost through a particular Chinese literariness. I

1. For evidence, see Chapter 5 below; Pye, “How China’s Nationalism Was Shanghaied”; Ye Xiaoping, “Shanghai Before Nationalism”; and Wagner, “Foreign Community.”

will question that as such, the writing in Chinese newspapers constituted a “newly fashioned prose,” *xin wenti* 新文體.² By describing what form a “newspaper” could take in China, what was “news” to the Chinese reader and what an “editorial,” and by analyzing the contents and the language of this new medium, I hope to uncover not only the assumptions underlying the newspaper but also the expectations of journalists and readers in China. By tracing changes in format and style, we can see how and imagine why this alien medium went native.

Dealing with Chinese Taste

The *Shun Pao* [*Shenbao*] had no more alien aspect than was warranted by the tastes of Chinese readers who were subject to the alien influences of the growing port city.

—Roswell Britton, 1933³

The missionaries who were the first to produce foreign-style newspapers and periodicals in China saw them as vehicles for spreading Christian beliefs and—since they considered China a cultured nation capable of modern development—modern knowledge.⁴ But beginning with the earliest efforts in the 1810s, they published much technical, legal, economic, and scientific information as well as world news, not related to their religious agenda.⁵ The merchants, on the other hand, who became involved in publishing Chinese-language newspapers, Ernest Major among them, were primarily interested in the press as a profit-making enterprise.

The missionaries' appreciation of China as a culture and the merchants' expectations of the Chinese as customers explains why neither group was seriously interested in exerting a dictatorial form of “cul-

2. Nienhauser, “Prose,” 115.

3. Britton, *The Chinese Periodical Press*, 63.

4. William Milne (1785–1822) explained the aim of his *Chinese Monthly Magazine* as follows: “This little publication should combine the diffusion of general knowledge with that of religion and morals” (Britton, *The Chinese Periodical Press*, 18–19). In a letter dated 3 Sept. 1867, John Fryer (1839–1928), who assumed the editorship of the *Shanghai xinbao* 上海新報 (founded in 1862) in 1866, wrote to his parents: “I mean to make the newspaper work its way to do a great deal in enlightening China when it gets more widely circulated” (cited in Spence, *China Helpers*, 145; Spence gives the name of the newspaper as *Jiaohui xinbao*).

5. For listings of missionary writings generally and their newspaper work in particular, see Wylie, *Memorials of Protestant Missionaries*.

tural hegemony." Both groups acknowledged that their interests—the conversion of the heathen Chinese and the establishment of commercially viable papers in a culture that believed that the lust for profit was a major vice—needed to be legitimated and to be packaged in culturally acceptable forms.⁶ Missionary and merchant alike felt that success depended on playing their foreign game on Chinese terms.⁷ Much like later advertisers who tried to market their foreign products by exploiting the value structure and iconography of native audiences, these early actors on the Chinese print market attempted to decrease the apparent foreignness of their offerings.⁸

Many of the missionaries most active in this field such as Karl Friedrich August Gutzlaff (1803–51), William Milne (1785–1822), Walter Henry Medhurst (1796–1857), and Young J. Allen (1836–1907) read and wrote Chinese with ease and communicated fluently in Mandarin and often in local dialects as well. Quite apart from their evangelical mission and purpose, these men saw themselves as students of Chinese culture. Gutzlaff even selected the programmatic pen name of Ai-Hanzhe 愛漢者 (Lover of the Han Chinese); Milne called himself Bo'aizhe 博愛者 (He who loves all) in his editorials; and Medhurst assumed the name Shangdezhe 上德者 (He who pays homage to virtue).⁹ Such deference to Chinese culture and Chinese moral values was not restricted to the missionaries. For Ernest Major, too, the merchant's wish of "selling Chinese civilization to China"¹⁰ was directly

6. See Mayer, "Presse in China," 594–95.

7. Heesterman, "Was There an Indian Reaction?" 51, relates a similar situation in India: "It was the English who reacted by adapting, not without enthusiasm to Indian ways and circumstances. The game was played on Indian terms, even though the English generally could call the shots." This was so, in spite of the fact that, as Partha Chatterjee (*Nationalist Thought*) shows, the degree of adaptation to foreign rules of thinking and philosophizing by the Indian elite was quite astonishing.

8. For the sinification of advertising strategies by foreign firms, see Mittler, "Stay Home and Shop the World." Advertising campaigns by British American Tobacco were usually accompanied with fireworks and Chinese music (Cochran, "Inventing Nanjing Road," 14, 17, 22). For the necessity of early adjustment to indigenous conditions as the key to commercial success in China, see Hao, *The Comprador*, 208.

9. Cf. Britton, *The Chinese Periodical Press*, 18, 21.

10. For this expression, see Cochran, "Inventing Nanjing Road," 28. The *Shenbao* publishing house built its enterprise on the cultural acceptance of certain print products in traditional guise, printed on modern technical equipment or filled with modern themes: it printed the *Kangxi cidian*, for example, an invaluable tool

intertwined with an honest interest in and true love and understanding for Chinese culture.¹¹ Major's obituary in the *Shenbao* confirms that he "could speak, read, and write Chinese" 能通中國言語文字, skills that he had begun acquiring in his childhood in England.¹² Thus he and others like him began to publish like Chinese in Chinese,¹³ and

for passing the civil service examinations, as well as collections of successful examination essays (see the advertisements in *SB* 22.3 and 2.5.1873; thanks to Rudolf G. Wagner for pointing them out to me), as well as new collections of *zhiguai xiaoshuo* and other popular fiction (for more information on these endeavors of the *Shenbao* publishing house, see Wagena Ludaofu (Rudolf G. Wagner), "Shenbaoguan zaoqi de shuji chuban"; and Huntington, "*Zhiguai* and Late Qing Periodicals"). Quite clearly, the *Shenbao* publishing house set out to profit from traditional forms of literary writing, and the *Shenbao* itself was simply one medium in which this aim was pursued.

11. Major's highly positive attitude appears to have been rather more the exception than the rule, among the Western (mercenary) population of Shanghai; see Green, *Foreigner in China*, 88; Reichert, "Tch bin in Shanghai!" 206-7; Feuerwerker, *Foreign Establishment*, 5, 31; and Patterson, "The Journalism of China," 3.

12. "報館開幕偉人美查事略" (A short description of the activities of the great Major, founder of this newspaper company), *SB* 29.3.1908. This information is based on research for Wagner, "First Encounter," which undoes the assertion in *Shenbao tongxun* 1947, no. 1/3: 8, that the Major brothers learned their Chinese in China. Apart from his language skills, Major had an all-encompassing interest in things Chinese (Xu and Xu, *Qingmo sishinian "Shenbao" shiliao*, 338), on which he based his profitable endeavors. In many ways, Major fits the picture of the publisher of broad interests in the West as described in Eisenstein, *Printing Revolution*, 177: "The prospering merchant-publisher had to know as much about books and intellectual trends as a cloth merchant did about dry goods and dress fashions; he needed to develop a connoisseur's expertise about type styles, book catalogues, and library sales. He often found it useful to master many languages, to handle various texts, to investigate antiquities and old inscriptions along with new maps and calendars."

13. The assumption of a Chinese stance, by use of a Chinese name for example, can be considered a first, perhaps unconscious, "strategy" of adaptation. Many newspapers (the missionary papers less so than the commercial papers, the political papers almost exclusively so) employed Chinese writers and journalists. Milne worked with Liang Afa 梁阿發 (1789-1855), Allen made extensive use of Chinese letters to the editor in the *Jiaohui xinbao* (Adrian A. Bennett, *Missionary Journalist*, esp. chap. 4, 101), and many of the commercial papers not associated with a foreign-language paper (e.g., *Shanghai xinbao*, which was edited by Fryer among others) actively engaged educated Chinese in the day-to-day management of their papers to the point that editorial control was largely in their hands, as was the case with the *Shenbao*. For difficulties with this type of arrangement, see Fang Hanqi, *Zhongguo jindai baokanshi*, 42. Fang argues in an anti-imperialist vein, quite typi-

they exerted themselves to find the right tone, the right idiom (*kouqi* 口氣), for communicating with their readers.

There were many different ways of adapting to Chinese *kouqi*. The first and most striking method was to adjust the format: instead of the large rectangular broadsheet, with print on both sides, used by some (not by coincidence far less successful) newspapers such as the *Shanghai xinbao* 上海新報 and the *Xunhuan ribao* 循環日報 in Hong Kong (see Fig. 1.1),¹⁴ the *Jiaohui xinbao* 教會新報 and its successor, the *Wanguo gongbao* 萬國公報, as well as the *Shenbao*, were printed as small¹⁵ folded booklets, reminiscent of Chinese books, printed only on one side of the thin bamboo pulp paper (see Fig. 1.2).¹⁶ The success of this device was immediately apparent. The demise of the offensively foreign *Shanghai xinbao* is one case in point. It went bankrupt only seven months after the inauguration of the sinified *Shenbao* in December 1872. And when in 1879 Allen experimented with publishing the *Wanguo gongbao* magazine in sheet format, the criticisms were so heated that he had to revert to the Chinese-style format after two issues.¹⁷

Allen's earlier *Jiaohui xinbao* with its format of 9 × 5.5 inches and a Chinese woodcut design on the cover,¹⁸ and three decades later in the mid-1890s Liang Qichao's *Zhongwai jiwén* 中外記聞 with its yellow cover and a format of 3 × 6 inches, copied the outer appearance of

cal of PRC newspaper histories, that the intent of these allegedly "objective" foreign-style papers was to fool the Chinese when in reality they were published only to ensure profits for foreigners. For a different view, see Vittinghoff, "Am Rande des Ruhms"; and Li Liangrong, "Historical Fate," 225.

14. The Hong Kong *Xunhuan ribao* and the *Xianggang Zhongwai xinbao* 香港中外新報 came in Western format (examples can be found in the *Bibliothèque Nationale* Collection, Chin. 9129, and the *Zeitungsmuseum* in Aix-en-Chapelle, Germany). For the *Xunhuan ribao*, see Vittinghoff, "Am Rande des Ruhms." Vittinghoff concludes that the *Xunhuan ribao* was less successful in terms of circulation than the *Shenbao* because of its disregard for Chinese *kouqi*.

15. The *Shenbao* page was almost square, measuring roughly 27 cm × 27 cm. The earliest Singapore newspaper, the *Lat Pau*, founded in 1881, copied the *Shenbao* format almost exactly (Mong Hock Chen, *Early Chinese Newspapers of Singapore*, 25–26, 30).

16. For the reference to Chinese books, see *Shenbao tongxun* 1947, no. 1/3: 9. I thank Natascha Vittinghoff for providing me copies of the *Shenbao tongxun*.

17. Adrian A. Bennett, *Missionary Journalist*, 257.

18. The *changben* 長本 (long copy) of the *jingbao* 京報 was approximately 9 × 4 inches. The British Museum has a number of exemplars.

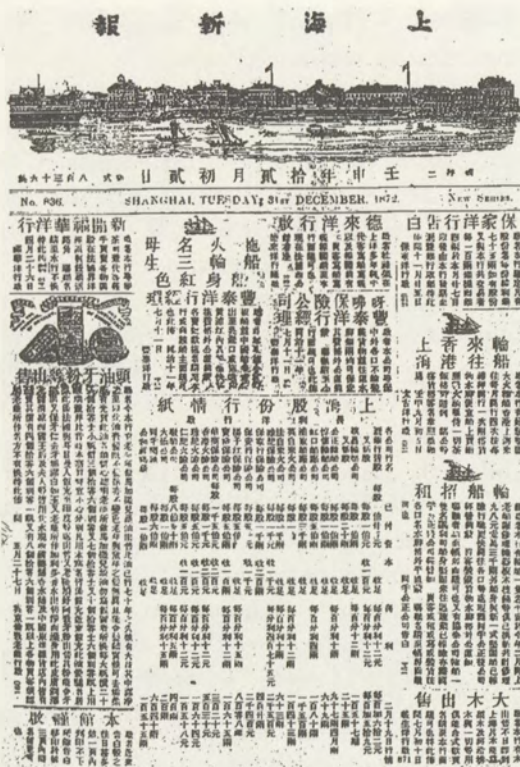


Fig. 1.1 The Chinese broadsheet (SHXB 31.12.1872)

different versions of the court gazette (the *Zhongwai jiwen* probably did so out of convenience: it was printed by a *jingbao* 京報 publisher).¹⁹ The court gazette also served as the model for the use of elevations or honorary spaces before, for instance, the names of the Chinese emperor and ancestral temples and the word for “god,” *shen* 神, in these newspapers.²⁰ Not only did the *Shenbao* have no punc-

19. The British Museum has a collection of manuscript *jingbao* entitled *Shangyu* 上諭 (edicts), which are approximately 3 × 6 inches. For the *Zhongwai jiwen*, see Nathan, *Chinese Democracy*, 138.

20. This practice was apparently taken for granted and monitored by Chinese as well as foreign readers. For some of the debates on the use and abuse of spaces and elevations in *Shenbao* and *Xunhuan ribao* and British documents from the Public Record Office, see Vittinghoff, “Am Rande des Ruhms.”

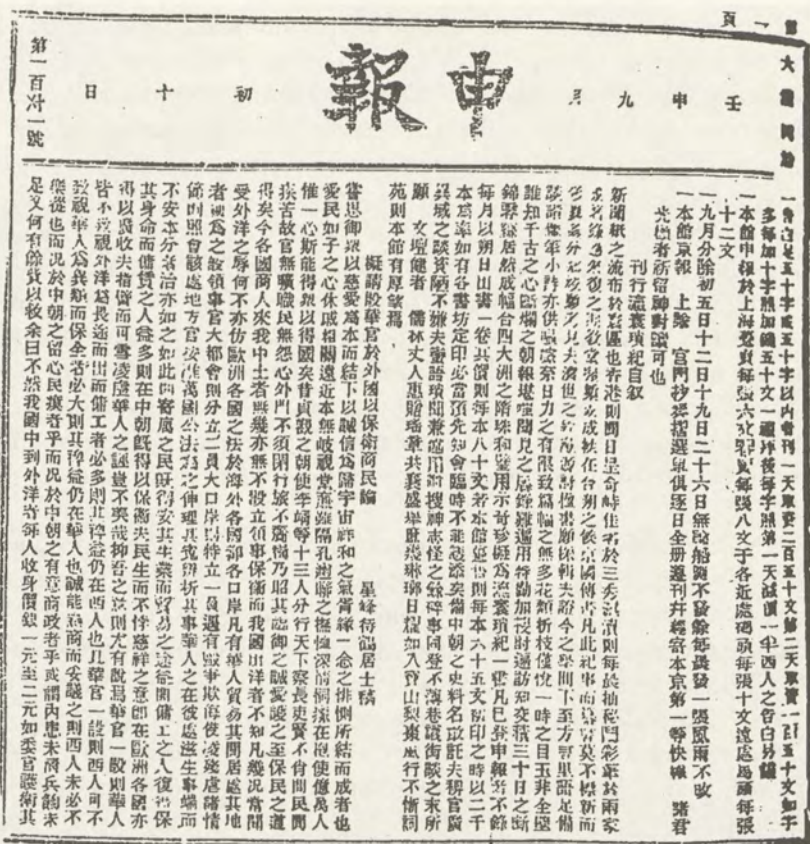


Fig. 1.2 The Chinese-style newspaper (SB 11.10.1872)

tuation generally,²¹ but in the first few years of publication, the articles were separated from each other by a large circle or a space after the heading, another practice adopted from the *jingbao*.

21. There were times when the *Shenbao* did feature punctuation in some sections, but these are the exceptions rather than the rule (there were several such intervals in the 1870s, one in October 1897, and another in October 1902). Newspapers such as the *Shibao* used punctuation marks from the start, and a few years after the turn of the twentieth century, the *Shenbao* introduced partial punctuation. According to Edward Gunn (*Rewriting Chinese*, 305), serials began adopting modern-style punctuation in 1918-19, but the daily press had clearly done so much earlier.

Foreign-style papers went beyond simply mimicking the format of the court newsletter, in yet another tactic of sinification: from the beginning, the *Jiaohui xinbao*,²² *Shanghai xinbao*, *Shenbao*, and *Xunhuan ribao*—and in their wake many other political, commercial, and missionary papers—reprinted parts or entire issues of the court gazette verbatim. In the fonts used in these foreign-style papers, the gazette was much more legible than it was in hastily done wax prints or woodblock prints of the traditional *jingbao* publishers. Moreover, especially after the introduction of the telegraph in 1881 and its use for the transmission of court announcements,²³ the *jingbao* reached readers much faster through the newspapers than it did through traditional paths.²⁴ Indeed, the *jingbao* constituted a substantial part of many newspapers' contents, in contrast to the marriage, death, and birth columns so prominent in the average Western newspapers at the time.

Another tactic of sinification was to adapt the periodicity to Chinese practices: both *Dianshizhai huabao* 點石齋畫報 and *Shiwubao* 時務報, for instance, appeared at intervals of ten days, following the Chinese division of the month into three 10-day segments, rather than the Western seven-day "week." And although the *Shenbao* imposed a foreign time scale, by not publishing on Sundays,²⁵ it used the Chinese calendar exclusively after its first few numbers. Only later, on 1 January 1875, did it resort to supplying both Chinese- and Western-style dates again.²⁶

22. On the decision not to publish the *jingbao* in the successor to the *Jiaohui xinbao*, the *Wanguo gongbao*, see Adrian A. Bennett, *Missionary Journalist*, 174.

23. The fact that foreign-style newspapers were willing to pay the high expenses of telegraphing court news and economized by not using the telegraph to transmit other news underlines the importance of these court news. Telegraphing became relatively cheap only after the foundation of the republic (Li Liangrong, *Zhongguo baozhi wenti fazhan gaiyao*, 11–12, 46).

24. On the desire of readers to see the *jingbao* as soon as possible, see the letters of Wang Kangnian (*Shuji*, 1: 745).

25. As a Shanghai newspaper, the *Shenbao* had no need to explain this practice. Sundays very quickly became a well-accepted institution in Shanghai. The *Shenbao*'s practice ended on 27.4.1879 with the publication of a first Sunday edition. This is bewailed by a later *Shenbao* reporter who complained that in Shanghai newspapermen alone had no day of rest (*Shenbao tongxun* 1947, no. 1/3: 9–10).

26. On 5.11.1911, after the Wuchang rebellion, the *Shenbao* used the Western calendar exclusively for a while, but this, too, was discontinued in favor of giving both dates (Xu and Xu, *Qingmo sishinian "Shenbao" shiliao*, 372).

Only slowly and gradually did some of the more traditional formal aspects change. A sweeping transformation came in 1904 with the foundation of *Shibao* 時報 in Shanghai.²⁷ This new paper, a modern broadsheet, influenced the format of the medium throughout China. It copied much of the layout and features of early Japanese newspapers such as *Hōchi shinbun* 報知新聞 (1897), and *Asahi shinbun* 朝日新聞 (1879).²⁸ It was obviously a paper for fast reading and consumption: it established the first page as the most prominent space for advertisements, it was arranged by clearly distinguishable categories, and it introduced a new form of short commentary, the *shiping* 時評 (timely criticisms), to replace the now old-fashioned *baguwen* 八股文 (examination essay) style editorial. While still including the *jingbao* and sometimes other official local newsletters, many commercial papers, including the *Shenbao* (see Fig. 1.3), followed the *Shibao*'s lead and adopted its layout eventually.²⁹ The Chinese book-style format was preserved only in (literary) journals and the new official newspaper publications such as the *Zhengzhi guanbao* 政治官報, founded in 1907.

When Wang Kangnian 汪康年 (1860–1911), a reformist official and journalist, had attempted the introduction of the broadsheet format with his *Zhongwai ribao* 中外日報 in 1898, he had not been successful (not unlike others before, such as the *Shanghai xinbao* in the early 1860s and the *Wanguo gongbao* in the late 1870s). Wang explains in his memoirs that by 1904 readers (in Shanghai!) had finally grown accustomed to this new format, however.³⁰ It was very slowly, then, that the introduction of the newspaper to China in fact inaugurated “a new world and a new mentality,” as the arrival of the printed book had done in Europe.³¹ Since the thinking of readers is guided and influ-

27. On *Shibao*, see Judge, *Print and Politics*; and Henriot, “Nouveau journalisme,” 23f. For the *Shenbao* reform in layout, see Vittinghoff, “Am Rande des Ruhms,” chap. 9.

28. These features are quite similar to those found in early Hong Kong papers. In the case of the *Shibao*, Japanese influence is probable as Liang Qichao, one of the co-founders, had spent a number of years in that country.

29. After closing for a week, the *Shenbao* reopened on 7.2.1905, with a new format modeled closely on that of *Shibao*; see Fig. 1.3.

30. His memoirs are discussed in detail in Janku, “Der Leitartikel in der frühen chinesischen Presse,” 131 and 249.

31. Febvre and Martin, *L'Apparition du livre*, 7 (preface by Paul Chalus).



Fig. 1.3 The first and second pages of the *Shenbao* before (top) and after (bottom) the reform (SB 31.1 and 7.2.1905)

enced by the format and presentation of the contents, changes in format and arrangement may in turn cause or reflect changes in the readers' mind-sets.³² The relatively slow pace of modifications in the formal aspects of Chinese newspapers reflects the strong adherence to a particular aesthetic prevalent among the readers of China's papers, an aesthetic that can be summarized in the well-known *tiyong* 體用 formula (Chinese learning as the substance, *ti*, and Western learning for application, *yong*, 中學為體, 西學為用). By downplaying the

32. Eisenstein, *Printing Revolution*, 64.

technical aspects (*yong*) of the foreign-style newspaper (speed and quality of typesetting with metal fonts and machine printing), which served to enhance what largely looked (and read) like a Chinese print product (*ti*), the newspapers employed the soothing powers of the familiar to buffer the potentially disorienting effects of changes coming with and through this new and alien medium.³³ More or less consciously, then, China's newspapermen utilized Chinese culture in reconfiguring the innards of the newspaper. Their respective successes and failures demonstrate that these adaptations were responsible for the survival of the press in China.³⁴

Missionary newspapers, commercial papers, and the political press adopted similar devices in tailoring the foreign medium to Chinese tastes.³⁵ All these newspapers won legitimacy not by insisting on being foreign and new but being old and Chinese. Their repeated claims of taking the Chinese stance and their many tactics of sinification are evidence of their lack of intrinsic authority even though they were published in the—allegedly modern—treaty ports. If I have shown in the Introduction that the argument for the new Chinese newspapers was based first on what they *should be* in the context of modernization according to the foreign model, this discussion of their formal makeup, which draws heavily on well-established Chinese conventions, is evidence, once more, of what they *could only be* in order to be effective in China: foreign newspapers in Chinese guise.

33. Eisenstadt (*Tradition, Wandel und Modernität*, 194) argues that traditional elements have the effect of a "tranquilizer" on the psyche.

34. Rudolf G. Wagner ("Ernest Major" and "Shenbaoguan zaoqi de shuji chuban") argues that in a similar manner, books published by Major's *Shenbao guan* imitated high-quality traditional imprints by, among other things, providing detailed prefaces and tables of contents while printing them on good paper in metal type in order to mark, simultaneously, the similarity and the difference of these products to their traditional origins.

35. This discussion shows that the traditional apparatus used to package the newspaper for the Chinese was not established by the reformist and revolutionary papers in the last decades of the Qing—as is usually assumed in PRC newspaper histories; rather, it was taken over from practices introduced much earlier by missionary and commercial papers.

*Chinese Form in the
Foreign-Style Newspaper: A Bestiary*

The literary training of the Chinese is fitted in no small degree for the production of a most efficient class of journalistic writers.

—George Lanning, 1912³⁶

In addition to these external “packaging devices,” a number of internal devices helped popularize the newspaper in China. One of them was the adaptation of Chinese literary genres to create a Chinese newspaper style. One could argue that the use of well-known literary forms by Chinese journalists may have been a matter of course, since every educated person had at one point learned to appreciate and write in certain literary styles.³⁷ The fact, however, that some of these patterns had been used earlier by missionaries, who had even been criticized by Chinese readers for not using them properly,³⁸ betrays that the use of a Chinese rather than a foreign style in writing the newspaper was yet another method for convincing the Chinese to accept it: the use of a familiar form of writing gives a certain predictability to a text, a sense of knowing what one is reading, which is important in the act of introducing something foreign, such as the newspaper.³⁹

This chapter provides a bestiary of Chinese newspaper prose written between 1872 and 1912. It is a common assumption that the late Qing produced a type of “newly fashioned ‘newspaper prose,’” *xin wenti*.⁴⁰ The creation of this prose is usually associated with Liang Qichao and the period when his writings were most avidly read, 1896–1916.⁴¹ The collection of examples presented here sets out to show that

36. Lanning, *Old Forces in New China*, 262.

37. See, e.g., Li Liangrong, *Zhongguo baozhi wenti fazhan gaiyao*; and Chen Pingyuan, “Bagu yu Ming-Qing guwen,” 341.

38. For the controversial debates on the writing style adapted by Young J. Allen in his *Jiaohui xinbao*, see Adrian A. Bennett, *Missionary Journalist*, 106ff.

39. Cf. Gunn, *Rewriting Chinese*, 20.

40. Nienhauser, “Prose,” 115.

41. All the common newspaper histories or essays dealing with this topic (see, e.g., Li Liangrong, *Zhongguo baozhi wenti fazhan gaiyao*; *Shanghai jindai wenxue shi*, chap. 2, pt. 2; and Nathan, “Liang Ch’i-Ch’ao’s ‘New-style Writing’”) agree that the development of *xin wenti* was a radical transformation and that it was fueled by the reformist and revolutionary press and culminated in the writing and particular style of Liang Qichao.

this newly fashioned newspaper prose indeed came into being during the late Qing, several decades before Liang Qichao. The chapter analyzes this prose and discusses how and to what extent it can be called a "new fashion." It shows that one of the key qualities of this prose was its literariness, even as there was a gradual transformation toward the modern (foreign) ideal of impersonal and objective newspaper prose. In tracing the traditional heritage and the contemporary usage in other forms of writing of many of the techniques and genres used for news and editorial writing in China's early newspapers and their perseverance over time, the chapter investigates the effects of this clever (if often unconsciously employed) packaging device on the perception of the newspaper in China.

The Editorial: Not Just One Type

The editorial or leading article deliberating matters of importance to the newspaper's readers is usually considered the heart of a Western newspaper; it is the mouthpiece, the personality, of the entire paper.⁴² The authoritative "we" in the editorial is supposed to reflect the power of the press to mold opinions on crucial questions. The *Shenbao* was the first Chinese-language paper to introduce the editorial as an integral part of its pages.⁴³ Indeed, it became famous for its editorials: it is assumed that these long, deliberative pieces were responsible for its immediate success in the first year, when it "competed away" the editorial-less *Shanghai xinbao*.⁴⁴ Whether the editorial made the crucial difference is difficult to prove. Nevertheless, a close reading of

42. See Drewry, *Concerning the Fourth Estate*, chap. 4; Nevins, "The Editorial as a Literary Form," 20; and Blake, "The Editorial."

43. On the background and significance of the *Shenbao* editorial and its English model, see Janku, "Der Leitartikel in der frühen chinesischen Presse." For a thorough study of *Shenbao* editorial rhetoric during the 100 Days Reform, see Janku, "Der Leitartikel der *Shenbao*."

44. *Shenbao shi bianxiezu*, "Chuangban chuqi de *Shenbao*," 142. Only in its last months of publication did *Shanghai xinbao* include (albeit short) deliberative pieces (*shuo* or *lun*), usually on its second page (see, e.g., "正本清源論" [On correcting the roots and clearing the springs], *SHXB* 30.11.1872; "多利爲害說" [On the harm of too much profit], *SHXB* 10.12.1872; "重道輕文說" [On emphasizing the way and making light of refinement], *SHXB* 24.12.1872; and "重利爲害論" [The harm of emphasizing profit], *SHXB* 25.12.1872).

Shenbao editorials allows us to uncover possible reasons for their particular appeal to the Chinese public. What shape did the editorial of this Western-style but Chinese-language newspaper take?

THE EIGHT-LEGGED ESSAY:

IN SEARCH OF AUTHORITY

In the days when the examination system and its backbone, the eight-legged essay (*baguwen*), came under increasing attack (the essay was briefly suspended during the 100 Days Reform in 1898, and finally abolished on 29.8.1901; the examination system lived on until the end of 1905),⁴⁵ contemporaries (and later newspaper historians) criticized the editorials in the *Shenbao* and its imitators as "eight-legged essays of the press."⁴⁶ Although this intentionally derogatory remark does not necessarily hint at the truth of the matter, numerous editorials in the *Shenbao* were indeed written in a form modeled on that of the eight-legged essay.

Baguwen (also called *shiwén* 時文 or *zhiyi* 制義) is a literary form with prominent parallel constructions⁴⁷ in which the writer assumes the pose of an ancient sage (*dai shengxian li yan* 代聖賢立言).⁴⁸ It is commonly traced back to the exegetical essays (*jingyi* 經義) on the Classics written for the state examinations during the Song (960–1271) that flourished during the Ming (1368–1644) and, since 1487, had been the standard style for the examination essay.⁴⁹ *Baguwen* in its ideal

45. Kuo Ping Wen, *The Chinese System of Public Education*, 85. In 1901, a short essay on a current topic was substituted for the traditional *baguwen* essay. The most comprehensive history of the examination system is Elman, *A Cultural History of Civil Examinations*. On the genesis of *baguwen*, see particularly 380–83.

46. See, e.g., Bao Tianxiao, *Chuangyonglou*, 317. See also Li Liangrong, *Zhongguo baozhi wenti fazhan gaiyao*, 20, which emphasizes the inadequacies of *baguwen* for writing editorials on contemporary subjects; and Janku, "Nur leere Reden," 6, esp. 117.

47. The use of parallelisms is to be distinguished from that in *piantiwen* 駢體文. *Baguwen* did not employ the four-character, six-character form prescribed for *piantiwen*, nor did it have rhyme or tonal rules. For an elaboration, see Andrew Lo, "Four Examination Essays."

48. Qi Gong, *Shuo bagu*, 33; and Elman, *A Cultural History of Civil Examinations*, 396, esp. 182.

49. See Plaks, "Pa-ku wen"; Nienhauser, "Prose," 113; Li Liangrong, *Zhongguo baozhi wenti fazhan gaiyao*, 18; Tu Ching-I, "Chinese Examination Essay," esp.

form consists of eight sections, including a preface and a conclusion.⁵⁰ The *poti* 破體 (breaking open the topic) reveals the writer's knowledge of the source of the essay title, which was posed in the examination question. The writer may not directly cite the full passage from which the quotation is drawn and he may not, most important, cite the names of important sages. The *chengti* 承題 (carrying forward the topic)—although not yet disclosing the complexity of the following sections—elaborates on the statements in the *poti* and explains the examination question. To mark this explanatory character of the *chengti*, it begins with topic markers such as *fu* 夫 or *gai* 蓋 and ends with particles such as *er* 耳, *ye* 也, or *yan* 焉. In this section, the names of the sages may be mentioned. *Poti* and *chengti* are thus closely related and serve as evocation and affirmation of what the sage was saying.

They are followed by the *qijiang* 起講 (opening statement), an introductory declaration of substantial length, usually in the author's voice. Here, he highlights and outlines the major topics dealt with in the four legs of the essay. This part may conclude with a digression (*lingti* 領題, "leading to the subject of the essay") and is followed by the main argument in four *gu* 股 (legs), frequently featuring parallel constructions, analogies, and contrasts. The *qigu* 起股 (beginning leg) ideally contains two parallel paragraphs that briefly spell out the topic. The *xiaogu* 小股 (little leg) is a short interlude before the argumentative climax of the essay and does not have to be in parallel structure. The *zhonggu* 中股 (middle leg) presents the major ideas in parallel paragraphs and is followed by the *hougu* 後股 (back leg), which includes a number of afterthoughts on the argumentation and leads to the conclusion (*dajie* 大結).

394–96; and Wang Kaifu, *Baguwen gaishuo*. For a selection of original essays, see Zottoli, *Cursus litteraturae sinicae*.

50. The structure cited here follows Wang Kaifu, *Baguwen gaishuo*, 5–14; Tu Ching-I, "Chinese Examination Essay"; and Zottoli, *Cursus litteraturae sinicae*. They describe one model of the *bagu* style; the theory was followed more or less strictly in practice. There was apparently no standard terminology; for different versions, see Li Liangrong, *Zhongguo baozhi wenti fazhan gaiyao*, 19; Liu Zhaobin, *Qingdai keju*; Jin and Zhang, *Shuo bagu*; Kao, "Rhetoric," 125; Alt, "The Eight-Legged Essay," esp. 166; and Andrew Lo, "Four Examination Essays." None of these works cites sources for the structural patterns they give, which were *baguwen* handbooks such as Liang Zhangju's *Zhiyi congbua*, for example, discussed in Elman, *A Cultural History of Civil Examinations*, 401.

There had been frequent criticism of the rigidity of form and content of *baguwen* at least since the early Qing, most famously in Wu Jingzi's 吳敬梓 (1701-54) *The Scholars* (*Rulin waishi* 儒林外史). *Bagu* eventually became the scapegoat for everything in the traditional education system among the reformists and the revolutionaries.⁵¹ Liang Qichao, in his "On Young China" ("Shaonian Zhongguo shuo" 少年中國說), which appeared in the *Qingyibao* 清議報 in 1900, excoriates officials "chanting a score of *bagu*." Ironically, however, this essay itself resembles a *baguwen* in structure.⁵² The same can be said for the *Shenbao*. It, too, published articles denouncing those writing *bagu* as sycophant careerists. On the other hand, the same article may go on to defend the form and compare *bagu*, in a hackneyed metaphor, to the perfect human organism, while many a *Shenbao* editorial is modeled on this form.⁵³ *Bagu* was simply a habit of all educated writers in China, it was a cultural form written by all classically literate men, and accordingly it is not surprising to find that many editorials in the *Shenbao* are reminiscent of *bagu*.⁵⁴

The topic of an 1873 editorial to be analyzed presently, "On the Establishment of Newspapers in Different Countries" ("Lun geguo xinbao zhi she" 論各國新報之設, SB 18.8.1873), is quite clearly not a quota-

51. *Baguwen* has come to stand for empty formalism, for saying nothing at great length and with tiresome posturing. For a study of such criticisms, see Ropp, *Dissent in Early Modern China*; Alt, "The Eight-Legged Essay"; Elman, *A Cultural History of Civil Examinations*, esp. 380-81; and Liu Haifeng, "Baguwen wei shenme yanyongle wubai yu nian?" Rui Magone of the Freie Universität Berlin, whose help with this section of the chapter is gratefully acknowledged, has been engaged for some years on a still unpublished study of *baguwen* as a genre and its (ab)use as a negative metaphor.

52. For an analysis, see Nathan, "Liang Ch'i-Ch'ao's 'New-Style Writing,'" esp. 5-19 and n22.

53. "八股辨" (In defense of *bagu*), SB 6.8.1898. For other critiques of *bagu*, see "論讀書" (On education), SB 30.6.1875; "宜亟振興西學議" (Discussing the appropriateness of establishing Western-style schools with urgency), SB 10.1.1892; and "講開西學特科議" (A discussion on teaching Western subjects as special courses), SB 23.3.1902, mentioned in Chapter 2. See further the ambivalent views on the usefulness or not of including *bagu*-style editorials in the *Shenbao* in "與申報館論申報紙格式鄙見" (My unworthy views in talking with the *Shenbao* company on the formal arrangements of the *Shenbao*), SB 13.3.1875.

54. For the pervasive influence of *bagu* as a form in Ming and Qing prose writing, see Chen Pingyuan, "Bagu yu Ming-Qing guwen"; and Elman, *A Cultural History of Civil Examinations*, 383.

tion from the Classics.⁵⁵ In length, too, this editorial does not abide by the rules: *bagu* essays seldom exceed 600 characters.⁵⁶ At 41 lines of 36 characters each, the editorial is not only long for a *baguwen* but almost twice as long as the usual *Shenbao* editorial (20–30 lines). Some paragraphs with the required parallel passages have been significantly extended. But despite a number of striking differences between a *baguwen* and this editorial, the structure of a *baguwen* can be discerned, helping the reader follow the argument. The editorial begins: “There is no one who does not know that Yao, Shun, Yu, and Tang were sagely rulers. There is no one who does not know that Jie, Zhou, You, and Li were brutal princes. What is the reason for this?” (l. 1).

This would be an effective—if unorthodox—beginning for an examination essay. The doubled negative “there is no one who does not know” and the parallel structure of the two sentences, which end in an opposition, make for a strong rhetorical effect. At first glance, then, this beginning is sufficiently spectacular to qualify as a well-written *poti* aimed at grabbing the examiner’s attention. And yet, it is not quite a proper *poti*. In violation of the rules, the names of the most famous wise and tyrannical rulers in Chinese history are mentioned. Furthermore, the paragraph ends with a *tiwen* 提問, a question posed by an author to himself for purposes of exposition.⁵⁷ It is also a question to the implied reader: what is it that makes the government of one ruler sagely and that of another dictatorial? Somehow, the author makes up for the fact that he was not given a classical quotation as a topic. His *poti* is in effect a combination of the quotation—the question mark of the examiner—and an attempt at “breaking open the topic.”

The following section, begins, as a *chengti* must, with an explanatory *gai* 蓋 (as for).⁵⁸ And, as a *chengti* must, this passage illuminates the bold statement that precedes it.⁵⁹ Yao, Shun, Yu, and Tang are separately praised in parallel sentences.

55. For a fuller analysis of this editorial, see pt. 4, “Writing an Editorial in China,” in Mittler, “Domesticating an Alien Medium.”

56. Plaks, “Pa-ku wen,” 641; Elman, *A Cultural History of Civil Examinations*, 407.

57. For examples, see Kao, “Rhetoric.”

58. See Wang Kaifu, *Baguwen gaishuo*, 7–8.

59. In the *chengti*, the names, which are omitted in the exam question and in the *poti*, appear for the first time. The reader is here told to what or to whom the passage alludes.

Now—

As for Yao, he daily consulted with the [chiefs of the]
four mountains,⁶⁰

As for Shun, he was keen on scrutinizing even
shallow statements,

Yu heard good words and revered them.

As for Tang, he was not slow to correct [his] mistakes.

As for the four sages, there was not one who did not
listen to and follow the words of others. (ll. 1-3)

Again, the author uses doubled negation for good effect (“there was not one who did not listen to the words of others”). For through this doubled negation, it becomes clear that the four villains, Jie, Zhou, You, and Li, introduced in the following lines, all “did not listen to the words of others.” Had they done so, the author concludes—and he uses the proper particle, *ye*,⁶¹ to end the *chengti*—even they could have “changed for the better” (l. 4).

These two initial sections, corresponding roughly to the *poti* and *chengti* in *baguwen*, are closely related. The author takes the affirmative pose of an imaginary sage. It is made clear that a government in which two-way communication is possible is good, as is the ruler who listens to criticisms from near and far. A *chengti* usually does not disclose the complexity of the following sections. And this *chengti* certainly does not, for the elaborate discussion that follows, in format close to a *qijiang*, ventures into different territory. It deals with the function and the effects of the newspaper in the West.

In antithetical parallel structure, it is explained that the newspaper serves as a tool of remonstrance (l. 5) and that it can give rise to national prosperity (ll. 7-8). The constant repetition of *xinwenzhi* 新聞紙 (newspaper), *xingwang* 興旺 (prosperity), *xinwen* 新聞 (news), and *yi* 益 (benefit) in this section is striking. By their very frequency, these words are not only effectively emphasized but also form a kind of hypnotic staccato that induces the reader to acknowledge their close connection and interdependence or even the interchangeability of

60. Each of these is an allusion to a passage in the Classics: for Yao, see *Shangshu* I.III.11ff; for Shun, *Zhongyong* (Doctrine of the Mean) 6; for Yu, *Mencius* 4B20; and for Tang, *Shangshu* IV.II and VII. I thank Rudolf G. Wagner for pointing these sources out to me.

61. Cf. Wang Kaifu, *Baguwen gaishuo*, 7-8.

these three words. This is most evident in lines 9 and 10 where these key words are coupled with a rhetorical figure called *lian zhu* 聯珠, a doubling of characters at the end and beginning of a phrase: "news can lead to prosperity; prosperity can increase news" (*xinwen neng yi zhi xingwang, xingwang yu yi duo xinwen* 新聞能以致興旺, 興旺愈以多新聞也). With these words, the author who—as is to be expected in the *qijiang*—first appears on the stage here, answers a question posed by a fictitious interlocutor (ll. 8–9).⁶² The partner in the dialogue is the potential reader. In stubborn opposition he interrogates the author. The dialogue deliberately allows for some of the more ridiculous prejudices against the newspaper to be articulated (ll. 10–11) in a way that ensures that a real reader would immediately disclaim any notion of sharing such ideas, while buying the rest of the argument. All the while, the author sets up the main argument by stating that the newspaper alone is a guarantee of good government and national prosperity (ll. 11–14). His technique of belittling some of the conceivable counterarguments, coupled with the use of hypnotic language, emphasizes his superiority and serves to convince the reader of the naïveté of what may well have been the reader's own assumptions.

The editorial *qijiang* ends with a digression (a *lingti*) which is marked, characteristically, with *qie* 且, "moreover" (l. 14). The author provides statistical tidbits and anecdotes from newspaper history in England and Japan. He mentions that the first newspaper founded in England was not even a third the size of the *Shenbao* (l. 15), and that newspapermen had originally devised ambitiously large formats but had no news to fill the available space (l. 16). This is illustrated by the story of a Nagasaki publisher "scratching his head" (l. 17) because for days he had not received enough news to be able to publish a paper. Nevertheless, the author concludes, there are now many (and bigger than ever before) newspapers in London with a circulation of more than 100,000 and a yearly budget of several 100,000 *liang* (ll. 18–19). In

62. The use of this type of dialogue in an argument is a well-established tradition and appears frequently in classical texts (e.g., *Lunyu*, *Zhuangzi*, and *Yantie-lun*, to name a few; for further discussion, see Janku, "Nur leere Reden," 154). Argumentative dialogue had occurred earlier in many missionary newspapers. A similar style of news in dialogue can also be found in the Western press at least since the eighteenth century (see the example in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, s.v. "Periodicals," 18: 540).

these two sections, the editorial conforms rather closely to the rules for a *qijiang*. Although some comic relief is provided in the transitional *lingti* section, all the major topics of the four legs of the essay have been sketched: the newspaper is the necessary precondition for good government and national prosperity because it connects those above and below by giving voice to their mutual criticisms.

The next section, corresponding to the *qigu* in *baguwen*, contains three parallel paragraphs (ll. 20–21, 23, 24) that develop the topics alluded to in the *qijiang*: it is salutary to the nation to create an informed public directly connected to those who rule. By providing information about everything to everyone and by granting space for anyone to voice grievances and critiques, the newspaper makes this possible. This point is urged on by the gradated use of doubled negatives. From the somewhat hesitant statement “that the newspaper is beneficial to the world is indeed not mistaken” 新聞紙之有益於世誠不謬 (ll. 21–22), the author concludes that the newspaper is, indeed, “something one cannot do without” 不可無爲 (ll. 23–24).

What follows is a *xiaogu* of sorts, a digression that, in *bagu*, builds on material from the *qigu*. It contains two parallel constructions (ll. 24–25, 27) and further explains the benefits of communication between ruler and ruled through the newspaper by using cautionary examples from Chinese history of times that the “road of speech” had been blocked. Whereas in the *qigu* section the perspective of the ruled was emphasized—those who would use the newspaper to contact their rulers—in this section the viewpoint is that of the rulers who would fear the newspaper. Doubled negatives again play a prominent role: among good rulers, the author argues, there is *not one* who is *not* happy to see the newspaper flourish 無不喜有新聞紙 (ll. 24–25). The paragraph ends with an analogy (parallel passages are marked in italics).

Of old, [some of] the rulers of the Western countries, too, feared that it [the newspaper] might not be convenient to them and wished to stop it. Someone made an analogy and said: “Compare it with flowing water.

*The great Gun built a dam, and it overflowed,
Yu [his son, the founder of the Xia] let the water go,
and it ran peacefully.*

Now if you wished to stop up the spring and hinder its flow, then its power will become wilder and all the more worrisome. This is not as good a tactic as clearing the spring and guiding the flow.” (ll. 26–28)

This water analogy was a well-established (and still frequently used) trope for the power of public opinion in Chinese writings.⁶³ The potential danger of the newspaper to the ruler is downplayed by the suggestion of “clearing the spring” and “guiding the flow.” The use of “clear” (*qing* 清) for the spring (*yuan* 源) suggests a connection with the disinterested, “clear” official, the *qingguan* 清官, hailed and heard by good rulers but muted and condemned for his remonstrations by evil ones. This traditional idea of conveying disinterested truth, part of the idealized critical tradition and thus an idea strong in cultural capital, is here applied to the newspaper. The reader must conclude that any ruler who turns against the newspaper is by definition not one of the sages hailed in the first lines of the editorial. He is, rather, one of the brutal and incompetent princes bewailed there.

The main body of the essay, corresponding to the *zhonggu* in *baguwen*, contains several parallel paragraphs (ll. 30, 33, 34, 35). The theoretical argument formulated at the beginning of the article—that a good ruler who wishes to bring prosperity to his country has to be willing to listen to remonstrance and is dependent on critics—is taken up and applied to present-day China. The flourishing of the West because of the existence of newspapers had been established in the *qijiang*-like section and was fleshed out in the first two legs of the essay. It is now juxtaposed to the situation in China. China’s newspapers are condemned for not publishing proper criticism. What criticisms they do publish are always directed toward other countries but not against local politics and officials (l. 30).⁶⁴ Why? China’s officials are said to hate the newspapers 各官之惡新聞紙也. They are constantly restricting newspapers, and even the mere transmission of news is turned into a capital crime (l. 32). After this denunciation of the present, the author zooms back to China’s glorious past:

Now, China: it is a country of great cultural heritage. How happy for scholars and nobles to be able to live there.

63. A prominent contemporary example is the controversial television series *Heshang* 河殤 (River elegy), especially the section on floods and other disasters. The historical background for the statement appears in chapter 2 of the *Shiji* and in the “Hongfan” chapter of the *Book of Documents*.

64. The *Shenbao*, on the contrary (and indeed many other Chinese-language newspapers, too, as we will see), does precisely that: its pages are filled with ideophobic rather than xenophobic reporting; see Chapter 6.

*Daily they penetrate into the teachings of the wise
and the sagely,
daily they recite from the books old and new.
[Yet] why is it that they do not take Yao, Shun,
Yu and Tang as their example,
and that instead they make Jie, Zhou, You and Li
their model?* (ll. 32-34)

The ironic question in the second antithetical parallel sentence picks up on the statement made in the editorial *poti*. Although they can distinguish good and bad rulers, China's officials still have a weakness for the bad! Yet, in spite of their corruption, the author is convinced that the truth is bound to come out: "*They might be able to deceive their own times, but they will not be able to deceive later generations*" (l. 35).

The editorial *zhonggu* continues to belabor this point that China's contemporary officials are akin to Jie, Zhou, You, and Li. The construction of this section is exactly antithetical to the one in the *chengti*. There, positive rulers are said to have sent out reports all over the country, to have welcomed inquiries, revered good words, and corrected their mistakes. But the negative rulers "go against" (*fan* 反) all these methods of good government. The activities of these negative rulers are exposed in intricate detail: they hate newspapers, want to burn publishing houses, and persecute journalists; they are afraid that people are discussing their mistakes and thus they ban unofficial histories and private books, in contrast to sage-rulers, who always worked to ensure the truthful transmission of historical facts. This mirroring effectively presents the enormous difference between the ideal (as put forth in the *chengti*) and the real (as described in the *zhonggu*). Accordingly, the editorial *zhonggu* also ends with an exclamatory *qi* question (*qi you ci li* 豈有此理, "How could there be such a thing?"), which characteristically appears in classical Chinese when something distinctly outrageous has been discussed: "How could it be such [that is, it simply cannot be] that the Chinese rulers do not know of this [the outrageous censoring of newspapers] and say it is just a rumor from the streets that none would believe?" (ll. 36-37).

The editorial *zhonggu* thus connects the statements in the editorial *poti* and *chengti* about the virtues and vices of ancient rulers with the main argument: the necessity of having newspapers to ensure prosperity and good government in China. As is typical of a *zhonggu*, this section provides the first answers to the questions posed at the begin-

ning.⁶⁵ The editorial *zhonggu* depicts a China ruled by the likes of Jie and Zhou even though “everybody knows” how bad they are.

The outrage at this state of affairs is taken up in the editorial *hougu*. It begins, typically, with *ruo yan* 若言, “if one were to say,”⁶⁶ and contains two parallel paragraphs (ll. 37–38, 38–39). The first, cleverly constructed paragraph stresses the impossibility of suppressing public opinion:

It is questionable whether

if it were possible to prohibit newspapers in the Chinese language,

it would then be possible to prohibit newspapers in Western languages [in China];

if indeed it were possible to prohibit newspapers in Western languages,

it would then be possible to prohibit completely public feeling from filling the streets. (ll. 37–38)⁶⁷

The publication of both Chinese- and Western-language papers was concentrated in the treaty ports. Although there were constant conflicts between the Chinese authorities and the publishers of both Chinese- and Western-language newspapers, a degree of real and an even greater degree of imagined protection was guaranteed by the treaty powers. In 1873, when this editorial was written, the prohibition of Chinese-language papers was not an everyday occurrence,⁶⁸ and the suppression of a Western-language-paper must have seemed an absolute impossibility. These lines start with something rarely seen and graduate to something inconceivable. Only thus does the subject

65. Wang Kaifu, *Baguwen gaishuo*, 10.

66. The *hougu* often begins with a conjunctive phrase such as *ruo ci* 若此, “if it is such”; *shigu* 是故, “for this reason”; *huo wei* 或謂, “someone says”; or *qie* 且, “moreover” (Wang Kaifu, *Baguwen gaishuo*, 11).

67. The similarities between this argument and that made by a foreign contemporary, Albert Schäffle, shows how much the newspaper in China was indebted to its foreign origins even if it was sinified. Schäffle argues that public opinion cannot be stopped: “Prohibit all newspapers, the public sphere will choose public streets. Scatter all groups gathered for small talk in public, the public sphere will take place in private salons, in the families, or in business circles among naturally cooperating masses of society” (*Bau und Leben des sozialen Körpers*, 448).

68. The turbulence around the succession of papers associated with the Shanghai circuit intendants (*daotai*) beginning in 1874, *Xinbao* 新報, *Yibao* 益報, and the two *Huibao* (匯報 and 彙報), tells a different story, but that happened after this editorial was written. See Vittinghoff, “Useful Knowledge and Appropriate Communication,” and *ibid.*, “Am Rande des Ruhms.”

of the final clause, the suppression of public opinion in the streets (which was, in fact, perfectly conceivable in the Chinese case), become an absurdity.

The movement from a rarity to the unimaginable is further supported by the formal structure of the argument. The paragraph consists of four lines, which appear to be neat parallelisms, even in terms of the wording. Only a small number of characters are changed in consecutive lines. This unity is deceptive, however. First, there is a subtle growth in the number of characters per line (7, 9, 9, 11); more and more conjunctions and question words (underlined in the quotation) are incorporated into the parallel passages, a technique that offsets the metrical balance. Second, the number of newly introduced characters increases greatly toward the end, when the inevitable force of public opinion is invoked. Although the use of rhetorical questions alone would have been forceful enough, these changes in what appears to be a strict and straightforward parallel construction, however faint at first but growing ever more explicit toward the end, buttress the content of this paragraph. Readers' expectations to the contrary, the parallelism is skewed; officials' beliefs notwithstanding, public opinion cannot be suppressed.

The second parallel paragraph introduces a historical element. The negative present featured prominently in the *zhonggu* is contrasted with a golden age in which ruler and ruled were still in contact and in which rulers were still interested in the thoughts and ideas of the ruled and their criticisms. Thus, this paragraph refers back to the editorial *poti* and *chengti* not by comparison as done in the *zhonggu* but by a temporal analogy.

In a moderate polemic, the article finally returns to the present situation, a common practice in the conclusion (*dajie*) of a proper *baguwen*. The editorial *dajie* sums up by restating the advantages of the newspaper: it is useful because everybody can learn everything that happens immediately, conveniently, and truthfully. Experienced and broad-minded scholars ought to be aware of this. And yet, they act otherwise. Why? The author cites a passage from *Mencius* 孟子 (4B9): "What future misery have they and ought they to endure, who talk of what is not good in others?" (l. 40).⁶⁹ Thus, he sympathizes with his

69. Trans. follows Legge, *Chinese Classics*, 1: 321. Lau, *Mencius*, 129, has: "Think of the consequences before you speak of the shortcomings of others." This belief

fellow newspapermen, who exercise too much caution in order to avoid censorship. Nevertheless, he concludes with the rhetorical question if all sides acted with truthfulness, how could the newspaper not be of use to all? (l. 41).

The author employs a number of tactics to persuade the reader of the necessity of introducing more newspapers to China and of reforming those already in existence. One of these tactics is the constant alternation between the dubious and the certain. Certainly, the editorialist states, everyone knows that Yao and Shun were good rulers. Certainly, anyone who wants to suppress news has selfish goals. Certainly, newspapers benefit the world. Certainly, reckless officials will not succeed in deceiving later generations. The frequent use of rhetorical questions supports this affirmative type of argumentation: public opinion simply cannot be suppressed. And yet, even in these hyperbolic statements the author is cautious not to overdo his case; his use of doubled negatives and questions leaves room for doubt—if only seemingly. Thus, the reader is made to accept the author's ethos: he never openly appears too positive and arrogant, but neither is he unsure or unconvincing.

The author's attempt at suasion also works through the logic of his argumentation. Two centuries ago there were few newspapers and little prosperity; today, there are many newspapers, and prosperity reigns throughout the Western countries. One must be linked to the other—a connection emphasized by repeating words such as *xinwenzhi* (newspaper), *xingwang* (prosperity), *xinwen* (news), and *yi* (benefit). Moreover, the dialogue in the sections reminiscent of *chengti* and *qijiang* takes up the questions of the implied reader. This device makes him and his arguments an integral part of the text while subtly guiding him to the author's conclusions. Last but not least, the adherence to the argumentation and rhetoric of *baguwen*, familiar to reader and author alike, helps create a sense of agreement between the sender and the receiver of this text. The very form provides the editorial and its logic with authoritative weight: *bagu* essays were, after all, envisaged as representing the voice of the sages. Thus, the allusion to

may have been one of the reasons why the acceptance of journalism took so long in China. Nathan, "The Late Ch'ing Press," 1288, quotes a similar argument from Bao Tianxiao's reminiscences. For a reconsideration of journalists' status, see Vittinghoff, "Am Rande des Ruhms."

this familiar and authoritative form avoids the alienation that could have occurred if the author's arguments had been proffered in the less respectable or simply incomprehensible form of a foreign model.

Apart from engaging the mind-set of readers, the author also appeals to their emotions through the use of antithetical contrasts, a well-established practice in Chinese rhetoric. The sorry state of China in the present is set against the flourishing West and China's own golden age. The description of heartless, deceitful officials, the repeated complaints that China's newspapers are neglecting to fulfill their proper function, and the constant repetition of incredulous questions in the manner of "How could this be?"—all of this is meant to move, to impress, to alarm readers. Readers' emotions are also captured by the use of anecdotes, sayings, and strange tales, by the choice of elegant parallel constructions, surprising conclusions, and familiar quotations and analogies from the Classics. In all these rhetorical moves, the editorialist attempts to gain authority.

Although *baguwen* was an apt choice to write the most authoritative text in a newspaper—the editorial—not all editorials followed the rules of *baguwen* even as loosely as the one analyzed above. Other forms were available to editorial writers. Indeed, although certain forms were used more frequently than others, there was no such thing as "the editorial" in Chinese newspapers of this era.⁷⁰ The lengthy pieces at the front of the *Shenbao*⁷¹ came in many different forms, variously called *lun* 論, *shuo* 說, *fu* 賦, *pian* 篇, *zhe* 摺, *ji* 記, *bian* 辨.⁷² They were written by, among others, the manager, Ernest Major himself, longtime editor Huang Xiexun 黃協燦 (1852–1924),⁷³ and outside correspondents (identified or not). On occasion, the newspaper even printed documents written by court officials. Whatever its form or

70. Li Liangrong (*Zhongguo baozhi wenti fazhan gaiyao*, 27) argues that editorials in general are reminiscent of earlier *shilun* 史論 (historical discussions). This is true for some forms of editorials, such as the *lun* and to a lesser extent the *shuo*, and for later commentaries, such as the *shiping*. But it does not apply as well to *ji* or *shu* and other such personalized forms discussed below.

71. After 1902 the editorial habitually appeared on the second page of the newspaper, and the first was devoted exclusively to advertisements.

72. Most of these forms are mentioned as editorial genres by *Shenbao* editor Huang Xiexun in "整頓報務餘言" (A few remaining words on the reform of the newspaper), *SB* 24.8.1898. Quite a number (esp. *shuo*, *ji*, and *lun*) also occur on the pages of the *Shanghai xinbao*.

73. For Huang's biography, see Janku, "Nur leere Reden," chap. 1.

author, however, the editorial more often than not concerned statecraft and politics. From the very beginning, when *Shenbao* was a Western-managed newspaper, editorials voiced the reformist or revolutionary ideas usually associated with the writings and newspapers of Kang Youwei 康有為 (1858–1927) and Liang Qichao that did not appear until two or three decades later. The “new citizen” (*xinmin* 新民), bicycles and railways, new ways of birth control and of disaster management, women’s education, the abolition of prostitution, and the formation of a parliament were broached in *Shenbao* long before they became the concerns of late Qing reformers. As the following survey will make clear, new concepts such as these were presented to good effect in the Chinese-language newspaper by making use of a variety of well-known stylistic traits and genres—those traditionally established and still being used for political communications at the time.

EDITORIAL LUN:

DEBATING FATE

The *baguwen*-style editorial discussed above, “On the Establishment of Newspapers in Different Countries,” was called a *lun*. A *lun* is a (political) discursive genre dating back as early as the *Xunzi* 荀子 (c. 3rd century BCE). It replaced the dialogues in earlier works such as the *Mengzi* (trad. 372–289 BCE).⁷⁴ The earliest essays on literature mention the *lun* as a genre. In the *Prose Poem on Literature* (*Wenfu* 文賦) by Lu Ji 陸機 (261–303), it is described as *jingwei langchang* 精微朗暢 (treating essentials and fine points lucidly and expansively).⁷⁵ This interpretation is largely followed in *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons* (*Wenxin diaolong* 文心雕龍) of Liu Xie 劉勰 (465–522):

Lun means to take into consideration a variety of statements for the purpose of examining minutely a specific idea. . . .

74. Nienhauser, “Prose,” 100. Jia Yi (賈誼, 200–168 BCE) further developed and codified the form in his “Guo Qin lun” 過秦論 (The faults of the Qin), which is often considered the first true discursive essay (see Nienhauser, “Prose,” 101; and Kao, “Rhetoric,” 121).

75. *The Literary Mind*, chap. 19; Achilles Fang, “Rhyme Prose on Literature,” 12; trans. from Owen, *Readings*, 130.

As a genre (*ti*), the *lun* performs the function of establishing what is true and what is not. It goes over all available tangible evidence and pursues truth to the realm of the intangible.⁷⁶

In an 1897 essay on newspaper genres, published in *Shiwubao*, the reformer Tan Sitong 譚嗣同 (1865–98), who would later die for his convictions at the end of the 100 Days Reforms, still credited the *lun* with the authority to judge between right and wrong (*lun shi fei* 論是非).⁷⁷ Into the late Qing, *lun* remained an established genre of political critique—often from outside the established bureaucracy.⁷⁸

These rather vague definitions describe the contents but give no straightforward structural criteria for identifying a *lun*. This is partly due to the fact that unlike the examination essay, exemplary *lun* (and many of the genres studied below) would be collected in popular anthologies such as Hanlin scholar Yao Nai's 姚鼐 (1732–1815) *Classified Anthology of Classical Prose* (*Guwenci leizuan* 古文辭類纂), first completed in 1779 but not published until 1820, and, 40 years later, in 1860, Zeng Guofan's 曾國藩 (1811–72) *Selection of Texts from the Classics, the Histories, and the Hundred Philosophers* (*Jingshi baijia zachao* 經史百家雜鈔) but never became the subject of formal schoolbook introductions.⁷⁹ The following discussion therefore focuses less on a predictable structure and more on common stylistic characteristics to be found in *Shenbao*'s editorial *lun* and derived from traditional templates, in order to illustrate how these texts used traditional formal elements to reach out to readers.

Editorial *lun* typically begin with an axiomatic statement—the words of a sage, so to speak—which is then proved with illustrative examples. They usually conclude with an expression of hope that readers will act according to the truth set out in the axiom.⁸⁰ All these

76. *The Literary Mind*, 140–41, 143.

77. Tan, "Baozhang wenti shuo."

78. Janku, "Nur leere Reden," 17, 120; and idem, "Der Leitartikel in der frühen chinesischen Presse," 119–20.

79. For a discussion of *lun* anthologies and their influence on newspaper writing, see Janku, "Nur leere Reden," 119–21. She shows that, among others, Zeng Guofan's text includes the "Great Plan" chapter from the *Book of Documents*, which, as we have already seen (and more examples follow in Chapter 2, e.g., *SB* 20.1.1902), is cited time and again in *Shenbao* articles.

80. A short survey of a number of *Shenbao lun* illustrates the constancy of this formal arrangement: a *lun* of 1907, "On the Many Words for 'Public' in the

are patterns also to be found in the anthologized *lun* mentioned above.⁸¹ Indeed, although argumentation and rhetorical techniques differ from one example to the next, almost all the techniques applied in editorial *lun* ultimately derive from a traditional canon.

“On Strange Stories from India and France” (“Lun Yindu Faguo er-chu chuanlai qitan” 論印度法國二處傳來奇談, *SB* 9.11.1877),⁸² an 1877 editorial *lun*, addresses the question of how to deal with famines and epidemics caused by overpopulation.⁸³ The editorial gives a number of

Mouths of the Chinese” (“論中國人口中多公名詞,” *SB* 5.3.1907), complains that the abundance of words for *gong* 公 (public) does not prevent the Chinese from acting selfishly (*si* 私). The editorial begins with the statement of a Western sociologist: “If you want to know the state of people’s morality, you just have to look at the words these people spit out” 欲知人之道德如何, 當觀人所吐之名詞如何. After numerous examples, it concludes with a call for rectification of names (*zhengming* 正名): the Chinese ought to change their hearts and mirror their words in their actions. Ten years earlier, in 1897, the *lun* “On the Hardships of Courtesans in Shanghai” (“論滬上妓女之苦,” *SB* 12.1.1897; this article is discussed further below, in the section on *shu*, and again in Chapter 4) begins with the statement “Among women in the world, the courtesans are the most despised and have the bitterest life” and ends with the hope that the profession be eradicated altogether in order to relieve them of their bitter fate. Similarly, “On How to Train Talent” (“論造就人才,” *SB* 2.4.1892; this article is discussed again in Chapter 2) begins with the well-known statement “Mankind is separated into four different kinds; the scholars are the first, the peasants, workers, and merchants the next three.” It argues for universal education and concludes that if the author’s suggestions are acted on, everlasting success is guaranteed. Ten years earlier, in 1882, “On Bitterness Within Happiness” (“論樂中苦境,” *SB* 11.2.1882), a tirade against morals (or, rather, the lack of them) in Shanghai (for a number of similar articles, see Chapter 5), begins with a statement that human life is a search for happiness, followed by a quote from the ancient sages. It argues that happiness is relative and closes with the hope that people will avoid Shanghai, where extreme happiness carries the danger of bitterness. Li Liangrong (*Zhongguo baozhi wenti fazhan gaiyao*, 21–22) describes the general structure of an editorial as follows: (1) words of the sage (or an aphorism), (2) discussion, (3) example(s) from reality, and (4) reasons and proof for the words of the sage. He says that a smaller number of editorials (according to my findings, these are in fact those editorials called *shuo*) start from an actual problem, analyze it, and then give their point of view of the problem (Li says 20 percent). As the following discussion shows, these findings apply only to editorials called *lun* or *shuo*.

81. See Janku, “Nur leere Reden,” esp. 115755.

82. For a fuller paraphrase of the article, see Appendix A, pp. 425–28.

83. For the famines of 1877–78 and their discussion in the Chinese press, see Janku, “Publicized Disasters.”

examples from India and France as possible methods to apply in China. While obviously written as a piece of critical advice to the Chinese government, this editorial is framed as an argument about fate. It begins with the aphorism "The way of heaven is indeed difficult to fathom" and concludes "The right to determine life and death lies with heaven." Thus: "How could one blame fathers or rulers for it?" This fatalist argument relativizes the editorialist's critical statements and practical advice to his government. If all the methods suggested by him are ineffective against the power of fate, why use them at all? The fact that at the end of the article (and in its title) the author categorizes his exemplary stories as "strange talk" (*qitan* 奇談) further supports this ironical twist.

Stylistically, this *lun* accords with the rules for persuasive writing advocated by the Tongcheng 桐城 school.⁸⁴ It variously incorporates a technique called "first the far and then the near; first people and then events" (*xian yuan hou jin, xian ren hou shi* 先遠後近, 先人後事): the article uses examples from far away (India and France) in order to explain what is near at hand (Chinese problems of overpopulation), it presents personal experiences and opinions (on how to deal with overpopulation, for example, by the use of birth control or relocation) followed by exposition of the basic facts from which they are drawn (here concrete examples from Prussia and England), and it moves from the citation of aphorisms and exempla (about the inevitability of fate) to their explanation. Nevertheless, despite this consistent use of traditional stylistic patterns and the strict adherence to traditional rules of rhetoric, the argumentation remains ambiguous, the author torn between transmitted wisdom regarding the power of fate and possible ways of taking fate into one's hands. Thus, while making use of the old form, the editorial argues in a new way.

The editorial "On Fate and Destiny" ("Lun ming shu" 論命數, *SB* 29.3.1877),⁸⁵ published the same year, similarly adheres to the maxims prescribed by the Tongcheng school, but it discards the conventional

84. For the Tongcheng school, its style, and its importance for late Qing (newspaper) prose, see Chen Pingyuan, "Bagu yu Ming-Qing guwen"; Li Liangrong, *Zhongguo baozhi wenti fazhan gaiyao*, 19; and, most recently, Janku, "Nur leere Reden."

85. This editorial was subsequently refuted in a *shuo* entitled "數為理之餘" (Destiny is what remains from inherent [rational] principles), *SB* 30.3.1877. This editorial is discussed briefly below.

order from time to time. Instead of making consistent use of parallelisms and strong contrasts, this *lun* relies on the attractions of narrative to persuade the reader. The beginning axiom states that fate is and has been from time immemorial an enormous, unfathomable, irresistible power.⁸⁶ This statement is then applied to the present, according to the principle of "first the far and then the near." The author introduces his own opinion first, fleshing it out with evidence as he goes along, in accord with the rule of "first people and then events." The first piece of evidence comes from a detailed report that had appeared in the *Shenbao* a few days before. It is incorporated in the editorial as follows:

On the day the stabbing took place, Yang and Jin had gone together [to the brothel]. Because there was a guest upstairs in the room of the courtesan that Yang knew, they then 遂 sat down for a while in the opium room on the first floor, established by a certain Chen from Chaozhou, and waited. A little time passed, and Yang could no longer be patient [his impatience is reflected in short sentences: 爲時少久, 楊不能耐]. Eventually 竟 he went up first to the courtesan that Jin knew. He was about to ask whether he could sit down in her room when he bumped into Brave He, who took out his knife and stabbed him. The courtesan who knew Yang heard this, came running to help and stop him, saying to He: "This is my guest. How come you stabbed him?" At this point 此時, He realized his mistake. He wanted to escape, but since he was being held back by the courtesan, He used his knife again and stabbed her. The courtesan,

86. "As for the talk of fate and destiny, many among the Chinese believe in it, and those who do not believe are few. On a great scale, the rise or fall of a country, on a small scale, the flourishing or the deterioration of a family, the life or death of the body, the success or failure of an affair, the gain or loss of a fortune, [in] all [these matters] the blame is put on fate. Therefore the accomplished scholars have the argument 論 of 'finding peace in fate' 安命, the common people have the phrase 詞 'bearing one's destiny' 任數, the sages have the saying 言 'there is fate and there is destiny' (有命有數). In any case fate and destiny are such that they are set by heaven and the people cannot presume power over them. Sometimes there have been one or two scholars who did not think that it was so with fate and destiny. Time and again they hoped to beat the heavenly force with human devices, but when it came to the end, even if they used all their force, they simply could not fight against fate and destiny. Therefore, whenever one reaches a point where one is not able to do anything any more, every time one meets with a difficulty that is impossible to overcome, even if one does not wish to say so, it is [a matter of] fate and destiny and one has nothing else to resort to: this is the talk of fate and destiny and a great many believe in it without doubt" (ll. 1-5).

wounded in the face, started to cry "Help!" The man from Chaozhou went upstairs to come to the rescue, and on the narrow path they met. He was also stabbed and wounded six times [this sequence of events is depicted in short, staccato sentences, often in four- or six-word phrases]. Then 遂 He ran away and fled westward, all the way to Xujiahui. As he came near it, he felt remorse and then 遂 he cut his throat, opened his veins, and died. (ll. 6-10)

Here, this lively story ends. It is a perfect small narrative, complete with dialogue. It gains momentum through the frequent use of time words and builds tension through the rhythmic use of short phrases. The article continues in the voice of the author. He states that 乃, "in fact," Mr. He was from Shandong, Mr. Yang from Fuzhou, Mr. Jin from Jiangning, and Mr. Chen from Chaozhou. Their meeting at Yangzhou could only be called a fluke since they usually lived at distances from one another of more than a thousand li. Their tragic meeting was a matter of fate alone.

The writer introduces a second story based on a report from Hong Kong by explaining that it deals with an herb called *humanjiang* 胡蔓蕪, which closely resembles the medicinal plant *kushanjie* 苦山芥. *Humanjiang* is used to fatten pigs but is deadly to humans. A certain farmer Qu had lived happily with his wife all his life.

Last year in the twelfth lunar month, Mr. Qu fell ill and wished to drink an infusion of *kushanjie*. The wife then 遂 mistook the *human(jiang)* she kept at home for *kushan(jie)*. She took it, made an infusion, and gave it to her husband to drink. Qu smelled it and noticed its bitterness. Then 遂 straightaway he collapsed onto the table and fell asleep. . . . Just then 適 a neighbor came by to visit and asked what medicine this was. The wife answered it was (*kushan*)*jie*-infusion and said: ". . . Please try some to see whether it tastes all right." She gave some of the infusion she had prepared to the neighbor. . . . One after another, he emptied several bowls. Forthwith 旋即, he cried out of gripping, unbearable pains in his bowels, and after a little while 片晌, he joined the ghosts. None of the neighbors could understand the reason for it. They closely inspected the ingredients of the infusion, and thus 乃, it turned out to be *humanjiang* and not *kushanjie*. (ll. 14-17)

In the end, Qu wakes up; the neighbor, however, remains dead. The wife is first accused of murder but the couple gets away with paying a fine because several people attest to her innocence. The editorialist opines that she is lucky that Qu had not consumed more of the infu-

sion, for if her husband had died, she certainly would have been executed for killing her husband. The author concludes: "It is evident that in life and death there is fate, that both catastrophes and luck are difficult to fathom" (l. 19).

Again, we have a story full of narrative detail and concrete description: we can see the husband dropping headlong on the table, and the neighbor roaring with pain and breathing his last; the movement of the story is punctuated by the repetition of time words, such as "then," "forthwith," and "after a little while." The technique of anticipating the contents of the story reduces the tension considerably, but this is well established in Chinese fiction, where the chapters of a novel would be prefaced by brief comments or a short poem summarizing the contents. Moreover, both stories deal with subjects that would have been familiar to Chinese readers of court-case stories (*gong'an xiaoshuo* 公案小說), which had been extremely popular since the second half of the sixteenth century. Thus, effective narration temporarily supplants the arguments found in the body of a *baguwen*-style editorial *lun*.

After these long narrative digressions, the *lun* returns to its original mode of argument, however. The author's conclusion reveals his willingness to accept fate. In contrast to the editorial on destiny discussed earlier, which concealed ambiguity in content in straightness of form, in this editorial a straightforward argument appears in ambiguous form. In using heavy ornamentation, it dispenses with some of the accepted rules for persuasive prose. This *lun* editorial is convincing and appealing not so much because its stance is authoritative but because it exploits the rules of good narrative. Thus once more, an old form, the *lun*, has been put to new effect.

EDITORIAL SHUO: TALKING OF CHINA'S DESTINY

Another form of persuasive prose used for editorials in *Shenbao* is the *shuo* 說 (or *shui*). Lu Ji in *Wen fu* describes the *shuo* as "flashy and entrancing"; it is expected to persuade in "glowing words and cunning parables."⁸⁷ According to the *Wenxin diaolong*, "The crucial require-

87. *Literary Mind*, chap. 19; Fang, "Rhyme Prose on Literature," 12; and Owen, *Readings*, 130.

ment in a *shuo* is to present at an opportune moment ideas which are crystal-clear and true. . . . In it one opens his heart before the ruler and conveys his ideas in winged words."⁸⁸ Like the *lun*, the *shuo* preaches effective principles of government. It originated with the persuasive speeches by officeseekers traveling from state to state advising rulers during the Warring States period (403–221 BCE).⁸⁹ It is a rather subjective form to be used at the right time to dazzle and to illuminate.⁹⁰

The structure of the *shuo* in *Shenbao* is similar to that of the *lun*: both begin with an aphorism followed by argument. Both use stylistic elements from the Tongcheng school of writing.⁹¹ The *shuo*, however, often appear more self-confident and flamboyant, more subjective, cunning, and extravagant in their argumentation than the *lun*. This is immediately evident in a *shuo* that takes to task the deliberations on fate and destiny in the *lun* discussed in the preceding section. The author of the *shuo* "Destiny Is What Remains from Inherent (Rational) Principles" ("Shu wei li zhi yu shuo" 數為理之餘說, *SB* 30.3.1877) is convinced that fate arises from a rationale of retribution. His *shuo* begins with a complaint that the sages never explained how fate came about. Accordingly, people know that it is "set by heaven and cannot be changed by human power." They "bear their luck and are not willing to do what they ought to." Confidently, the author deconstructs these well-established beliefs and calls for a proper investigation (深究) of every instance of fate. He is convinced that even in strange cases, an explanation can always be found: "I tell you, all affairs of the world follow an inherent rationale" 吾則曰天下事本皆循理. Referring to the *lun* published the day before, he argues that only our ignorance of He and Yang leads us to believe that their deaths were a matter of fate. But perhaps in a former life, they did live in the same place. Thus, the murders may in fact have a retributive "rationale" behind them and need not be attributed to fate (ll. 9–13). Although the difference between the *lun* and the *shuo* may be one of degree only, the *shuo* tend to be rather more personal in appeal. As here, the author is clearly present as a

88. *Literary Mind*, 146–47.

89. Janku, "Der Leitartikel in der frühen chinesischen Presse," 120.

90. For this interpretation, see Owen, *Readings*, 133–34.

91. For one such example, see "風氣日開說" (On daily advances toward enlightenment), *SB* 23.2.1882, paraphrased in Appendix A, pp. 427–28, and discussed in Chapter 5.

person—dazzling, lamenting, complaining, ridiculing—indicated by the frequent use of exclamation words such as *wu* 嗚 and *zai* 哉 and, particularly, the use of first person pronouns such as *wu* 吾. In the *shuo*, the author seldom assumes the position of a disinterested omniscient narrator; rather, he styles himself a subjective but authoritative advocate on important matters.

Precisely in such a manner, an 1897 editorial *shuo* “On the New” (“Xin shuo” 新說, *SB* 6.2.1897) discussed the need for a new citizen *xinmin* 新民, a figure that would later become famous with Liang Qichao’s journal, the *Xinmin congbao* 新民叢報, founded in 1902.⁹² Not unlike Liang Qichao, the *Shenbao* editorialist in this *shuo* thrives in his condemnation of the old citizens of China, calling them selfish and incompetent. How then to create a new citizen? The author advocates a new type of universal education based on foreign standards (l. 18) that would change people’s outlook, making them resolved (*juexin* 決心),⁹³ so that they would begin to think of modernizing the government (ll. 25–26). What he calls for, cleverly backed up by classical quotations from the *Mencius*, *Yijing* 易經 (Book of changes), and *Han Feizi* 韓非子,⁹⁴ is a revolution, which he declares to be inevitable. In the rather flamboyant appeal typical of a *shuo*, he voices his conviction that China’s people and with them the Chinese government are doomed and will fall unless they are willing to accept radical changes.

The same sense of inevitability is the tenor of a *shuo* published in 1898, “On the Fact That Bicycles Must Flourish in the Future” (“Jiaotache jianglai bi shengxing shuo” 腳踏車將來必盛興說, *SB* 1.4.1898).⁹⁵ The article, which begins with a quotation from the *Shijing* 詩經 (Book of odes), glorifies the bicycle: it can be taken anywhere, and riding one is good for one’s health (ll. 13–14). Even bicycle armies have been successful, as have been canine corps trained to bite the legs of the soldier-cyclists to make them fall off their vehicles (ll. 14–21). Clearly, bicycles have to be made an integral part of China’s

92. The idea in fact occurred first in one of the inaugural statements of the *Shenbao* (“本館條例,” *SB* 30.4.1872), in which Major wrote that his newspaper was intended to “renew the people” 新人.

93. For later *Shenbao* discussions of this new citizen’s virtue (and the old citizen’s vices), see Chapter 5.

94. For the use and abuse of quotations in Chinese editorials, see Chapter 2.

95. For a longer paraphrase of this article, see Appendix A, p. 428.

modernization. As is typical of a *shuo*, the editorialist argues his points confidently and provides a dazzling amount of interesting and amusing detail.

After the turn of the twentieth century and the revamping of the *Shenbao* layout in 1905, editorials entitled *shuo* appear in a rather short, clear-cut format, different from the lengthier texts found earlier. The self-confident manner of the *shuo* makes them—by 1907—the preferred tool for voicing harsh social criticisms against, for example, prostitution, chaos, and cheating.⁹⁶ The case to be discussed is usually stated as an aphorism at the beginning; it is then deliberated from different viewpoints, each in a separate paragraph; and then in a final paragraph the author calls for action. The editorial *shuo* against China as a nation of cheaters begins: “Alas, China. This is a country established by the use of cheating.”⁹⁷ The “textbook” 教科書 for cheating has been handed down from generation to generation, an assertion that leads the writer to exclaim: “What a tragedy! What a tragedy!” 悲夫悲夫. He then elaborates on cheating in appearance, in speech, in writing and in reality, quoting from the Classics as well as from anecdotes and proverbs and providing cunning animal parables on officials as well as citizens. *Shuo* such as this appeal through their emotional quality, their lucid structure, and their ornamental use of quotations from various sources. However much the editorial *shuo* in the *Shenbao* changed in length and content over time, they remained faithful to the prototype described by Lu Ji centuries earlier—they are “flashy and entrancing,” and written in “glowing words and cunning parables.”

EDITORIAL JI: REMEMBERING

FLOWERS AND CATASTROPHES

According to the *Wenxin diaolong*, *ji* 記 were originally beautiful letters to high officials, which contained advice that proved beneficial to the receivers.⁹⁸ They were warm and intimate and full of concrete descriptions.⁹⁹ From this early tradition, two genres of writing evolved: the *biji* 筆記 and the *youji* 遊記. The *biji*, intimate and subjective literary

96. “說嫖” (On visiting prostitutes), *SB* 6.3.1907; “說亂” (On chaos), *SB* 27.3.1907; “說欺” (On cheating), *SB* 13-14.3. 1907.

97. *Ibid.*

98. *Literary Mind*, 205.

99. *Ibid.*, 223.

writings in the form of notes, may date to the Han (206 BCE–221 AD) but become a major genre in Chinese writing in the Six Dynasties (221–589). They are catholic in subject matter and may be fictional, historical, or philological in nature. Some editorial *ji* in the *Shenbao* fall into this category of *biji*: in one, for example, the author records meetings with three old friends from abroad;¹⁰⁰ in another, he remembers a gathering for a returning friend in Shanghai.¹⁰¹ Far more frequently, however, the editorial *ji* in the *Shenbao* are written in the form of *youji*, travel records, which had flourished in China since the Song (960–1279).¹⁰² This form traditionally consists of firsthand accounts of an excursion, be it to an adjoining county, a distant province, or even a foreign country. These accounts are usually chronological and often written in diary form. Although they tend to contain numerous geographical or historical facts, the authorial presence is quite pronounced. They are characterized by a particular intimacy and a sensual concreteness of detail. In the *Shenbao*, *youji* most often take the form of a framed story—the journalist either meets a person who has gone on a journey or went on a journey himself and is relating his experiences. In the last sentence of the *ji*, the journalist usually gives his reasons for recording the story and summarizes the relevance of his record.

In one 1887 editorial *ji*,¹⁰³ the author meets an official at a bar who has just survived a shipwreck on a trip from Taipei to Shanghai. His story is related in minute chronological detail; the reader is given the exact dates of when the official went where. The *ji* is characterized by a tense tone, emphasized by the constant staccato of time words—“suddenly,” “a short moment later,” “just then,” “at that moment,” “thereupon.” Its sensory impact is heightened by the fast tempo at which the author describes the cries and shouts for rescue of the passengers, the smells on the boat, and the sight of the sinking ship and the people rushing for rescue boats. The official is hurt while helping others, loses all his luggage and important documents “to the waves” (l. 20), but concludes: “One ought to think it great that one was so

100. “海天三友圖記” (A record of a picture with three friends from abroad), *SB* 1.4.1887.

101. “洗塵雅集小記” (Short record of an elegant gathering for a returning friend), *SB* 30.11.1887.

102. Cf. Li Liangrong, *Zhongguo baozhi wenti fazhan gaiyao*, 17; Fogel, *The Literature of Travel*.

103. “歷劫記” (A record of successive kalpas), *SB* 27.2.1887.

lucky to be able to escape such a catastrophe alive" (l. 22). Impressed by the valor of this man and the drama of his experience, the author hurries home to record it.

Just as sensual, if in a very different sense, are two records, also from 1887, of visits to flower gardens in Shanghai. These gardens are presented as pure and secluded grottos, counterimages to the destructive and seductive life of vulgar Shanghai (discussed in Chapter 5)—this is obviously the morale behind these editorial *ji*. The first deals with a flower lover who strolls around Shanghai parks looking at and smelling all the different flowers, enjoying their colors and exchanging poems with those he meets.¹⁰⁴ The second again contrasts the hectic life of Shanghai, which is mentioned in the frame story, with the peace to be found in the Xu gardens:¹⁰⁵ "The trees were still and quiet, and one heard the voices of birds from time to time. On paths among the winding trees, there were strollers coming and going" (ll. 11–12). Again the flowers are described in detail, praised through poetry, and eulogized for their scents. In the end, the author hurries home, amid a "cloudlike" flurry of carriages and horses, to write down his impressions.

Intimate records such as these can still be found "in place of an editorial" (*dai lun* 代論) in the *Shenbao* after the turn of the twentieth century. One example is the "Record of the Terrible Situation of the Starving People in Yangzhou" 揚州饑民慘狀記 (*SB* 4.1.1907), which appeared in 1907. In typical *ji* fashion, the author introduces his tale by recounting chronologically his receipt of a letter from a friend about a famine. A number of days later, he travels to Yangzhou on business and sees signs of the famine himself. A few days later, he goes to the countryside, and here his concrete report begins: he leaves the city and turns southward into a fierce wind (time and again this is described onomatopoeically, e.g., l. 8 瑟瑟). Apart from the wind, all he can hear is the sound of crying everywhere. The color of everyone's face is deadly, and only because they are still breathing, can one see that they are not dead (l. 10/11). He meets a woman who has lost seven members of her family (ll. 15–16) and who is now left with one daughter and has nowhere to go. The author feels deeply sympathetic and attempts to find a solution to her problems, to no avail. He is moved

104. "餐花小記" (A short record of feasting on flowers), *SB* 8.3.1887.

105. "徐園品蘭記" (A record of tasting orchids in the Xu Gardens), *SB* 4.4.1887.

to tears over this unbearable situation, tears that drop down, one after another, from his cheeks, but he has to return home.

The second part of this *ji* is his heartfelt advice to the government: "I, Tian Lusheng, I say: 'From the situation of these starving people, which is really such as I have recorded above, I now begin to realize how bad the fate of my country's people is'" (ll. 21-22). Not only is the number of natural disasters in China great, he argues, but awareness of them is incredibly low. Officials indulge in meat and wines with people starving at their doorstep. In other, civilized countries, "if someone dies unjustly, his name is made known and appears in the newspapers many times" (ll. 27-28). When there is a flood or other natural disaster, various relief methods are employed. But in China? The author ends with the devastating statement that even he cannot be sure that he will not die of starvation.

This is a clear example of the *ji* as a letter of advice to rulers, providing much personal detail and concrete description for perusal and instruction. The editorial *ji* in the *Shenbao* are intimate records, warning of depravity and corruption or describing heroic deeds and havens of moral purity. They are skillfully written in a familiar, personal style and genre, the *ji*, with a long tradition for enlightened entertainment as well as instruction.

EDITORIAL SHU: READING AND RESPONDING

Shu 書 (letter) editorials are another example of the use of a traditional form of personal writing in the public newspaper: Court historian Sima Qian's 司馬遷 (ca. 145-90 BCE) famous "Letter in Response to Ren An" is said to have established the letter as a form intended to voice an author's personal feelings.¹⁰⁶ *Shu* were considered so revealing that they were read in order to "know" the author. Indeed, the *Wenxin diaolong* says that the purpose of the *shu* was to "unburden the mind of its melancholy thought in the form of elegant colors."¹⁰⁷ Since it came to be used for private defenses and apologies, it eventually became a medium for public persuasion and the exposition of ideas as well. And this applies to the *shu* to be found in the *Shenbao*.

106. For this letter, see Burton Watson, *Ssu-ma Ch'ien*, 57-69.

107. *The Literary Mind*, 202.

They are usually personal responses to an article or report that the author read in the *Shenbao* or another paper.¹⁰⁸ Even more than the *shuo*, they are an emotional form, with frequent expressions of “alas”¹⁰⁹ or “I fear,”¹¹⁰ exaggerations,¹¹¹ and personal interjections.¹¹²

The juxtaposition of a *lun* and a *shu* written in response will serve to illuminate the particular qualities of each. The 1897 *lun* “On the Hardships of Courtesans in Shanghai” 論滬上妓女之苦 (*SB* 12.1.1897) appeared a week before the *shu*.¹¹³ It argues that courtesans are the most despised of women in the world and views them from a variety of different angles. The author deliberates the fact that “courtesans are not born as courtesans and thus born despicable” (l. 8). Indeed, prostitution “is [the fate] assigned them by heaven” 天之所賦. He tries to provide rational explanations for some of the courtesans’ more despised habits, such as rising late (l. 11). He notes the different categories of courtesans and emphasizes the ambiguity of their lives (ll. 13–17).¹¹⁴ He concludes: “If you wish to eradicate the hardships of courtesans, you will have to forbid that profession.” Despite its sympathetic treatment of the subject, this article is disinterested and matter-of-fact. Its rational argument differs considerably from that in the *shu* on this topic.¹¹⁵ The article begins with a long list of lyrical images of bitterness before the editor relates that a person described as “Someone Well Versed in These Matters” 熟於斯事者 (l. 26) had written a letter to supplement the earlier editorial account of courtesans. The letter-writer cannot be identified and might even be a courtesan herself. Courtesans did in fact frequently relate their stories and experiences in some of the contemporary entertainment papers founded by novelist Li Boyuan 李伯元 (1867–1932).¹¹⁶

108. See, e.g., *SB* 9.4.1877, 31.12.1877, 19.1.1897, 9.11.1902.

109. See, e.g., *SB* 9.4.1877, l. 1; 30.12.1882, ll. 1, 26.

110. *SB* 19.1.1897, l. 24; 9.11.1902, l. 20.

111. *SB* 9.4.1877, l. 1; 9.11.1902, ll. 7–8.

112. *SB* 31.12.1877, ll. 9, 24.

113. *SB* 12.1.1897; see also note 80 to this chapter.

114. For this ambiguity as a trope in writings about courtesans and prostitutes, see Chapter 4.

115. “書客述妓女之苦” (Letter on how a guest describes the hardships of courtesans), *SB* 19.1.1897.

116. On publications like these, the *Youxibao* 遊戲報 (Entertainment, founded in 1896) and the *Shijie fanhua bao* 世界繁華報 (Vanity fair, founded in 1901) among them, see Yeh, “Deciphering the Entertainment Press.”

The text of the letter is then given. It begins with the very polite request to be allowed to supplement some of the information given in the *lun* (l. 2). The letter-writer explains that, unlike him/herself, the author of the *lun* was clearly not an insider (l. 1-2) in courtesan matters. The ensuing depiction of courtesan life is unambiguous. Even some of the more attractive aspects mentioned in the *lun*, such as nice clothing and extravagant surroundings, are a curse, according to this letter, for they, too, cost money. The writer describes in great detail the hellish circle of debt accumulation and the ever-increasing dependence of the courtesans on the madams. And, s/he makes an ingenious suggestion: it may be impossible to forbid prostitution, but one could "give out some official money to pay for their debts. Then they would not dare to go into debt again, and the number of prostitutes would decrease of itself. This would be a way of forbidding prostitution without forbidding it" (ll. 24-26).

Rather differently from the *lun*, which deals extensively and rather more superficially with diverse aspects of the topic, this letter writer treats one aspect of the topic, which s/he considers the major malady of courtesan life, in great detail. Unlike the author of the *lun*, this author admits being very much engaged in the matter. Unlike the author of the *lun*, s/he does not simply end by making a suggestion that no one (not even the author of the *lun*) would find realistic; instead, the letter writer is interested in finding a feasible method of fighting prostitution. Thus, the *shu* editorial fulfills many of the functions traditionally assigned the letter as a literary form. The *shu* in *Shenbao* can be read to "know" the author, and they are intended to voice an author's personal feelings, to expose his ideas, and thus to persuade.

NOT JUST ONE TYPE: THE SHENBAO EDITORIAL REVISITED

Following the reforms of 1905, editorials in the form of *shu* or *ji* were marked "in place of an editorial *lun*" 代論 in the *Shenbao*. By this time, then, an awareness of the editorial as a particular genre of text had come into being. Indeed, by at least 1895, the category *lunshuo* 論說 as a translation of the term "editorial" had come into frequent use.¹¹⁷ Herbert A. Giles (1845-1935), in the authoritative *Chinese-*

117. Cf. Janku, "Der Leitartikel in der frühen chinesischen Presse," 126.

English Dictionary (London 1892), translates *zuo lun* 作論 (“to write a *lun*”) as “to write a leader.”¹¹⁸ Although the *lun* (and to a lesser extent the *shuo*) would become the prototype of the “Chinese-style editorial” in the twentieth century, this survey has illustrated that at least until the turn of that century, editorials were marked with the names and conveyed some of the attributes of a large number of traditional genres other than *lun* and *shuo*.¹¹⁹ There was no such thing as “the editorial” in early Western-style Chinese newspapers such as the *Shenbao*.

Moreover, the inherently ambiguous Chinese editorial had little to do with its foreign model. Around the turn of the century, the editorial in the West was no longer seen as personal, the writing of an individual; rather, the writer was considered to be speaking for the newspaper.¹²⁰ Because in the early years its editorials were written by members of an editorial board who took turns and the *Shenbao* even published editorials by “guests,” violently conflicting views often appeared in consecutive issues. *Shenbao* editorials, therefore, bear abundant evidence of the voices of individuals speaking their own mind. Despite the foreign model, this tendency becomes more and more pronounced after the turn of the century and increasingly so during the Republican period.¹²¹

Arguably, the deliberate inclusion of readers as contributors to the newspaper, especially its most important section, the editorial page, was one reason the *Shenbao* soon became a cultural resource of the Jiangnan elite.¹²² In this process, the *Shenbao* editorial became one

118. *Ibid.*, 126.

119. Janku, “Nur leere Reden,” esp. 19–21 and 121–22, where she gives statistics on the editorial genres used during 1898.

120. See Blake, “The Editorial.” In 1911, he wrote (443): “To-day editorial writing is better in tone and temper, essentially honester and more considerate, broader and more varied in its interests and its sympathies, than it was in the days of personal journalism.”

121. One article with rather striking emotional qualities is “說欺,” *SB* 13–14.3.1907, mentioned in the section on *shuo* above. For further evidence, see my discussion of texts from 1900 to 1925 in Chapter 6. The increasingly subjective and emotional evidence from these texts as well as their increasing vernacularization clearly shows that the argument in *Shanghai jindai wenzue shi* (143) that the development of a new style of writing was a movement from 情 (emotion) to 理 (reason) and from 雅 (the refined) to 俗 (the popular) is wrong. See also the discussion of new-style commentaries below.

122. Janku, “Der Leitartikel in der frühen chinesischen Presse,” esp. 117.

other accepted means of public communication available to the Chinese elite. A close comparison of early newspaper editorials and exemplary writings on statecraft published in the late Qing in collections modeled on Wei Yuan's 魏源 (1794–1856) *Collected Writings on Statecraft from the Qing* (*Huangchao jingshi wenbian* 皇朝經世文編) of 1828 shows that they were quite interchangeable in terms of both form and content (we have seen one example for this in the Introduction—Liang Qichao, Zhang Zhidong, and *Shenbao* had similar things to say about the use of newspapers). As a matter of course, later publications of this genre would include writings that had originated as newspaper editorials as examples; and in turn, newspaper editorials would quote extensively from documents and statecraft writing. On occasion, such texts would even be used as an editorial.¹²³ By the waning years of the nineteenth century, writing on statecraft, in the form of *lun* or otherwise, was thus considered equivalent to writing an “editorial” in China. In contrast to foreign editorials at the time, which did not have to be highly polished literary pieces,¹²⁴ these Chinese editorials—just like the statecraft essays—appealed by their narrative, their poetic language, their concrete images, their erudite quotations, and their idiosyncratic logic. Not only were they written in established forms of literary prose, but they were quite distinctly literary in nature.

How did these old forms manage to accommodate new content and convey new ideas? Was there an awareness of the incongruities between content and form (for example, using venerable genres of political deliberation to introduce the bicycle)? Obviously not: resorting to the genres at hand, with their peculiar expectations and associations, seemed to help make an unfamiliar message palatable.¹²⁵ A contemporary missionary argued as late as 1902 that Chinese writing habits were too strong to be overcome by the introduction of new forms of prose. He said of *baguwen* that “having tickled and delighted the ear of native literary exquisites for so many generations with a melody of consonance peculiarly Chinese, it will die hard.

123. Detailed comparisons of newspaper articles with the statecraft publications from the late nineteenth century are contained in Janku, “Nur leere Reden,” chaps. 3 and 4.

124. Nevins, “The Editorial as a Literary Form,” 21.

125. Gunn, *Rewriting Chinese*, 20, 42.

There are already some indications that it will be restored the same in substance but masquerading under another name."¹²⁶

The use of *baguwen* and other traditional forms to write editorials was one such masquerade, which indeed had a fruitful effect: a broad public could thus be introduced to new contents, be they ideas on contraception, the new citizen, the proper handling of famines, or prostitution. This public knew how to read a *ji* and what to look for in a *shuo*. The missionary continued: "Behind the secure rampart of antiquity the Essayist fires load after load of excellent *wen-li* [that is, high prose style 文理] bullets."¹²⁷ To judge from the editorial critiques in *Shenbao* of China, the Chinese, and the Chinese government, including officials and the emperor himself, the adherence to classical and literary forms of writing throughout the forty years of *Shenbao* surveyed here suggests that here (and only here) Chinese bullets were considered more effective than foreign ammunition.

News: Mystery, Morality, and Matter of Fact

I described as best I could the whirling world in which I'd been. "No, no—I don't mean that," [the editor in chief] replied, "that's literature—not news stuff."

—Theodore Dreiser (1871–1945), 1931¹²⁸

In the present-day understanding, news reports are expected to provide impersonal information about recent events. They should include information on the "Five W's" of reporting, the who, what, where, when, and why of an event, and these are to be enumerated in accordance with certain strict standards of informational importance, in an inverted pyramid.¹²⁹ At the top of the pyramid one finds the headline, which has to adhere to a strict format, leaving out enough to be short and concise while emphasizing the essential.¹³⁰

At first glance, news reports in the late Qing Western-style Chinese-language newspaper (situated after the editorial and before the *jingbao* reprint and the advertisements in the early issues of *Shenbao*) adhere to these standards. They provide crucial information ex-

126. Woodbridge, "The 'Eight-legged' Essay," *NCH* 18.6.1902.

127. *Ibid.*

128. Dreiser, *Newspaper Days*, 59.

129. Hulteng and Nelson, *The Fourth Estate*, 17–18; Drewry, *Concerning the Fourth Estate*, 130.

130. Hulteng and Nelson, *The Fourth Estate*, 21.

pected in a piece of news, and they have short eye-catching titles—until 1907, quite frequently in sets of four characters.¹³¹ And yet, these titles are often not so much informative as intriguing. Some are written in the style of *chengyu* 成語, proverbial expressions that usually contain some allusion to ancient texts or events: “Losing the Big for the Small” (“Wei xiao shi da” 為小失大, *SB* 19.2.1873),¹³² “Tiring of Life but Enjoying Death” (“Yan sheng le si” 厭生樂死, *SB* 29.4.1873), “Auspicious Snow, Prophecy of a Good Harvest” (“Rui xue zhao feng” 瑞雪兆豐, *SB* 1.2.1877), or “Losing One’s Silver, Hurting One’s Life” (“Shi yin shang ming” 失銀傷命, *SB* 8.2.1877).¹³³ Other titles, especially in the sections purveying local news, are distinctly poetic in nature.¹³⁴ News from abroad is called “Spring Colors from Majestic Countries” (“Huang zhou chun se” 皇州春色, *SB* 19.4.1887). Instead of “News from Tianjin,” we find “Tattle from Cloudy [Tian]Jin” (“Yun jin suo ji” 雲津瑣記, *SB* 22.4.1897), or “Cuckoo Crows from a Tianjin Bridge” (“Jin qiao juan yu” 津橋鶻語, *SB* 8.4.1897). Reports from Yangzhou are “Various Spring Rumors from Yangzhou” (“Za Yang chun chuan” 雜揚春傳, *SB* 8.2.1892), from Guangzhou “Tides from the Southern Sea” (“Nanhai chao yin” 南海潮音, *SB* 7.2.1897),¹³⁵ from Ningbo “Colors of the Four Bright Mountains” (“Si ming shan se” 四明山色, *SB* 28.2.1897), from Fujian “Spring Voices from the Mountain Paths” (“Min qi chun sheng” 閩岐春聲, *SB* 12.2.1892), and from Henan “Events at Song, the Highest of the Five Sacred Mountains” (“Yue jiang Song sheng” 嶽降嵩生, *SB* 12.2.1892). Many of these titles use famous rivers or mountains to stand for a particular province, a practice that can be traced to early historiographical writings such as Sima Qian’s *Shiji* (史記, Records of the Grand Historian). Other titles are reminiscent of the examination poems (*tieshi* 帖詩) that the literati had to write as part of the

131. As late as 1912, the headlines of smaller subcategories of news such as “Official Matters from Shanghai” 上海官事 or “Strange Relations from Abroad” 海外奇談 still appear in four-character phrases.

132. This expression can be found in special *chengyu* dictionaries. See, e.g., *Chengyu cidian*, 880.

133. On *Shenbao* headlines, see Li Liangrong, *Zhongguo baozhi wenti fazhan gaiyao*, and Xu and Xu, *Qingmo sishinian “Shenbao” shiliao*.

134. See the categories for different regional areas given in Xu and Xu, *Qingmo sishinian “Shenbao” shiliao*, 60.

135. *Shenbao tongxun* 1947, no. 1-5: 18-19, gives further titles of local news and variations for Yangzhou and Guangzhou news.

state examinations.¹³⁶ Although these titles could be read with ease by anyone with the educational level necessary to take the examinations, by the 1890s a debate had arisen concerning their relevance. Why, it was asked, was news of Wuchang called “Flute Cantos from the Tower of Cranes” (鶴樓笛韻) if it had nothing to do either with birds or with the sounds of flutes, just because one classical name for Wuchang was Tower of Cranes?¹³⁷

Throughout the period under investigation here, such elusive titles appear next to matter-of-fact titles such as “An Unclaimed Floating Corpse” (“Wushu fushi” 無屬浮屍, *SB* 29.4.1873), “Prefectural Examinations Have Begun” (“Suishi kai kao” 歲試開考, *SB* 1.2.1877), “Rice Shortage in Tokyo” (“Dongjing mi shao” 東京米少, *SB* 27.4.1887), “Fire Alarm in Japan” (“Ri dong huo jing” 日東火警, *SB* 7.2.1897), “Extremely Heavy Tortoise” (“Jizhong da gui” 極重大龜, *SB* 24.11.1907), “A Patient Has His Brain Changed” (“Bingren huan nao” 病人換腦, *SB* 28.4.1912), or “Married on the Phone” (“Dianhua jiehun” 電話結婚, *SB* 13.11.1912). Longer, more prosaic titles such as “Japan Forbids the Eating of Rice” (“Ribei jin shi mifan” 日本禁食米飯, *SB* 9.4.1873), “Chinese Men and Women meet in Hongkou Church” (“Hongkou libaitang Zhongguo nannü jieqin” 虹口禮拜堂中國男女接親, *SB* 11.4.1873), or “Women Use Force to Demand Right of Political Participation” (“Nüzi yi wuli yaoqiu canzhengquan” 女子以武力要求參政權, *SB* 24.3.1912) are also common.

This variety in styles of titles—some of them rather distinctly Chinese—is reflected in a diversity of approaches to the writing of news. Articles can be quite matter-of-fact; for example, an 1873 report on an unclaimed body found by the police in the Huangpu near Hongkou¹³⁸ features a detailed description and concludes that the man looks like someone from Ningbo—which probably says more about his low social status than his ethnicity.¹³⁹ This type of news report is reminiscent of the short notices on the first pages of the court gazette *jingbao*, the

136. *Ibid.*, 19.

137. In the editorial “整頓報紙芻言” (A few modest words on the reform of newspapers), *SB* 15.8.1898), the editor criticizes the abstruse nature of some of the local news sections. For the scope of the debate, see Xu and Xu, *Qingmo sishinian “Shenbao” shiliao*, 61; and *Shenbao tongxun* 1947, no. 1-5: 19.

138. “無屬浮屍” (An unclaimed floating corpse), *SB* 29.4.1873.

139. See Honig, *Creating Chinese Ethnicity*.

so-called “palace gate jottings” or *gongmenchao* 宮門抄.¹⁴⁰ Quite different from these brief notices, however, is a news item from 1877:

On the 27th of last month, at the third watch of the night [i.e., 11:00 P.M.–1:00 A.M.], a red light suddenly illuminated the sky outside the gates of Zhangjiang in Nanchang. Those who saw it were surprised and guessed it must be a fire. All of them stretched their necks to look up. After quite a while, it was quiet again and nothing could be observed of it. One could see only the clear stars glimmering 閃閃 and wisps of thin clouds. On the 28th, the sky was clear in color, the air was extremely cold, and a bitter wind blew from the west and the north growing stronger by the time night arrived. Everywhere . . . snowflakes fell here and there as in free brushwork (洒落). When the morning of the 29th arose, one could see in the distance westward that thin snowflakes had collected. In a little while, when the sun began to shine brightly 杲杲日出, their frightened looks said “melt” 見暝日消矣.¹⁴¹

The reader is drawn into this poetic text by the tension of the unknown: the sudden red light in the sky. With the observers on the ground, he is led through a number of sensual experiences, the light, the silence, the glimmering stars. The description continues on this note, elaborated by the use of metaphors and personification. And, this was not the only poetic report to appear that day. Another reads:¹⁴²

Ningbo 甯地¹⁴³ first saw snow on the 11th. In small dots it fell melting away immediately. By the evening of the 14th, six-petaled flowers 六出花 [snowflakes] flew around in confusion in the firmament. The next morning, . . . the entire universe was like silver 六合如銀, heaven and earth were without night 乾坤不夜 [and one was reminded] of heavenly territories 天峒. The snow was everywhere: even the winter plum was wrapped in a fur garment.

This year, since we have received this good omen, we will surely get a bumper harvest. Just today it has indeed started to rain thinly in a drizzle 溟濛. The gathering clouds make up a dense cloth, and I have not yet seen . . . the yellow-wadded coat 黃棉襖 [i.e., the sun in winter] come out.

140. Li Liangrong (*Zhongguo baozhi wenti fazhan gaiyao*, 10–11) calls this short type of news “chronology writing” but does not mention the fairly obvious connection with the *jingbao*. For the *gongmenchao*, see Chapter 3.

141. “章門近聞” (Recent news from Zhangmen), *SB* 1.2.1877.

142. “寧郡瑞雪” (Auspicious snow in Ning prefecture), *SB* 1.2.1877.

143. 寧 in the title is most probably a variant for 甯, which is used in the first sentence.

This text gives the exact dates and states of the changes in the weather and from these predicts a bumper harvest, all features familiar from *gongmenchao*-style "weather reports."¹⁴⁴ But the highly ornamented language and the use of metaphors (six-petaled flowers, yellow-wadded coat, etc.), common topoi such as the winter plum, and onomatopoeic language (e.g., 溟濛 *mingmeng* for the dripping of the rain) make for a distinctly poetic feeling reminiscent of that found in *fu* 賦 prose-poetry.¹⁴⁵ By foreign standards this is not reporting. Different cultural patterns are obviously at work here.

This must also be said of another early news report, from 1873, even though its character is entirely different from these latter reports.¹⁴⁶ It begins with an aphoristic statement: "Between ruler and minister there is propriety, between father and son there is love, between husband and wife there is obedience, and these are what are called the Three Bonds." But although the whole world might agree with these principles, the concessions in Shanghai are an exception: "Of ruler and minister, father and son, we won't even speak, but as for the bond between husband and wife, it seems as if it, too, can be dispensed with completely." After this moralizing introduction, the writer reports a fight between a man and a woman that he had observed in a teahouse the day before. Suddenly, the woman slapped the man on the cheek. The author (as well as everyone else) was quite shocked at this unseemly, callous, indeed barbarous behavior. His very personal report, brimming with ornate detail, ends with a warning: he is convinced that China is doomed, for "this behavior of women indicates that the cart is already upset." Not only does this au-

144. See Chapter 3, esp. p. 192, for a discussion of *gongmenchao* "weather reports." Another *Shenbao* report similar in style and language to the two discussed here is "瑞雪兆豐," *SB* 1.2.1877. It reports the situation in Hubei, which had received too much rain; there had been worries that crops would be washed away, but recent snowfalls had alleviated the situation. The report concludes with the habitual remark on the auspicious nature of such natural occurrences.

145. Cf. Liu Wu-chi, *Introduction to Chinese Literature*, 140. Li Liangrong (*Zhongguo baozhi wenti fazhan gaiyao*, 3) also makes the point that some news reports are closer to Han *fu* in their exaggerations and elegant diction than to contemporary Western newspaper prose, but he provides no evidence for his contention. For the literary qualities and beauty of *Shenbao* reports, see further *Shenbao tongxun* 1947, no. 1-5: 19.

146. "男遭婦辱" (A man shamed by a woman), *SB* 19.2.1873.

thor report on the event, but he comments on it and draws his own conclusions. This item is nothing short of a moral tale.¹⁴⁷

Quite frequently, these early accounts contain a personal note and are in fact cautionary tales told by the reporter-narrator. One example is the story of a man from a village who borrows 30 *yuan* in a nearby town only to realize on his way back home that his pockets have been emptied, and the money is gone:¹⁴⁸

He stood there on the riverbank and cried loudly, and then he threw himself into the stream and died. His father waited, but his son did not return. The next day he searched for him. When he reached the river, he saw his corpse, floating on the water. Then he threw himself into the river and died. When his grandmother heard the news, she was so startled and shocked that she misstepped, tripped, and died at the bottom of the stairs.

The author reckons that these 30 *yuan* had brought three people's lives to an end, a "truly tragic" outcome. He accuses pickpockets of being devoid of feeling and exhorts officials to find a way to stop them. His emotional tale is told like a story: it begins quite slowly with an elaborate description of the son's family background and the long-drawn-out process of deciding to borrow money. It describes the son's happiness on his way back in detail. Half the text is taken up with these matters. Then, the story suddenly picks up momentum and within the space of four sentences three people are dead. This sudden increase in narrative tempo draws even the most uninterested reader into the story and makes him feel the drama of the situation.

A similar narrative technique is used in another item from 1873, which again takes the form of a cautionary tale.¹⁴⁹ It is related by an I-

147. Cf. "日本禁食米飯" (Japan forbids the eating of rice), *SB* 9.4.1873, a news item dealing with the Japanese habit of adapting foreign ways. Here, too, the author becomes involved as he argues a case. According to him, the Japanese have long eaten rice and "the taste and stomach of the people has long been adjusted to this." Therefore, he condemns the Japanese government forbidding the use of rice and forcing people to eat bread. In the reporter's view, this is a bad measure. Again, this is not just a report about a new law passed by the Japanese; it is a moralistic tale, the author's warning to Japan and the world.

148. "失銀傷命" (Losing one's silver, hurting one's life), *SB* 8.2.1877.

149. "記逆婦慘報" (Recording the tragic story of a rebellious wife), *SB* 20.3.1873. Chapters 3 and 4 present more examples for the prevalence of the moral tale in the newspaper text. Moral tales most frequently concerned women. One

narrator who introduces his neighbor's "disorderly, covetous and lazy, vicious and stubborn" wife. Since her marriage, she had treated her father-in-law with extreme cruelty, not giving him enough food or clothing. The reporter quotes some examples (in direct speech) of the wife's retorts when scolded for her behavior. She comes across as a witty and outspoken person.

When the old man dies, the wife shows no signs of sadness. She decorates his coffin with coarse grass. She even argues that it was only just and fair that her father-in-law died—had he not always been a threat to her life? Whenever anyone mentions the father, she answers with profanities. In the winter of that same year, however, she suddenly catches a strange illness 奇病. With every move, she cries out in pain. Soon she can no longer move at all. When her limbs begin to rot, she realizes that she will die soon. Resigned, she wants her fate recorded to ensure that "the rebellious women of the world hear what happened to me, and all change into filial wives. For only thus can my misdeeds be slightly redeemed." The author, a friend of the family, takes over the task of recording the story "in order to warn of the fate that befell the old man and the young woman."

This piece of news is in fact a tale of retribution. Full of concrete descriptions of the wife's methods of tormenting her father-in-law and of the different stages and colors of her rotting flesh, this report is also reminiscent of a *biji*, an intimate record,¹⁵⁰ which, as we saw above, was also used for editorials. And, again like many Chinese-style editorials, this news report is told as a story, with a narrative line marked by time words and with constant shifts in point of view as the narrator zooms in on a dialogue, for example. Speech is also typically used for characterization: the wife's wickedness and her willingness to atone for her sins are depicted in her own words rather than in the narrator's voice.¹⁵¹ Thus, this report, apart from

exception is "論孝子剜臂奉母" (On the filial son who cut flesh from his arm to present to his mother), *SB* 17.12.1872.

150. Li Liangrong (*Zhongguo baozhi wenti fazhan gaiyao*, 7) argues that some news reports continue the tradition of *biji* found in collections of anecdotes such as the fifth-century *Shishuo xinyu* 世說新語 or the tenth-century *Taiping guangji* 太平廣記.

151. On the significance of the frequent appearance of speaking women in *Shenbao* news reports but not in traditional Chinese prose writing, see Chapter 4.

conveying a subjective moral message, is characterized by an emphasis on narrative.

And narrative recurs frequently. One 1873 report on “ghost affairs”¹⁵² begins with an almost apologetic introduction. Ghost affairs can never really be understood and nevertheless, narrators, such as Mr. Empty (Zi Xuzhe 子虛者), a character who appears not just in this news report, but in Chinese literary and fictional writing (most frequently as Zi Xuzi 子虛子), attempt to record them as accurately as possible.

What follows, accordingly, is the “truthful” description of some “alarming and strange happenings” 咄咄怪事 that had taken place recently. The bedcurtains of a family named Li had suddenly burst into flames. All attempts to stop the fire were of no avail. “Who would have expected it” (詎意, the use of this interjection of surprise makes for a very direct appeal to the reader), the text continues, for “this was not a natural disaster, it was something else.” Indeed, strangely enough, the fire does not burn everything: the wooden frame of a standing mirror is burned, but the fire does not touch the rope used to suspend the mirror from the frame, for example.

The description is vivid, capturing the different stages of the fire and the reactions of those watching it. The story line is clearly marked through the constant occurrence of time words such as “afterward” 嗣, “later” 後, “subsequently” 旋, and “thereupon” 遂. Eventually, an exorcist nicknamed Devil King Resplendent 鬼王燦 is called in. He investigates the situation and answers questions by members of the Li family, but even he has to admit that the fire is caused by a kind of ghost that he cannot drive out.

The family then moves, as does the ghost who apparently finds it boring to practice his magic in an empty house. Next, the elder brother’s house is attacked. Again, Devil King Resplendent tries a number of charms on the ghost. It changes shapes, first into a tiger and then into a snake. Devil King Resplendent has a servant beat it, but it turns back into a fire. The exorcist tries shouting at it and eventually the haunting ends. A maid sees a man holding a girl and an old woman escape through a window. Reports from a nearby village indicate that the ghost has moved there, and the calamities he inflicts now take different shapes: “Sometimes things were burned, sometimes

152. “鬼怪新事” (New ghost affairs), *SB* 9.4.1873.

things were stolen; in the end, it no longer had a fixed appearance 無定刑。” Indeed, the worried journalist concludes, a reliable means of vanquishing the ghost has yet to be found.

The reference to Zi Xuizi, the interjections of surprise, the quotations of direct speech, the constant recurrence of time words, the building of tension—all these are elements from the Chinese tradition of literary and fictional narrative. Indeed, the initial claim that the story is a truthful account, as well as its fantastic subject matter, is akin to the conventions of traditional “stories of the strange,” the so-called *zhiguai* 志怪 or *chuanqi* 傳奇 tales of which this is a modern version.¹⁵³

In this survey of the early *Shenbao*, we have seen news articles reminiscent of the factual reports found in traditional chronologies or the *jingbao*, examples of poetic diction and polemical prose that usually appear under the headings of *shuo* or *lun*, and tales of retribution and of strange happenings featuring techniques and writing styles reminiscent of Chinese literary and fictional genres.¹⁵⁴ Clearly, there was as yet no such thing as a homogenous and binding format for writing the news in foreign-style newspapers. Moreover, these texts suggest that there was little awareness of foreign conventions for writing “news” or of distinctions between the subjective and the objective, the factual and the fictional.¹⁵⁵ Reports of “ghost affairs” appear next to “Japan forbids the eating of rice,” and a poetic weather report, matter-of-fact news, *zhiguai*-like stories, poetry, and the *jingbao* fall on the same page, as do reports on local, international, and very personal news. It is not until the 1890s that a certain level of categorization of

153. For these tales, see Company, *Strange Writing*. For *zhiguai* in the context of late Qing periodicals, see Huntington, “*Zhiguai* and Late Qing Periodicals,” and the discussion below.

154. On the literary qualities of news in early Chinese newspapers such as *Shenbao*, *Xunbuan ribao*, and *Qiribao*, see further Vittinghoff, “Am Rande des Ruhms,” chap. 6; Sinn, “Fledgling in Flight”; and *Zhongguo xinwen shiye tongshi*, 405–17. Li Liangrong (*Zhongguo baozhi wenti fazhan gaiyao*, 4) mentions the use of phrases from the ritualized storytelling tradition in Chinese news reports.

155. The juxtaposition of some of the same news reports, once in the English-language Hong Kong newspaper *China Mail* and then in its Chinese weekly supplement, the *Zhongwai xinwen qiribao* 中外新聞七日報, undertaken by Elizabeth Sinn (“Fledgling in Flight”), throws important light on radically different conventions of writing news, foreign- and Chinese-style. Sinn also comments on the Chinese narrative and literary qualities in news reporting of the *Qiribao*.

news begins (news that arrived by the telegraph, news from the *jingbao* and other official papers, and news from the concessions are separated and appear in specified order).¹⁵⁶ This tendency becomes ever more pronounced after the turn of the twentieth century, especially after the reforms in February 1905, when categories such as “important news” 要聞 and “local news” 本埠新聞 are introduced (see Fig. 1.3). The newspaper thus became more transparent and easier to skim.¹⁵⁷ By 1912 a definite change has taken place, and amusing subject matter and wondrous relations of no political import appear only within the section “Free Talk” (*ziyoutan* 自由談).¹⁵⁸ Thus ghosts and other such *chiens écrasés*—if they appear at all—are categorized as entertainments. They are no longer treated as “serious” news.¹⁵⁹ Moreover, there is a tendency, for these kinds of “strange and amusing” tales, to be written up in a more matter-of-fact and impersonal manner than even regular news would have been in earlier decades. A report in the “Free talk” section on the resurrection of a girl further categorized under the heading “Strange relations from abroad” 海外奇談 illustrates this point.¹⁶⁰ This strange piece of news is related in a straightforward manner, and the exact place and time and the names of protagonists are given. The reporting is objective, clinical; no emotions are voiced.

The article begins with the explanation that in the West it was long the custom to watch the corpse of someone who died suddenly for a full day to make sure that the person was truly dead and not just in a

156. See “整頓報務餘言,” *SB* 24.8.1898.

157. Cf. Nathan, *Chinese Democracy*, 137. In 1905 the splitting of the page of the newspaper into two registers substantially shortened the column length and made it easier for one to find the next line on the top of the page. It also introduced bigger print for the titles of different sections. By 1907, all editorial sections were punctuated. It remains to be studied to what extent the new urban readership with little time demanded some of these changes in layout.

158. Li Liangrong (*Zhongguo baozhi wenti fazhan gaiyao*) does not account for these evident changes, which reflect an awareness of and the desire to distinguish what would then be considered “fictitious” and “factual” subject matter after 1905 and even more clearly after 1912.

159. See, e.g., “殺人祭鬼” (Killing humans to sacrifice to the ghosts), *SB* 5.5.1912, which appears in the “Free Talk” section.

160. “死而復生之女子” (A girl who died came back to life), *SB* 14.11.1912. Some editorials in the Chinese edition of the *North China Herald*, the *Shanghai xinbao*, were entitled “Strange Relations from Abroad” (“海外奇談”; e.g., *SHXB* 5 and 6.12.1872) but are treated on equal terms with other reports.

coma. In Spain, however, this custom had ceased to be observed. During an epidemic in June and July, a ten-year-old girl had suddenly taken ill and stopped breathing. "Hurriedly" the doctor arrived, but he could say nothing more than "Her body is as cold as ice. Her soul has already started to rise up." So they buried her, without even using a coffin. On the next day, someone passed the cemetery and saw the "dead" girl crying beside the road. He took her home. That was three and a half months ago, and the girl is still alive. The article then turns to the efforts of foreign scientists to develop a method for determining whether a person has stopped breathing.

The introduction and the conclusion of this article matter-of-factly relate funerary practices in Western countries and the advances in Western science. The miraculous tale is told with a certain grasp of good storytelling techniques. Nevertheless, despite the narrative touches, this news item is rather different from those discussed above. Missing is a moralist or subjective statement by the author; nor is the strangeness of the event emphasized—to the contrary, it is presented within an empirical scientific frame.¹⁶¹

Apparently, by 1912 a new awareness of "what's news" had developed in China and determined the choice and placement of reports on various subjects and, to an extent, the style of reporting on these subjects. This changing style of categorizing and writing news may be related to the first efforts at teaching journalism in China. The first translations of Japanese journalism textbooks appeared in the early 1900s, and the first original Chinese textbook (*Xinwen xue* 新聞學 [Journalism]) by Xu Baohuang 徐寶璜 (1894–1930) in 1916.¹⁶² These textbooks introduce techniques of newswriting, such as the adherence to the Five W's and the importance of the pyramidal shape of news, as well as the new values of truthful and objective reporting, which had become dominant in the West in the 1890s and more prominently

161. Another of these reports ("病人換腦" [A patient has his brain changed], *SB* 28.4.1912) is written in a similar manner. It tells the story of a man from Budimo (Baltimore?) who experienced a serious weakening of his brain matter, apparently because he talked too much. He is told that the only cure is to replace his brain. For this purpose, a child that has just died is needed as the donor. Eventually a child is found, and the brain transplanted.

162. For more information on journalism education, see Vittinghoff, "Am Rande des Ruhms," chap. 8; and Chao, *The Foreign Press in China*, 16.

since the early twentieth century.¹⁶³ Journalism in the West had moved away from being a form of literature to a mode dominated by objective reporting.¹⁶⁴ This ensured a loss of independence for the reporter, who could no longer be an overt advocate or social critic.¹⁶⁵ Rather than write from an obvious subjective viewpoint, the journalist had to observe the conventions of relating objective facts.¹⁶⁶

This idea of objectivity, engendered in Western newspaper circles as late as the 1890s and taking root in the first two decades of the twentieth century, was behind the drastic changes that did occur both in the classification and in the writing of news in China, too.¹⁶⁷ There is evidence for the growth of this attitude in a clearer separation of opinion and news¹⁶⁸ and in the adherence to factuality rather than fictionality in reporting. Indeed "objectivity and factuality" 公正客觀, 準確無誤 become keywords in Chinese newspaper discussions.¹⁶⁹

163. Connery, "A Third Way to Tell the Story," 4; Hulteng and Nelson, *The Fourth Estate*, 28; Peterson, "Social Responsibility Theory," 172-73; and Schiller, *Objectivity and the News*, esp. chap. 1. Schiller argues that—ironically—the penny press of the 1830s pioneered the ideals of objectivity and accuracy (cf. esp. his chap. 7).

164. For a typical handbook of how not to write literary or subjective news, see C. Ross, *The Writing of News*. His attitude is summed up in the statement, also mentioned below: "The method of telling the news story is usually the opposite of that employed by the writer of fiction" (ibid., 57).

165. Until the turn of the twentieth century, journalistic writing even in the Western-language treaty-port papers was subjective, to say the least (see Cox, "The Treaty Port Press," 97). Indeed, this may have been true of the *North China Herald* as late as 1925 (see Chapter 6).

166. Frus, *The Politics and Poetics of Journalistic Narrative*, xviii. For the prescriptive terms in which subjectivity was being denied, see C. Ross, *The Writing of News*, 20, 26. This led to a situation in which daily journalism was characterized precisely by its lack of individuality: "Stories written by a score of reporters . . . are transformed through the narrative pattern into a grey continuum of copy in which a single narrative voice is dominant" (Koch, *News as Myth*, 170).

167. Schiller, *Objectivity and the News*, 194. Li Liangrong (*Zhongguo baozhi wenti fazhan gaiyao*, 48) states that *Shibao* was instrumental in propagating and implementing this change. My own findings, presented below, suggest that discussions of the idea of objectivity had appeared on the pages of commercial papers such as the *Shenbao* from their first days. See also Vittinghoff, "Am Rande des Ruhms," chaps. 6 and 8.

168. For the increasing number of new columns of short commentary, see below.

169. Li Liangrong, *Zhongguo baozhi wenti fazhan gaiyao*, 48.

Accordingly, it is wrong to measure the Chinese-language newspaper of the 1870s against the yardstick of foreign newspaper-theory introduced in the early years of the twentieth century, and to blame early Chinese news-writing for making no clear distinctions between what was to be considered fact and fiction, subjective and objective.¹⁷⁰ Until well into the 1890s, Chinese and foreign journalists alike used a powerful story and a personal voice to draw readers into something perhaps more recognizably real than the “facts only” variety of reporting later prescribed by newspaper editors who feared the personal voice in news reports (or even editorials) because they felt it betrayed the public’s trust in journalism as unbiased fact.¹⁷¹ It was only then that the method of telling a news story would become “the opposite of that employed by a writer of fiction.”¹⁷² After the 1905 reforms, this attitude was quickly reflected on the pages of Chinese-language newspapers, too.

This meant that such foreign standards (which slowly evolved in the second half of the nineteenth century) were now, several decades later, fully applied to the Chinese newspaper text: Ernest Major, in his inaugural statement of 1872, had made an attempt to introduce a clear-cut distinction between some forms of literary (or fictional) writings, as he conceived them, and the writing of news. He cited some of the classics of *zhiguai* writing, such as Gan Bao’s 千寶 (ca. 4th c. AD) *Soushenji* 搜神記 (ca. 340), as negative examples of writing dealing with the absurd and the groundless. He called it his duty to search for truth in the matters his newspaper recorded 求其真實無妄.¹⁷³ In an 1875 advertisement calling for journalists, the *Shenbao* asks, once more, for “someone who

170. This is the reason why I have problems with many of the interpretations in Li Liangrong, *Zhongguo baozhi wenti fazhan gaiyao*. Li judges early Chinese newspaper writing from the point of view of modern journalism and applies categories unknown to writers at the time. Similar criticism applies to *Shanghai jindai wenxue shi*, 143.

171. Sims, “The Literary Journalists,” 5; and Pauly, “Politics of the New Journalism,” 114.

172. C. Ross, *The Writing of News*, 57. Connery, “A Third Way to Tell the Story,” 14, describes literary close-ups about people and situations that are rather similar to the Chinese editorial-style *ji* as well as of Chinese news reports as an important element of American literary journalism at the end of the nineteenth century.

173. “本館告白” (Announcement by our company), *SB* 30.4.1872.

seeks the truth in contemporary events” 時事求實者。¹⁷⁴ And indeed, this work ethic of truthfulness and accuracy was epitomized in a sign that has hung over the entrance of *Shenbao* since the early 1880s: “A business respectful of the news” 尊聞閣。¹⁷⁵ On the other hand, Major wanted his newspaper to sell, and to do that, it had to entertain as well as educate. The regulations printed in the first issue of *Shenbao*,¹⁷⁶ right next to the article denouncing *zhiguai*, state that the aim of the newspaper is to bring both the new and the strange 新奇 to the reader. Variations of this statement appeared time and again in announcements and editorials.¹⁷⁷ An editorial of 1877, which advertises a collection of selected items from the *Shenbao* in book form, states that the newspaper is appreciated so much not only because it publishes many important and broad discussions but also because it records “astonishing and wonderful affairs” 可驚可喜之事 (ll. 8 and 22).¹⁷⁸ An editorial of 1873 even explicitly compares the strange relations to be read in the *Shenbao* with stories of the strange, *zhiguai*.¹⁷⁹ Reading about the strange was an established and popular practice. Accordingly, as entertaining reading matter, the newspapers were in competition with stories of the strange, and therefore *Shenbao* opted to include these stories under the guise of news.¹⁸⁰ So, even though

174. “延友訪事告白” (Advertisement for journalists), *SB* 7.7.1875. The argument recurs in “論本報銷數” (On the sales of the *Shenbao*), *SB* 10.2.1877; in “與西友論報紙體例” (Talking with a foreign friend about newspaper styles), *SB* 17.10.1897, and in the criticism of the unreliability of journalists in “整頓報紙弱言,” *SB* 15.8.1898.

175. Cf. *Shenbao tongxun* 1947, no. 1-4: 22. The sign read 尊聞閣, which was interpreted as 尊重新聞事業.

176. “本館條例” (Our company’s regulations), *SB* 30.4.1872.

177. E.g., “本館自述” (News from our company), *SB* 8.5.1872; “本館告白,” (Announcement by our company), *SB* 16.5.1872; “本館自敘” (Self-explanation of our company), *SB* 20.5.1872.

178. “選新聞紙成書說” (On selecting from newspapers to make a book), *SB* 28.3.1877.

179. “申報館賦” (A prose-poem on the Shenbao Publishing House), *SB* 15.2.1873, l.11: 惟神奇之說比於志怪之齊 (Discussions of the strange [in this newspaper] are just like *zhiguai*).

180. This obviously worked both ways; the newspaper led to changes in traditional *zhiguai* as well. There are examples of *zhiguai* collections based on materials that initially appeared in the newspapers. Moreover, as an echo to the forced anonymity of *Shenbao* news reports, for example, “a certain Mr. Wang” becomes a distinctive feature of late Qing editions of *zhiguai*; this practice establishes a dis-

Shenbao faced ridicule from Western-language papers in China for the more bizarre stories it printed,¹⁸¹ it continued to carry them for a long time and justified their use in programmatic statements. In a 1874 editorial "Refuting Discussions of the *Shenbao* by Western Papers in Hong Kong" ("Bo Xianggang xibao lun Shenbao shi" 駁香港西報論申報事, *SB* 25.12.1874), for example, the *Shenbao* argues that at least half of the Chinese population enjoys and believes these stories and says that even in the West, "stories of the strange" are popular (the implicit example given is the Bible).¹⁸² Although the excuse was "entertainment," these news stories were in fact a tribute to Chinese taste: for news, too, is a "social construct empowered by a cultural history."¹⁸³ Thus, Major, the foreign manager, was in fact willing to accept what he considered "fictional" writing in his "factual" paper; indeed, he even promoted the reading of his newspaper as a book¹⁸⁴ and thus supported approaching the newspaper with a distinctly Chinese and "literary attitude."

Indeed, Chinese attitudes toward literature were one reason for the apparent difficulty with foreign distinctions between fact and fiction in early Chinese news writing. Many of the narrative techniques mentioned above, such as the use of dialogue for characterization¹⁸⁵ and the structuring, retarding, and increasing of the textual flow through time words and adverbial phrases, are used in traditional Chinese

tant, collective narratorial authority in this fiction. For these observations, see Huntington, "Zbiguai and Late Qing Periodicals."

181. Rudolf G. Wagner has found evidence for such criticisms in the *Celestial Empire*. As mentioned above in note 160 and paradoxically, in view of this Western disdain, there are plenty of strange writings catering to this particular taste, even in the Chinese edition of the *North China Herald*, the *Shanghai xinbao* (see, e.g., "夢遊仙境" [Dream-traveling in the land of the immortals], *SHXB* 9.12.1872).

182. See the discussion in Vittinghoff, "Am Rande des Ruhms," chap. 6.

183. Koch, *News as Myth*, 19. There are other reasons for which factuality was sometimes disregarded in the new-style papers' reporting, considerations of etiquette being one example. For this matter see Vittinghoff, "Am Rande des Ruhms," 226.

184. "選新聞紙成書說," *SB* 28.3.1877.

185. The generally flat character depiction in Chinese narrative has been enhanced by characterization through dialogue since at least the *Zuozhuan* 左傳, a commentary on the *Spring and Autumn Annals* (春秋); see John Wang, "Early Chinese Narrative," 8-9.

“fiction” as well as in “factual” writings such as the dynastic histories (and thus from the Chinese point of view were applicable to the writing of news).¹⁸⁶ Sima Qian’s prototype of official historiography is greatly indebted to sources that may only be termed pseudo-historical (if not patently fictional) from a modern point of view, however.¹⁸⁷ Indeed, the dynastic histories include relations of strange events, dreams, and portents in their regular section on the “five elements,” *wuxing* 五行. What might be considered factual and fictional discourse, respectively, are conjoined in one category.¹⁸⁸

This is not to say that there were no distinctions between “fact” and “fiction” in Chinese understanding but simply that they were very different from those introduced to China since the late nineteenth century. A text changes status according to cultural context: its creators may see it as the “Truth” and “Fact”; its readers may view it as “Untruth” and thus relabel it “Fiction.”¹⁸⁹ The “literariness” of text is intrinsic, guaranteed by a number of complex intentions, genre conventions, and cultural traditions. At the same time, it is conditioned by and dependent on subjective and revocable evaluations.¹⁹⁰ The relative quality of “fact” and “fiction” is evident when we recall that the modern Chinese term for fiction, *xiaoshuo* 小說, did not include the idea of “invented matter” until it had been in use for several centuries. Originally, it stood for something that we would probably call “news” today: in the *Zhuangzi* 莊子 (ca. 3rd–2nd c. BCE), *xiaoshuo* meant “word of mouth,” and in pre-Han and Han times, *xiaoshuo* referred to the talk of ordinary people in the marketplace, collected by minor court officials as a means of keeping the court apprised of

186. Plaks, “Towards a Critical Theory of Chinese Narrative,” 311. Subsequently (314) he remarks: “Historical writing, oriented towards the function of transmission, occupies the predominant position within the range of Chinese narrative possibilities so that it is fiction that becomes the subset and historiography the central model of narration.” He argues that “historiography replaces epic among the Chinese narrative genres, providing not only a set of complex techniques of structuration and characterization but also a conceptual model for the perception of significance within the outlines of human events.”

187. See *Ibid.*, 312; Sheldon Lu, *From Historicity to Fictionality*; and Campany, *Strange Writing*.

188. See Frus, *The Politics and Poetics of Journalistic Narrative*, 528.

189. Genette, *Fiktion und Diktion*, 61.

190. *Ibid.*, 7.

popular opinion.¹⁹¹ *Xiaoshuo*, then, were defined less by their form than by their contents. Criteria distinguishing *xiaoshuo* from other, "more serious," writings, took into account the social status of the protagonists allowed to appear in one or the other, for example. This explains why, traditionally, *xiaoshuo* was frowned upon as an anti-discourse and an anti-genre that destroyed the proper hierarchies of the literary canon (a definition that can be traced back to Confucius, who disdained "petty writings," *xiaodao* 小道). This pejorative view of *xiaoshuo* or "fiction" was reconfigured only with the influential May Fourth, or New Culture movement in the second and third decade of the twentieth century.¹⁹²

What was or was not included in the category of *xiaoshuo* in the arts sections of the dynastic histories was not self-evident or traditionally stable either. Stories of the strange, for example *zhiguai*, came to be considered "fiction" only as late as the Ming; early readers accepted them as "history."¹⁹³ Another such shift is to be observed in the Chinese conception of "literature," *wenxue* 文學, some time around 1895. At this point, *wenxue* as any kind of humane letters and writing is narrowed to *wenxue* in the sense of "imaginative writing," or "fiction."¹⁹⁴ Thus, by the late nineteenth century, the question of what was fiction and what was fact had been a matter of continuous debate in China as well as in the West,¹⁹⁵ and it should come as no surprise that foreign and Chinese definitions of these two categories did not completely overlap.

191. Liu Wu-chi, *Introduction to Chinese Literature*, 141; and Sheldon Lu, *From Historicity to Fictionality*, esp. 39–52.

192. For a study of Lu Xun's 鲁迅 (1881–1936) *Brief History of Chinese Fiction* exemplifying this paradigm shift, see Mittler, "Zwischen chinesischer Tradition und europäischen Ideen."

193. DeWoskin, "The *Sou-Shen-chi* and the *Chih-kuai* Tradition," 297; idem, "Six Dynasties *chih-kuai*," 51. See also the careful study by Company, *Strange Writing*. By using the title "Historian of the Strange," Pu Songling (蒲松齡, 1640–1715), in following the old *zhiguai* tradition, developed a discursive format that enabled him to "cross the boundaries between the factual and the fantastic, the historical and the esoteric"; see David Wang, *Fin-de-Siècle Splendor*, 201; and Zeitlin, *Historian of the Strange*.

194. See Hutters, "A New Way of Writing," 272n1.

195. See Company, *Strange Writing*; and Sheldon Lu, *From Historicity to Fictionality*, esp. chaps. 1 and 2.

Hence for a long time, traditional narrative forms that were at best seen as on the border between the “fictional” and the “factual” in nineteenth-century foreign terms, served Chinese newspapers well. There was as yet no handbook on “how to write news” in China. As late as 1898, a *Shenbao* editorial dealing with the form and format of newspaper-writing admits that “since it has not long been used in China” 中土風行未久 no “standard” had yet been developed 無典.¹⁹⁶ Even during the reforms of February 1905, no such standard was set: one of the most important points in an article explaining the layout reform is that the newspaper be as broad and detailed as possible in its coverage, making the voice of public opinion heard. But it is not mentioned what would qualify as news. Indeed, the article even confirms that the form of items sent in by correspondents or readers does not matter at all.¹⁹⁷

The Chinese journalist who eschewed established foreign forms and standards in favor of a number of well-known traditional techniques simply wrote in the style that came most naturally to himself and to his readers. He wrote short, matter-of-fact, accurate descriptions of crimes, wars, and catastrophes, like those found in the *gongmenchao* section of the *jingbao*. He penned reports in the narrative style of historical writings with the strong sense of chronology found in the *Zuo-zhuan* tradition (a commentary on the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, *Chunqiu* 春秋) or in the evaluative style typical since Sima Qian’s *Records of the Grand Historian*.¹⁹⁸ Or he employed the techniques of a number of literary forms: prose-poetry, tales of retribution, and *zhiguai*.

These formal consistencies are not to say, however, that there was nothing new in these early news reports. News may have been related from time immemorial in China (some call the *Spring and Autumn Annals* the first news collection), and the conventions for narrating news, however prosaic or strange, had long been established. Nevertheless, the question of who or what was respectable and thus worthy of report did change considerably with the introduction of the foreign-style newspaper. Certain groups of protagonists, for instance,

196. “整頓報務餘言,” *SB* 24.8.1898.

197. “本館整頓報務舉例” (An itemized list of reforms in our company’s newspaper), *SB* 7.2.1905.

198. These categories are suggested in Li Liangrong, *Zhongguo baozhi wenti fazhan gaiyao*, 7–9.

who had seldom been thought newsworthy in traditional China, conquered the late Qing newspaper. Rebellious women and penniless peasants had traditionally been banned to the "lesser" fictional genres and rarely appeared in "serious" prose writings such as the dynastic histories or the traditional news media, except in reports of court cases.¹⁹⁹ Thus, despite its traditional attire and long before acceptance of foreign standards after the turn of the twentieth century, the news in the early *Shenbao* brought something new to China. Cleverly hidden under a traditional cover, *Shenbao* articles dealt with new subjects. Thus, packaged within well-established forms of narrative, early news in the foreign-style newspaper brought about a rearrangement of realities, of fact and fiction, and it is this first reshuffling—not the later orientalist acceptance of foreign definitions of "what is *not* news"—that marked the most important change in the conception of "what is news" in China.

*Commentaries: New
Names for Old Forms of Deliberation*

Since the turn of the twentieth century and most markedly with the reorganization of the *Shenbao* in 1905, a number of new, clear-cut categories had been introduced.²⁰⁰ This change was accompanied by the appearance of short commentaries under headings such as *pinglun* 評論 (critical commentary), *shelun* 社論 (social commentary), *shiping* 時評 (timely criticisms), *zaping* 雜評 (various criticisms), or *qingtan* 清談 (pure deliberations). As manifestations of the acceptance of foreign standards of factuality and objectivity, the new categories and the new commentaries are thus the products of the most dramatic and all-encompassing revision of the interior makeup of China's newspapers. As the following analysis of two of these new forms of commentary will illustrate, they were still based on well-established traditional forms of deliberations in prose, however.

There is no genre in the traditional canon called *shiping*, "timely criticisms." Indeed, the *shiping*, which began to appear in a number of

199. Cf. the introduction of writings on blacks during the civil rights movement in Leonard, "Antislavery, Civil Rights, and Incendiary Material," esp. 126.

200. After another reform in 1907, on 29.3.1907, these categories were visibly separated by flowery dingbats.

newspapers in 1904, would oust the *baguwen* editorial.²⁰¹ The new *shipping* is nonetheless modeled on a traditional genre, the *ping* 評, which, in the *Wenxin diaolong*, is defined as a form for deliberating history written in a “leveled and reasonable” 平理 manner. Similarly, in the *Shenbao*, a *shipping* critically deliberated and evaluated 評 timely 時 affairs. It was a short (twelve–seventeen lines of seventeen characters each), openly subjective form, moralizing in tone and didactic in nature.²⁰²

The *shipping* “What I Consider Most Dangerous Today” (“Yu wei jinri zhi zui keweizhe” 余謂今日之最可危者, *SB* 14.12.1912), for example, begins on a personal note (the type of introduction also typical of a *ji*): upon his return from a trip to Beijing, the journalist sat down and wrote his report. This is followed by two paragraphs, each presenting a long tirade of parallel clauses beginning with “is not” 非:

What I consider most dangerous in present-day China *is not the outside threat, is not the border defense, is not financial politics, is not the party struggles, is not the military uproars, is not the qualifications of the people*. It is the lack of a sense of responsibility among those who are responsible, and that is all.

What I mean by [saying] that those responsible lack a sense of responsibility *is not that they discard responsibility, is not that they delegate responsibility, is not that they do not know of the existence of responsibility*.

In the author’s opinion, the government simply does not know how to do the things expected of it and thus ends up doing nothing. His level-headed critique acquires a biting touch through the use of these parallel constructions. The repetitive beginning within such a re-

201. The argument that *Shibao* introduced the *shipping* is a subject of debate. Li Liangrong (*Zhongguo baozhi wenti fazhan gaiyao*, 36) cites a *shipping* published in *Zhongguo ribao* 中國日報 in March 1904, three months before the first issue of *Shibao* appeared.

202. This moral didacticism is immediately obvious from titles such as “What I Consider Most Dangerous Today” (“余謂今日之最可危者,” *SB* 14.12.1912), “The Heavenly Duty of the Critic/Orator” (“言論家之天職,” *SB* 6.11.1912), “Begging the Government Not to Cheat Citizens” (“請政府毋欺國民,” *SB* 2.12.1912), and “What a Great Country’s Citizens Ought to Be Like” (“大國民固宜如是,” *SB* 3.11.1912). Unlike the *qingtan* discussed below, however, the authorial presence in these *shipping* is only seldom marked with the phrase 記者曰, “the journalist says.”

stricted number of short lines creates a hypnotic staccato that is particularly effective in swaying readers.²⁰³

Whereas the *shiping* were introduced as a replacement for the "outdated" *baguwen* editorial, another commentarial form, the *qingtan* (pure deliberations), which first appeared in the *Shenbao* around the same time, is a deliberate revival of an old form. *Qingtan* came into use in the third to fourth centuries as the name for detailed, differentiated, witty, and always critical discussions of certain persons or events. This tradition seems to have directly influenced the creation of the newspaper *qingtan*. It usually consists of two or three paragraphs. The first paragraph reads like an aphorism or a short statement of fact. This is followed by a long paragraph discussing the situation or person in question. The concluding paragraph, most of the time rather short, presents the journalist's personal view on the matter, often introduced by the phrase "the journalist says" (*jizhe yue* 記者曰), a practice reminiscent of the familiar "the sage says" in philosophical texts, "the gentleman speaks" in classical writings such as the *Zuo-zhuan*, or "the Grand Historian speaks," the phrase that introduces the chapter-ending comments in the *Shiji* tradition. The adaptation of this familiar phrase gives the new impersonator, the journalist, an authoritative voice.

A *qingtan* of 1 March 1912 begins with the aphorism "What makes people different from animals is not that they can speak or move but that they have knowledge." The entire article is a harsh criticism of Yuan Shikai's politics: it is said that he is interested in power alone and that he wants to overthrow the republic. The *qingtan* ends with the journalist's warning to those who do not heed his advice. In another *qingtan* of 18 March 1912, the first paragraph states that since the establishment of the republic "there are two things that have developed most, one is the parties and the other is the news industry." It continues:

As for the parties and their members, they have made it their heavenly duty to hold political discussions and to lead the government. The journalists, they have made it their heavenly duty to propagate 鼓吹 public

203. Such repetitions are playfully used in the column "心直口快" (With straight heart and happy mouth) in the "Free Talk" section. The column always features a set number of sentences beginning or ending in a repetitive passage or phrase; see, e.g., "十可怕" (Ten things to be feared), *SB* 6.4.1912.

opinion and to supervise 監督 the government. A government that receives manifold good leadership and good supervision—that is a happy government indeed.

The journalist says: “If among the people in government there are those who consider this [situation] unfortunate, then how could that be happiness for the lives of many people?”

In the *qingtan*, harsh personalized critiques are traditionally acceptable. Although all these new-style *qingtan* deal with distinctly contemporary subjects (as did the historical *qingtan* in their time), they strike the traditional pose of the remonstrating scholar and often appeal to traditional values. It is significant, however, that the one assuming the role of the sage is a practitioner of a new profession, the journalist.

Even after a thorough reform of the makeup of the newspaper, even after a revision of conceptions of fact and fiction, even after a revolution in the educational system and the abandonment of the civil-service examinations, all of which took place in the first years of the twentieth century, China's newspapermen still looked to tradition in writing “new-style” commentaries. In their adaptations of conventional genres, their resort to rhetorical techniques such as repetitive parallelisms, and their adoption of the pose of the remonstrating official, these new types of commentary gained general acceptance by appealing to well-established standards of writing. From the beginning China's newspapers openly advocated change, but change was seldom visible on their own pages. If they wrote of creating the new citizen, of opening up secluded China, of learning from public opinion, they did so in literary forms that had long been in use and continued to be used in writings on statecraft of the time. It was these interlocking antagonisms between form and content, combined with fast delivery and broad reach, rather than the development of truly new forms,²⁰⁴ that distinguished this category of writing: Chinese newspaper prose.

204. Here I take issue with Janku (“Der Leitartikel der *Shenbao*,” 3) and Li Liangrong (*Zhongguo baozhi wenti fazhan gaiyao*, 20), both of whom argue that the introduction of new topics within old forms necessarily led to changes in the old forms. I would contend that it did so, but only to a small degree.

Chinese Newspaper
Prose: A New Style of Writing?

In a style no one can match, you say what everyone thinks, so that even men of stone or iron must be moved.

—Huang Zunxian 黄遵憲 (1848–1905) to Liang Qichao, 1902²⁰⁵

It has often been said—by contemporaries and successors alike—that Liang Qichao's newspaper prose was the beginning of the "new style of writing," *xin wenti* 新文體. According to Chinese newspaper historians, Liang Qichao's style was responsible for the sweeping changes that, they argue, can be observed in newspaper prose in the period between 1896 and 1916.²⁰⁶ In the remainder of this chapter, I discuss the qualities attributed to his new style of writing and compare them with newspaper writing in *Shenbao*.²⁰⁷ I will show that much of what is considered unique in Liang Qichao's writing can be found in newspaper articles predating his own by several decades. I will argue, first, that what is considered novel in his style may not be so novel after all (even though some of what are considered the special qualities of Liang Qichao's writings do occur more frequently in newspaper prose after he started writing); and, second, that there are other, more idiosyncratic qualities of his style that make his prose as appealing as it is and somehow impossible to copy. Thus, I will argue that Liang Qichao's prose was indeed a great (but not the foundational) influence in the making of newspaper prose in China.

What was special about Liang Qichao's style? He explained (referring to himself in the third person):

205. Cited in Nathan, "Liang Ch'i-ch'ao's 'New-Style Writing,'" 29.

206. *Shanghai jindai wenxue shi*, 140, argues that Liang Qichao's *Shiwubao* was responsible for the greatest leap in the development of the new newspaper prose. See also M. C. Liu, "Liang Ch'i-Ch'ao"; and Nathan, *Chinese Democracy*. Vittinghoff ("Am Rande des Ruhms," chap. 9; and idem, "Unity vs. Uniformity") shows convincingly that Liang Qichao was one of the most adamant advocates of himself and his importance in creating a new press and a new style of writing for this press.

207. A long and heated debate on Liang Qichao's style with Vivian Wagner, Catherine Yeh, and Rudolf G. Wagner has helped me formulate the thoughts that follow. I am grateful to them for their suggestions and, more important, their disagreements.

His own early writing had been modeled after that of Han, Wei, and Jin and was quite cogent and skilful, but at this point (1898–1902) he liberated himself from it and made it a rule to be plain, easy, expressive, and fluent of communication. He interlarded his writings with colloquialisms, verses, and foreign expressions fairly frequently, letting his pen flow freely and without restraint. Scholars hastened to imitate his style and it became known as the New-Style Writing. . . . His style had a clear structure and the flow of his pen was often passionate, with a rare magical kind of power for the reader.²⁰⁸

A number of closer analyses have made these general statements, which are repeatedly cited as the distinctive elements of Liang's style, more concrete and tangible.²⁰⁹ According to these analyses, Liang relied on sources as diverse as proverbs, folksongs, and quotations from foreign as well as from Chinese works, and he used ingenious metaphors and foreign grammatical structures side by side with traditional Chinese parallelisms.²¹⁰ He frequently argued by analogy and concrete examples, in a fast-moving and not always clear sequence of steps, with vivid contrasts and rapid rhythms and at times a biting iconoclasm, and he was sharply present as a person in his writings, which tend to be emotional and direct.²¹¹ If we compare this list with *Shenbao* texts, it is evident that these items appear to be typical elements of a synthetic style—one that relies heavily on traditional formal elements but juxtaposes them with new and rather untraditional contents—a style that was not Liang Qichao's alone, but was practiced by many *Shenbao* journalists from its inauguration. A closer reading of one of Liang Qichao's most famous essays, "On Young China" ("Shaonian Zhongguo shuo" 少年中國說) of 1901, in comparison with *Shenbao* texts will serve to provide more concrete evidence for the existence of these very same stylistic traits.

208. Liang Qichao, *Intellectual Trends in the Ch'ing Period*, 102.

209. See, e.g., Li Liangrong, *Zhongguo baozhi wenti fazhan gaiyao*, 32–33; and *Shanghai jindai wenxue shi*, 148.

210. Hutters, "New Way of Writing," 248, 257; Tang, *Global Space and the Nationalist Discourse of Modernity*, 17–21; and Gunn, *Rewriting Chinese*, 34.

211. Nathan. "Liang Ch'i-ch'ao's 'New-Style Writing,'" 6.

Emotion, the frequent use of emphatic particles, and the strong presence of the author, clearly seen in Liang's essay,²¹² for example, can be observed in many *Shenbao* editorials. They often begin or end with a phrase containing "alas" 嗚呼;²¹³ many argue emotionally;²¹⁴ and the editorialist or news reporter who strongly identifies with what he is describing, and calls out loudly for "my/our China" 吾/我中國 is common.²¹⁵ Rather than objectively reporting or standing in for the "personality of the newspaper" behind an editorial "we," the author of a Chinese editorial is a strong, subjective presence (and remained so, even after the turn of the twentieth century), often appearing as an "I" 余, 竊, 吾 or "this scribe" 執筆者, or even under his own name.²¹⁶ The author-persona also frequently turns to the reader directly, addressing "all you gentlemen" 諸君子 in the same way Liang Qichao did.²¹⁷ It is partly because of these recurrent direct appeals to the reader that these texts consist of a bizarre mix of vernacular and classical-style phrases and contain some strange and ungrammatical displacements of the word order. Moreover, these texts often engage in the redefinition or creation of a particular terminology later to be labeled "modern."²¹⁸ These are typical elements of the language both of the early *Shenbao* and of Liang Qichao's later newspaper prose.

212. Notice the repeated use of "alas," Liang's constant identification with 我中國 "our China" and 我少年 "our youth," and his appearance in the text as "Liang Qichao says" (paragraph 5 and 9).

213. To cite just a few examples, the editorial in *SB* 9.4.1877 begins "Alas"; *SB* 13.10.1877 (discussed below in Chapter 5) returns with an "Alas, I look at Shanghai again . . ."; and *SB* 9.9.1887 cries out "Alas, the world is a stage." For more editorial sighs, see Chapters 4–6 below.

214. See, e.g., an editorial that calls an order excluding women from tea picking "pitiable: one cannot but be moved" (*SB* 30.12.1882).

215. A number of striking examples of this are discussed in Chapters 4 and 6. See, e.g., *SB* 1.7.1900.

216. See *SB* 12.2.1873: "This is not my personal opinion alone" (非子一人之私說); *SB* 10.2.1887: "I think" (竊以爲); *SB* 16.3.1887: "What I think of this is as follows"; *SB* 1.7.1900: "And then I say" (余則曰).

217. For the earliest example, see the request for manuscripts and information from readers in the guidelines for publication, *SB* 30.4.1872.

218. Some of the terms popularized by Liang Qichao had already been discussed in the *Shenbao* decades earlier; a more careful and thorough study of the terminology used in the *Shenbao* is needed, however. Liang's famous concept of *qun* 群 (collective/grouping), essential to his reformist program, developed in the mid-1890s, for instance (see the discussion in Tang, *Global Space and Nationalist*

As for the use of metaphors, “weather reports” made use of poetic images, and fancy metaphorical descriptions such as “immortal’s stairs” 仙梯 to describe a Shanghai elevator, for example, were common in *Shenbao* articles.²¹⁹ Metaphors also occur frequently in equations between foreign and Chinese institutions. A great many of the bodily metaphors used to describe the (sick) Chinese body politic²²⁰ are not particularly original and recur often not only in writings of early Chinese journalists but also in those of later statesmen and politicians—and of course in Liang Qichao (as in his description of the newspaper mentioned in the Introduction). Thus, metaphors rather similar to Liang’s, some fresh, some more hackneyed, were used by writers for the *Shenbao* long before Liang Qichao established them as part of the “new style.”

The same can be said about the use of quotations, to be discussed in more detail in the next chapter. We have seen examples above of quotations from the Classics as well as of folksongs, proverbs, and, increasingly so after the turn of the century, from foreign sources. This use of quotations in the *Shenbao* predates or parallels that in Liang’s

Discourse, 65–68), and *qunzhi* 群治 (regulating society, governing the people) was not coined by Liang Qichao (it appears, among others, in his famous “Lun xiaoshuo yu qunzhi zhi guanxi” of 1902), as is often assumed (see Hsia “Yen Fu and Liang Ch’i-ch’ao as Advocates of New Fiction,” 222n3). These expressions are anticipated in *Shenbao* articles; e.g., for *qun* the article dealing with “Strange Stories from India and France” discussed above (*SB* 9.11.1877) and for *qunzhi* a eulogy on Sun Yatsen discussed in Chapter 2 and cited in full in Appendix B (*SB* 1.1.1912). The same could perhaps also be said about the concept of the “new citizen,” invoked incessantly on the pages of the *Shenbao*, first in its inaugural issue (*SB* 30.4.1872). See note 92 to this chapter.

219. The expression occurs in a bamboo-rhyme in *SB* 30.5.1872. For more examples, see Chapter 5.

220. One of many examples is an editorial about why Chinese do not develop proper “citizens’ feelings” (*SB* 16.3.1887); see also *SB* 23.3.1902, which deals with the need to introduce Western education to China: China’s problem (which is described in terms of an ailment) is that it does not understand the West. A particularly appealing metaphor is used in an editorial on trade (*SB* 20.9.1902, l. 5). Southeast Asia appears as the “throat” of trade between the West and China. The article is discussed in Chapter 2. An editorial dealing with friendship in *SB* 21.2.1873 likens good friends to bottom and lid of a vessel. Another metaphor worked almost into an allegory is that of a fish and how it can and cannot live (paralleling human life and especially the difficulties of the lower classes) in an editorial in *SB* 21.10.1872.

newspaper prose. Similarly, Liang Qichao's "fast style of writing," his ability to sweep through thousands of years of history in only two lines of text as he does in "On Young China," for example, is also not unique to himself. Indeed, many a *Shenbao* article using history as precedent or a foil will run through millennia in a few lines of text.²²¹ Accordingly, Liang's effective use of contrasts between old and new, China and the West, has many precedents in the newspaper writing of earlier days (as well as being part of the repertoire of the Tongcheng school of writing).

The effective use of rhythmic changes and sudden variations in the tempo of reading, a hallmark of Liang's style, is part of the rhetorical repertoire of *Shenbao* as well: the news report on pickpockets, recounting three deaths in one line, or the editorial narrative depicting Mr. Yang's excitement upon seeing his courtesan by a shortening of lines can be mentioned as examples. Biting irony and iconoclasm, too, are not restricted to Liang's writings but occur frequently in the early *Shenbao*. In "On Young China," (end of paragraph 8) Liang parodied the beginning of the *Great Learning* 大學 and started his tirade against *bagu*-chanting officials by recording some of their ridiculous questions. The iconoclasm in the treatment of classical quotations in *Shenbao* will be discussed in detail in the next chapter, but we have already encountered the use of a negative foil to the ideal implied reader, such as the *bagu*-chanting officials ridiculed here by Liang. These kind of fools who have to be told everything are rhetorical features frequently used in *Shenbao*, too.²²²

Nevertheless, it is clear that few—if any—of the articles cited here have the flair, the "magical power," of Liang Qichao's style in some of his strongest works such as "On Young China." This essay is baffling

221. E.g., especially the articles explaining the newspaper and the articles explaining the difference between the newspaper and the Chinese court gazette already discussed above and in the Introduction. A similar example is *SB* 30.3.1877, the article on rationality and fate mentioned above, which has a passage running through different periods of history (l. 18). *SB* 13.1.1897 has a discussion of the "development" of crime in China throughout history. See also *SB* 23.3.1902, which surveys the examination system throughout history, or *SB* 28.11.1902, which traces the history of translation.

222. See the *bagu* editorial discussed above ("論各國新報之設," *SB* 18.8.1873, ll. 10–11). For similar ironic images of the negative foil of the ideal readers, see the discussion of women's education in Chapter 4. Liang Qichao also mentions the *bagu*-chanting officials in "Lun baoguan you yi yu guoshi," 102.

as a whole; certainly it is more than the sum of these singular parts. It appeals and convinces not so much because of any one of the stylistic markers discussed here, but as a whole, in its intensity, its utopian tone, its disjunctions in mood, its idiosyncrasy. It is not my intent to belittle the quality of Liang's writing, indeed, his flamboyant and original style, which none of the newspaper writers were ever able to imitate much less to anticipate, may have had an influence as so many claimed (and still claim).²²³ But I think that there is need for further study. There is evidence that Liang Qichao's role in the *formation* of an alleged "new style of writing," which Chinese newspaper prose indeed was, not unlike his role in the foundation of a politically active press in China, has been overemphasized.²²⁴ The commercial papers, in their creation of new forms for the newspaper, may have played a role in the fashioning of that new style of writing that was perhaps just as or even more crucial than that of Liang Qichao. In his own idiosyncratic writings, Liang did not *create* this synthetic style, which relied heavily on disjunctions between traditional formal features and untraditional contents. He *perfected* it.

Conclusion

The "invention" of the keywords *factuality* and *objectivity* in reporting and the ensuing separation of the factual from the fictional, and objective narration from the subjective, an invention that was accompanied by a re-evaluation of literature, or *wenxue*, as a collection of timeless works of universal value and appeal,²²⁵ created a new view of newspaper prose in the consciousness of newspaper readers both in China and in the West. As a Western journalist wrote in 1928,

223. Liang's ideas on style have been considered extraordinarily influential: "In the last half-year," wrote Huang Zunxian to Liang (his letter is dated 1902), "all forty or fifty newspapers in China have taken up the arguments you promote. Your phrases are plagiarized everywhere: in the terminology of new translations, the language of common gossip, the memorials of officials, the examination topics set by civil service examiners" (cited in Nathan, *Chinese Democracy*, 144).

224. See Vittinghoff "Unity vs. Uniformity."

225. This is to say that only works that transcended their (factual) context qualify for inclusion in the category of literature (cf. Frus, *The Politics and Poetics of Journalistic Narrative*, 5), a shift in meaning similar to the one observed in the Chinese conception of *wenxue* around 1895 (see the discussion above on p. 102).

"journalism is not and never can pretend to be a department of literature."²²⁶ This cultural construct became a Truth perpetuated throughout the first half of the twentieth century both in the West and in China. It became such a commonplace that in the 1960s the American journalist Tom Wolfe claimed to have created a "journalism that would read like a novel." This "New Journalism," as it was called, was hailed as a "new genre," a "third type of language," one that combined literature, as the garden of the imagination, and journalism, as the empire of facts.²²⁷ "Impersonal newspaper prose" is still assumed to have been in existence since time immemorial, an unexamined given, while this new type of literary journalism has been hailed as a panacea to journalism²²⁸ and has captured the imagination of a number of writers and scholars (a 1989 master thesis is even devoted to "proving the existence of a new genre").²²⁹

The absurdity of this claim—especially in recent years, when the borders between fact and fiction have become increasingly blurred and problematized again²³⁰—need not be proved: journalism in the West until the 1890s was subjective and literary, however much that may have been forgotten by the middle of the next century.²³¹ Names such as Daniel Defoe, Theodore Dreiser, Ernest Hemingway, and Mark Twain ought to remind us that journalists were often writers

226. Nevins, "The Editorial as a Literary Form," 19. For a discussion of the history of the bifurcation of news as story and news as fact in the West, see Koch, *News as Myth*, esp. the introduction.

227. Pauly, "Politics of the New Journalism," 110.

228. Hellmann (*Fables of Fact*, 4) argues that "the problem with *conventional* journalism is that . . . it refuses to acknowledge the creative nature of its 'news,' instead concealing the structuring mechanisms of its organizational mind behind masks of objectivity and fact."

229. Bush, "The Use of Fiction Elements in Nonfiction: Proving the Existence of a New Genre."

230. The deconstruction of history as narrative by Hayden White is only one example; see esp. his *Content of the Form*. Historians of journalism, too, have increasingly begun to question the possibility of achieving the aim of objectivity in news writing (e.g., Koch, *News as Myth*, chap. 1).

231. It is this lack of memory that made the craze for New Journalism possible in the first place. For a historical evaluation of the phenomenon and its distinguished but unrecognized predecessors, see the collection of essays *Literary Journalism*, and esp. Pauly, "Politics of the New Journalism."

and vice versa, that novelists and journalists shared similar styles.²³² In the Chinese case, the question whether any part of nineteenth-century journalism could pretend to be a “department of literature” has to be answered in the affirmative: literary forms, fictional and factual narrative, prose and poetry, were indeed the backbone of the *xin wenti* that was Chinese newspaper prose. From the evidence provided in this chapter, it is clear that foreign-style Chinese-language newspapers were distinctly literary in nature. But external evidence, too, proves this point: the facts that newspapers were read attentively from beginning to end, that newspaper clippings were republished as books, and that newspaper stories were included in *zhiguai* collections show that newspapers were read as literature.²³³ In China, I would argue, there was in the beginning no awareness of a difference between “journal-ese”²³⁴ and other forms of writing. The literary language to be found in China’s Western-style papers was not perceived as a third type of language, since there were not the same clear-cut definitions of the first and second types of language, those of fact and fiction. Chinese journalism was literary journalism from the beginning.

One reason for studying the interior format of the newspaper was to see whether and how the Western-style newspaper went native. Instead of copying foreign forms of newspaper writing, China’s journalists instead adapted traditional genres for political writings and used them, most of the time consistent with their original intentions, to write editorials, news reports, and commentaries. The use of these conservative literary forms is important given the common contention that the late Qing was an age of iconoclasm in which “newly fashioned ‘newspaper prose’ became more popular than the Classics

232. See Danielson et al., “Journalists and Novelists,” 438; Drewry, *Concerning the Fourth Estate*, 6–7; and Schiller, *Objectivity and the News*, e.g., 70.

233. Chapter 3, which discusses the literariness of *jingbao* prose and elaborates on the close connections between stories in the *jingbao* and in fictional literature from the Ming and Qing, further supports this point. The *jingbao* appears as prop in literature but also as source, as is often indicated in the prefaces of late Ming or Qing stories and novels. The resulting fiction, which had its heyday some time in the Ming, dealt prominently with contemporary affairs, some of which had happened only weeks before the novel was written. This was New Journalism turned on its head, dealing with factual affairs in a fictional manner. See Liu Yongqiang, “Ming-Qing *dibao yu wenxue zhi guanxi*,” esp. 455, 458, 461.

234. Hemingway’s term appears in Weber, “Hemingway’s Permanent Records,” 24.

themselves."²³⁵ This newly fashioned prose was in fact to a considerable extent formatted as a literary classic. Indeed, the adaptability of the old forms may have ensured the continuing appeal of *Shenbao* editorials, commentaries, and news to that newspaper's readers.

And yet, these classical forms and stylistic devices which, as pointed out repeatedly, were equally used in contemporary writings on statecraft addressed to the rulers at hand, here appeared on the pages of a new public medium; they were addressed to a new readership, and they were filled with new subjects. In this survey of the use of these forms on the pages of the *Shenbao* between its establishment in 1872 and the first year of the republic in 1912, I have attempted to analyze the effects of this clever packaging. I have examined whether and how writing for the newspaper affected the traditional prose forms employed and whether and how newspaper writing itself was affected over time. Although some of the changes, especially after the turn of the century, resulted from the influx of knowledge about "how to write as a journalist" from the West, it appears that the argument often made that the most significant feature of newspaper prose was its foreign nature, does not hold true.²³⁶ Chinese newspaper prose, even after 1905, was not a "new style of writing" because it was foreign-style prose. To some extent, it denied foreign patterns of writing even after 1905—witness the increasingly subjective and emotional evidence from editorials (if not news). Rather, I would argue, Chinese newspaper prose became part of a "new style of writing" (which was by no means restricted, however, to the newspaper) because it was a radical reinvention of old forms and techniques. The use of parallelisms and repetitions is a case in point: they are integral parts of traditional style of writing. They are prevalent in many early *Shenbao* editorials,²³⁷ often effectively off rhythm,²³⁸ but they appear even more frequently after the turn of the century, more so in the shorter

235. Cf. Nienhauser, "Prose," 115; and *Shanghai jindai wenxue*, esp. 138–64.

236. Li Liangrong, *Zhongguo baozhi wenti fazhan gairyao*, 29.

237. Many examples are given above. Two rather effective ones are the editorials in *SB* 22.8 and 9.9.1887. The tendency increases in later editorials; see *SB* 22.2 and 25.3.1907.

238. This technique has already been observed above in the *baguwen* editorial, which reached an effective climax over the impossibility of stopping public opinion (see comments on p. 65 regarding ll. 37–38).

commentaries than in the longer editorials.²³⁹ The overuse and abuse of traditional poses to convey new and “untraditional” contents may, in Levensonian terms, eventually have been the most radical blow against this very tradition, but only by default. To cite tradition constantly is to stylize it, to change it from a meaningful sign into a cliché deprived of any deeper sense. The form that this process took was the “new” type of literary prose: the *xin wenti* that arose and matured along with (if not exclusively!) the foreign-style newspaper, not so much created as perfected, by Liang Qichao.

The newspaper was introduced as an alien medium to China, and it was often advocated not as an organic development of the native Chinese press but as something different, something distinctly alien. Nevertheless, the newspaper did not sell, or at least was not envisioned to sell, as an alien medium in China.²⁴⁰ It had to become a legitimate Chinese product through creative borrowing and cultural translation. As Sir Rutherford Alcock put it in 1873: “The fastidious taste of the literati and educated classes in China . . . in matters of style and composition could only be met by one of themselves.”²⁴¹ And thus, the newspaper was explained as a long-lost native product, it was given a Chinese look and a Chinese name, it was written in Chinese forms, and, as I will show in the next chapter, it argued in the words of China’s sages.

239. Compare the *fei* tirade cited above and the eighth paragraph of Liang’s “On Young China.”

240. For a similar phenomenon, see Mosel, “The ‘Verse Editorial’ in Thai Journalism.”

241. Alcock, “*Peking Gazette*,” 249.

CHAPTER 2

In the Words of the Sages

Authority and Style in the Chinese Newspaper

The presence of the past is constantly felt in China.

—Pierre Ryckmans

On 1 January 1912, in place of an editorial, the *Shenbao* carried a congratulatory text 祝詞 addressed to Sun Yatsen (Sun Zhongshan 孫中山, 1866–1925), who on that day assumed office in Nanjing as provisional president of the Chinese Republic.¹ The text begins with a characterization of this wonderful but wholly unfathomable day: the first day of a new polity (a republic, *gonghe* 共和), the first day of a new year according to a new calendar (solar rather than lunar), the first day of duty for a new type of ruler (a president, *zongtong* 總統), and the first day under a new kind of government (democracy, *minzhu* 民主). The glorious future of this new government is contrasted with past mismanagement under the Manchus, those brutal “Northern Caitiffs” 北虜 who devastated China and made the Chinese people suffer. In contrast, Sun Yatsen, who subscribes to the “Three People’s Principles” 三民主義, will rule with and for the people. A poetic eulogy to Sun ends the article.

This celebration of a revolutionary break with the past is not, however, written in equally revolutionary language. Rather, it is interlarded with classical allusions and citations. The opening question: “What kind of a day is it today?”—that is, What is so special about this day?—is

1. “共和國大總統履任祝詞” (Congratulatory wishes on the president of the Republic’s assumption of office), *SB* 1.1.1912. For a translation of the complete text, see Appendix B, pp. 429–30.

answered in familiar images and terms: the day is called a *jiyuan* 紀元, the traditional denomination for the first day of a new dynasty. The new government begins, quite in accordance with the cyclical understanding of history, with the opening of a new year. The exclamation “*We are wild with contentment and happiness, free from all our worries*” (*xixi hu, haobao hu* 熙熙乎皞皞乎—in this chapter, italics signal direct quotations from or allusions to classical texts) that follows recalls a passage from the “Money-makers” (“Huozi liezhuan” 貨殖列傳) chapter of the *Shiji*. It contrasts a state that is *xixi* (orderly, and its people happy) with another that is *rangrang* 攘攘 (chaotic, and its people distressed).² *Haobao* first appears in the *Mencius* (孟子 7A13) in a depiction of the state of mind of a people under an ideal ruler. Describing life in the new republic as *xixi haobao*, then, is to characterize the future of the unknown republic in familiar terms. This technique continues in the next sentence when the new regime is compared to and equated with government in the golden age (*zhongtian* 中天) of Yao, Shun, Tang, and Yu, the paradigmatic sage-emperors of the semi-legendary period. While eulogizing the newness of this special day, this first paragraph (and indeed the rest of the article) is couched in well-known terminology. The effective use of traditional images and allusions renders the new day less bewildering and threatening.

The imagery in the first half of the following paragraph contrasts sharply with that in the preceding paragraph. The Northern Caitiffs (who were still officially the rulers of China until the imperial abdication on 12 February) are accused of having devastated China. Their government is labeled “perverse” (*hengxing* 橫行). In the Classics and the Histories, only those rulers who lacked any sense of virtue and were unable to attain the trust of their people are considered *hengxing*.³ Effectively, the sentence in which this occurs, “Never has the *perverse behavior* of the Northern Caitiffs been worse than in these days” 北虜之橫行未有甚於此日者, parallels a statement in the *Mencius* (2A1): “Never has the citizens’ suffering through brutal government been worse than at this time” 民之憔悴於虐政未有甚於此時者也. Mencius was speaking of the state of Qi, then in decline, and arguing that if only virtue were practiced, it would be quite easy to

2. The *locus classicus* for *xixi* is a passage in the *Laozi* 老子, chapter 20: “All the people are happy and content, just as when they are enjoying the sacrificial feast of the ox” 眾人熙熙如享太牢.

3. This usage can be found in the *Xunzi* 荀子 and the *Shiji*, for example.

transform even Qi into a state ruled by a “real king.” The quotation indicates that with the coming of a true regent (and so Sun Yatsen is being styled), all the sufferings caused by the Manchus would soon end. The following phrase, which insinuates that under the Manchus the Chinese were *full of hatred and worries* 疾首蹙額, is again borrowed from the *Mencius* (孟). It occurs in another discussion between Mencius and the king of Qi: Mencius reminds the king that if he found that while he was enjoying music his people were “full of hatred and worries,” this would be a sign that he was not sharing his pleasures properly with his subjects.

Through the deliberate use of such charged phrases, the Manchus are established as barbarian, ruthless rulers with no sense of virtue or thought for the people. This verdict is confirmed in the concluding sentence of the first half of the second paragraph: “Had this continued, the day would have been destined to come on which all 400 million compatriots would have been ruined” 繼此以往勢必有四萬萬同胞淪胥以盡之一日. This sentence is effectively echoed at the end of the second part of this paragraph: “In about a year my 400 million compatriots will have put these dire straits behind them and will live in peace” 他年我四萬萬同胞出水火而登衽席.

This use of antitheses makes the Manchu regime into a foil for the new regime under Sun Yatsen, whose government is praised in the second half of the paragraph. His politics are trustworthy, they are based on “wise plans” (*you* 猷), defined in the “Zhou guan” 周官 chapter of the *Book of Documents* as the perfect way of governing: if one uses such *you*, “the system is not in chaos and the state is not endangered” 制治于未亂, 保邦于未危. Sun Yatsen’s “wise plans” consist of the Three People’s Principles (*sanmin zhuyi* 三民主義), which are paraphrased here as “three attentions to the sufferings of the people” (*yu minsheng jiku san zhuyi* 於民生疾苦三注意), a definition that contains homonyms for all elements of the Three People’s Principles. By equating these with *you*, they are given the status of supreme government.

Next follows a poetic tribute to Sun Yatsen. Its four-character lines are modeled on the poems in the *Book of Odes*.⁴ Chinese poetry, even

4. According to the orthodox interpretation of the Great Preface to the *Book of Odes*, all poetry can be understood as political allegory. A poem as political instrument could support the state as here, in the form of a eulogy (*song* 訟), or criticize it, in the form of a satirical poem (*feng* 諷); see Wagner, “The Implied

more than Chinese prose, is characterized by frequent *imitatio*.⁵ Whereas the introductory part of this article is larded with allusions to classical writings, the poem is best described as a patchwork of quotations from different sources. The first verse sets out with two lines that form the beginning of each of the chapters (except the sixth one) of the *Rites of Zhou*, which purports to be a record of the rituals of the state of Zhou,⁶ praised by Confucius as the model of good government.⁷ Sun Yatsen is so far present only abstractly, as “the ruler” who is reviving the heritage of the Zhou (“*The ruler alone establishes his country and is thus an example for his people*”). The verse continues with a phrase from the Confucian *Analects* (*Lunyu* 論語), 6.30 (“*He establishes the people as human beings and improves them in their humanity*”). For Confucius, the ruler has to achieve 仁 *ren*, humanity, in order to teach others humanity. By implication, Sun Yatsen has this most important virtue. The last line of the verse reads “*He looks after the people (mumin 牧民) as his heavenly duty (tianzhi 天職).*” *Mumin* is the title and the topic of the famous first chapter from the *Canonical Statements* (*Jingyan* 經言) of the *Guanzi* 管子. In this chapter, the importance for the ruler of attending to the economic well-being of the people is established.⁸ *Mumin*, too, is the duty of an ideal ruler. This ruler, the still unnamed Sun Yatsen, makes *mumin* his heavenly duty, *tianzhi* (from *Mencius* 5B3). The first verse of the poem thus serves to establish the picture of a great ruler whose virtues (exemplified by humanity, *ren*) and actions (exemplified by looking after the people, *mumin*) accord with those of a sage-king.

“O glorious [Sun] Zhongshan,” the second verse begins. For the first time, the implicit addressee of the poem is mentioned directly: Sun Yatsen himself. This practice of deferring identification is remi-

Censor.” For the early heritage of political interpretation of poetry, even predating the Great Preface, see F. Martin, “*Le Shijing*.”

5. See *ibid*.

6. The quotation omits three phrases dealing with the more particular duties of a ruler in establishing a country; see Biot, *Tcheou-li*; Legge, *Chinese Classics*, 3: 484; and *Early Chinese Texts*, 379.

7. Owen, *Remembrances*: “It is Confucius who begins to present the Chou moral order not as a fact but as a possibility, not as something one can assume but as something to be desired” (13); and “The customs of Chou were considered valid for all human beings. And that vision of the validity of the Chou *nomos* survived heroically in a world where its implementation was all but hopeless” (9).

8. Cf. Rickett, *Guanzi*, vol. 1: 121.

niscent of the rules for the beginning section in *baguwen*—which did not allow the names of the sages involved to be disclosed (see Chapter 1). This further supports the argument that Sun Yatsen is being presented here as a traditional sage. “*You consider all men and things your brothers, equal to your self*” 胞於民物. This expression has been adapted (for reasons of rhyme) from the common 民胞物與, which is short for a phrase 民吾同胞, 物吾與也 from Zhang Zai’s 張載 (1020–77) “Western Inscription” (“Ximing” 西銘), one of the most celebrated pieces of Neo-Confucian literature.⁹ It argues that whereas each human relation may have a specific moral requirement, love embraces them all. The man of true love (in other words, the ideal ruler) feels affection for everyone, be they “tired, infirm, crippled, or sick.”¹⁰ Sun Yatsen’s Three People’s Principles, quoted in the next few lines, are the means by which the president will implement the all-embracing love expected from a perfect ruler. Thus, an old ideal is ingeniously connected with a new utopia.

The next verse mentions the Wuhan uprising of October 1911 that led to the overthrow of the Manchus and draws an idyllic picture of its aftermath, when the five-colored flag fluttered all over China, thus creating a majestic backdrop for the long-delayed entry of Sun Yatsen. Sun has been abstractly described as a sage-ruler in the first stanza, addressed as the wondrous inventor of the People’s Principles in the second, and now, in the last, he is the “*one person*” 一人 who “stepped forward [*like a ruler*].” *Yiren* 一人, the expression used here, is traditionally employed for and by rulers and emperors and is thus an indication of Sun’s status in the author’s eyes. He may be called a “president,” but he is like the princely rulers of old. The next line resonates with phrases in a number of poems in the *Book of Odes* (one of which praises a successful minister who modeled himself after the Duke of Zhou, for example) and a passage from the *Book of Documents* in which sage-emperor Yu explains how best to care for one’s people.¹¹

9. The piece was allegedly written onto the western wall of Zhang’s study and was hence called the “Western Inscription” by another important Neo-Confucian, Cheng Yi 程頤 (1033–1107). See Wing-tsit Chan, *Source Book*; and Kasoff, *Thought of Chang Tsai*.

10. Trans. from Wing-tsit Chan, *Source Book*, 497. See also Kasoff, *Thought of Chang Tsai*, 179.

11. See “蒸民” (Multitudes of people), trans. in Legge, *Chinese Classics*, 4: 541; and “益稷” (Yi and Ji), trans. in Legge, *Chinese Classics*, 3: 78.

Like the good rulers described there, Sun “*nourishes our multitudes of people.*” How does he do that? “He supports industry.” This juxtaposition of past and present creates an impression of Sun as both a sage-ruler of old and a very contemporary, timely ruler. The same process of updating continues in the next two lines, “*Each one of them has all he needs, and each family has everything it needs*” 人足家給, a phrase that appears twice in the *Shiji* to laud proper methods of government,¹² is prefaced by “[as concerns] the masses of people, the 400 million.” Thus again, Sun Yatsen, the ruler of the present, is placed within a traditional line of exemplary methods of rulership.

At the same time, his government is presented as something that will optimize even these accepted norms of perfection. The utopian quality of the poem reaches its climax in the concluding couplet, featuring the distinctive, if hackneyed, Great Leap Forward mentality typical of writings at the time: “He/we will overtake America and will leave Europe behind, He/we will recover the power of our country and increase it ever more.” In portraying Sun Yatsen as the perfect ruler for times to come, this article uses the past to predict a utopian future.

Change with Authority!

Confucius said: “I transmit rather than create; I believe in and love the Ancients”
子曰：“述而不作信而好古。”

—*Analects* 7.1

The wealth of classical allusions in this article may appear incongruous: Why would a foreign-style newspaper, which had in the 1870s already said of itself that it “appreciates the new” 貴新也 and “eliminates whatever is not new” 弗新者刪也 in order to “renew the people” 新眾人, adopt the words of the ancient sages?¹³ Why would a

12. The phrase occurs in the order 家給人足 in “Biography of Lord Shang,” chap. 68 of *Shiji*. Lord Shang, or Shang Yang, of the Legalist school, is said to have called for the proper organization of rights, the military, and agriculture in order to secure public benefits and national prosperity (Duyvendak, *Book of Lord Shang*). In chapter 30, the expression appears again (in the form 人給家足). This chapter advises how a good ruler can palliate, by use of intelligent economic measures, the disastrous effects of a drought (Chavannes, *Les Mémoires Historiques*, 3: 538).

13. Quotations taken from “申報館賦” (A prose-poem on the *Shenbao* Publishing House), *SB* 15.2.1873, ll. 13–16.

journalist who was an important contributor to the *xin wenti* be writing as late as 1912 in such an old-fashioned style? Arguably, the occasion itself determined the choice of language. In writing a eulogy for a new ruler, one employed the tropes and phrases at hand. However, this is not the only example of a Republican text couched in “non-Republican” language. Numerous commentaries, editorials, and even news reports employ classical quotations and allusions to support their arguments.¹⁴ The Revolution of 1911 had no immediate, much less a drastic or revolutionary, effect on the language of Shanghai’s newspapers.¹⁵ Indeed, until well into the 1920s, newspaper prose aspired to classical eloquence, expressing old as well as new ideas more or less adroitly “in old phrases, illustrated and adorned by older quotations.”¹⁶

In the last chapter, I argued that the novelty of China’s new-style writing lay precisely in the multiple disjunctions between content and form. In this chapter, I argue that the novelty of China’s new-style writing lay, furthermore, in multiple disjunctions between content and language. The wealth of classical allusions to be found persistently in late Qing and Republican (newspaper and other) prose is proof

14. E.g., “去私篇” (On eradicating selfishness), *SB* 5.5.1912, which alludes to the Han army’s singing of the songs of Chu, which makes the men of Chu in Xiang Yu’s army weary of fighting; “清帝遜位問題” (Problems with the Qing emperor’s abdication), *SB* 17.1.1912, which cites the *Analects*. See also “民社緣起” (The origins of community), *SB* 20.1.1912; “清談” (Pure deliberations), *SB* 27.1.1912; and “教育部總長蔡元培對於新教育之意見” (Suggestions by Cai Yuanpei, head of the Ministry of Education, on modern education), *SB* 8–10.2.1912. The last is discussed in the next section of this chapter.

15. Here, I agree with Gunn (*Rewriting Chinese*, 36), who states that after 1911 “the media as a whole continued stylistically on the same course set in the last decade of the Qing.”

16. This is observed in Gilbert, *What’s Wrong with China*, 92. On the frequency of classical quotations in newspaper editorials, see Li Liangrong, *Zhongguo baozhi wenti fazhan gaiyao*, esp. 22. In my reading of Shanghai newspapers, I did not quite see the “rapid eradication of quotations and allusions” in the first decades of the twentieth century mentioned in Gunn, *Rewriting Chinese*, 71–72. My view is supported by Keenan, *Dewey Experiment*, 68, who says of the New Culture intellectuals active in the 1920s: “The specifically conscious, if not studied, use of references to Confucius by these modern rebels against tradition suggests the didactic purpose they had in mind. Each time Confucius was evoked against an evil they perceived as worse.” A good example for this is Chiang Monlin’s *A Study in Chinese Principles of Education of 1924*: his “new theory” of education is based in its entirety on old citations.

again that to regard the development of the *xin wenti* as a change from “traditional exquisite elegance” 古雅 to “modern vulgar colloquialism” 今俗 is to oversimplify the case.¹⁷ The adherence to traditional forms and to a particular traditional language are evidence for the power of an—outdated but still effective—educational system. Until the early years of the twentieth century, students, including many future journalists, aspired to pass the state examinations.¹⁸ In order to do so, they had to master (indeed, memorize) a certain number of classical texts. The most important written examinations called on candidates to compose a poem in the style of the ancients (*gutishi* 古體詩) and write an essay (*baguwen*) on an unidentified citation from the Classics.

Accordingly, knowledge of the Classics, at least among those aspiring to take part in the examinations, was thorough and pervasive. As Arthur Smith put it, “There are . . . thousands of quotations perfectly familiar to the millions of scholars who have hidden the whole of the Thirteen Classics in their capacious memories.”¹⁹ China’s past—instead of being preserved in physical remains²⁰—appeared (and appears)²¹ in the old texts that people remembered and reproduced. Works as different as the sixteenth-century botanic encyclopedia *Bencao gangmu* 本草綱目 and Zhang Zai’s eleventh-century *Explications of Obscure Passages in the Words of the Great Sage* (*Zheng meng* 正蒙) are made up almost entirely of quotations from earlier (classical) works, combined in a patchwork as one voice.²² In the words of John K. Fairbank, “Writers of classical Chinese were by training compilers more than composers . . . (they) constructed their own works by extensive cut-and-paste replication of phrases.”²³ The idea of originality

17. For this erroneous interpretation, see *Shanghai jindai wenxue shi*, 139.

18. For the education of early journalists, see Vittinghoff, “Am Rande des Ruhms,” esp. chaps. 3 and 8.

19. Arthur H. Smith, *Proverbs and Common Sayings from the Chinese*, 39.

20. For an illuminating essay on this topic, see Ryckmans, “Chinese Attitude Towards the Past.” A more elaborate discussion is Mote, *A Millennium of Chinese Urban History*.

21. The campaigns against Confucius and Lin Biao show the prevalence of citation even in revolutionary China; see Louie, *Inheriting Tradition*.

22. For a study on the predominance of citation in these works, see Métailié, “Note à propos des citations implicites,” for the *Bencao gangmu*; and Lackner, “Citation et éveil,” for the *Zheng Meng*, more than 80 percent of which is citations.

23. Fairbank, *China. A New History*, 100–101.

or intellectual property was foreign to Chinese writing from its beginning: was it not Confucius' mission to transmit and not to create?²⁴

One reason, then, behind the use of allusions and quotations in the journalistic writing of the early Republic is acculturation. There simply was no other way of writing. Quoting phrases from the Classics was simply a reflex. This is obviously the case in an 1873 article dealing with the contamination of drinking water in Shanghai,²⁵ which begins with quotations from the *Analects* (10.6) and the *Mencius* (7A23): "Confucius says: 'What smells bad, I would not eat it.' Now, among food and drink, water is the first. This is what Mencius says: 'The people cannot live without water and fire.'"

Both quotations are taken out of context for the purposes of the argument. The passage from the *Analects* is devoted to Confucius' personal habits. In the *Mencius*, the point is that a good ruler makes food as abundant as water and fire for his people. The argument of the editorial, however, is that Shanghai water is contaminated and has a "fishy odor." Why? A lot of garbage is dumped into waterways, and people walk through it, especially when fishing, even though such actions have been prohibited by the city government. A fancy water purifier, invented by a foreigner, might be the solution.

The quotations at the beginning of the article, however irrelevant they may appear, are evidence for the author's (and the implied reader's) ease with the classical heritage and their ability to find a (more or less) appropriate quotation for every situation: to cite the Classics was to employ a kind of "universal speech." Allusion and reference constituted a sophisticated cultural shorthand accessible throughout the civilized (that is, the literati-bureaucratic) world.²⁶ To quote Confucius and Mencius in a public health debate was to make the matter acceptable—even if the sages' words had to be bent for the purpose.²⁷ Citation served as a mediator between the known and the

24. See Alford, *To Steal a Book Is an Elegant Offense*; and Métaillé, "Note à propos des citations implicites," 137.

25. "上海飲水穢害亟宜清潔論" (On the fact that the contamination of drinking water in Shanghai ought to be cleared), *SB* 28.2.1873.

26. Alford, *To Steal a Book Is an Elegant Offense*, 26.

27. Similar manipulations of the text are well known to everyone working with commentaries of the Classics: these commentaries often played out in contemporary politics. Therefore, the "original meaning" of a text could be changed drastically between one and the next commentator of the same text (for a good

unknown (it is no coincidence that many neologisms of the time derive from classical phrases).²⁸

Furthermore, in citing the Classics, the author complimented the implied reader on his knowledge, even as he supplied evidence of his own membership in the "club of the civilized" and his own wisdom.²⁹ The Classics lent his text authority, since the rules of the ancients were generally accepted as the laws of Nature.³⁰ Indeed, it was rather more likely, according to one study of Chinese rhetoric, "that a person would be wrong about what he thought he saw or felt than that the condensed and evaluated wisdom of the past could be misleading. Hence, proverbial sayings were often quoted and were heard with respect."³¹ They were, in the words of Rudolf G. Wagner, "repositories of hidden Truth with absolute validity."³² Confucius and Mencius gave weight to one's observations about water in Shanghai. In using the Classics, an author inherited the power and authority of the past, for a truth once spoken—no matter how different the context—was true forever.³³ Journalists would flirt openly with the idea that they were just like Confucius, who, in "transmitting but not creating" 述而不作, in editing the *Spring and Autumn Annals* and the *Book of Odes*,

example, see Wagner, "Der vergessene Hinweis," esp. 264). It was known and accepted that even Confucius "misquoted" deliberately if it served his purpose (F. Martin, "Le *Shijing*"). For similarly subversive methods used in the *Huainanzi* 淮南子 and the *Zhuangzi* 莊子, see Levi, "Quelques exemples."

28. For a list of such neologisms, complete with the *loci classici*, see Lydia Liu, *Translingual Practice*, app. D; see also Masini, *Formation of Modern Chinese Lexicon*.

29. Chemla and Martin, "Rendre à César?" 10. Oliver (*Communication and Culture*, 112) cites a Chinese diviner as saying: "Surely, gentlemen, you have observed the rhetoricians and orators. All their plans and schemes are simply the products of their own minds. But if they merely blurted out their own ideas they could never capture the imagination of the ruler. Therefore they always begin their speeches by discussing the kings of antiquity and open their orations with a description of ancient times." This use of citation is, of course, not unique to China, as Lloyd, "Quotation in Greco-Roman Contexts," 149, shows.

30. Cf. Chemla and Martin, "Rendre à César?" 10; and esp. Alford, *To Steal a Book Is an Elegant Offense*, 27.

31. Oliver, *Communication and Culture*, 90.

32. Wagner, "Der vergessene Hinweis," 261: "Repositorien versteckter Wahrheit absoluter Gültigkeit."

33. Tilemann Grimm, *Erziehung und Politik*, 93.

had shown “what was good and bad” and “what was right and wrong”—which was just what newspapers did.³⁴

It is often stated, if not so easily proved, that the newspaper made a difference in China. It was a medium of change. But how did it change things? I have discussed in the previous chapter that the ways in which newspapers were written did not differ significantly from the ways in which other narrative or deliberative prose texts were written.³⁵ Obviously, the newspaper could serve as an agent of change only if it were accepted. Domestication through adherence to Chinese forms, as illustrated in the last chapter, was an important factor in empowering the alien medium. The use of classical citations, to be discussed in this chapter, was perhaps even more effective. The fact that quotations are used throughout the period studied here illustrates that newspapers could make a difference only by reacting and catering to the tastes of their readers and by using the most common and appreciated rhetorical forms and techniques and language. Thus, they could carry their message to a much broader public than would have been reached by writings published in conventional media.

This argument runs counter to a common assumption—strongly nourished by followers of the New Culture movement—that reliance on the classical heritage through the educational system was a hindrance to change. Study of the Confucian Classics to the exclusion of

34. Here, I paraphrase from a contribution to the jubilee collection celebrating 50 years of *Sbenbao: Zuijin zhi wushi nian*, 40. Another passage directly comparing *Spring and Autumn Annals* and the newspaper also occurs in “主客問答” (Dialogue between host and guest), *SB* 28.1.1875. This passage is discussed in Chapter 3, pp. 29–32. For Wang Tao’s and other early journalists’ self-fashioning as new-style Confucians, see Vittinghoff, “Am Rande des Ruhms,” III–17.

35. A thorough comparative study of prose styles outside and inside the newspaper is the dissertation by Andrea Janku (“Nur leere Reden”) mentioned in the preceding chapter. A few rather more accidental (but therefore all the more telling) examples I came across are an 1895 memorial by Kang Youwei and other examination candidates to the emperor that not only cites some of the same examples from the Classics to be found in relevant articles in the newspapers but also contains many of the same figures of speech (the Great Leap mentality) and metaphors (the sick body of China) frequently used in the newspapers. See Chow Tse-tsung, “The Anti-Confucian Movement,” 288–90, 300–303; see also some of Zhang Jian’s writings, e.g., his argument why it is necessary to reform education in lower primary schools, which calls on the Duke of Zhou (trans. in Bastid, *Educational Reform*, 133). See also Prince Gong’s essay on the reform of education (Peake, *Nationalism and Education*, 4, and, for another example, 37–39).

all other texts, it is argued, restricted students and their ways of thinking: those educated in this system held tenaciously to the sayings of the ancient sages, afraid to advance new thoughts of their own.³⁶ Although citation can be restrictive to an extent, I dispute the gist of this argument.³⁷ Even within the context of the Chinese schooling system, knowledge of the Classics was considered a necessity for solving the problems of the *present*.³⁸ Surveys of the use of citation in Chinese history³⁹ and this study of the use of citation in Chinese newspapers show that almost every time the past is used, a “chemical reaction” between the old phrase and its new context takes place. Granted in using the Classics, an author acquired the authority of the past and its truth (*ipse dixit, ergo verum*), this does not necessarily imply that what had once been said rightly and with authority would *mean the same thing* forever.⁴⁰

Although the author of the *Bencao gangmu* or the *Zhengmeng* would have insisted on his correct use of the classical sources, it is evident that both of them, by their particular choice of citations, changed and manipulated their meaning. Even in the case of Confucius, “transmission” was far from a passive endeavor. In order to make these texts meaningful to himself, his contemporaries, and his succes-

36. For this negative view, see, e.g., Kuo Ping-wen, *Public Education*, 35, 48; Alcock, “Peking Gazette,” 345, 356; Franke, *Reform and Abolition*, 13: “There remained almost no opportunity for the development of original ideas [after the introduction of Zhu Xi’s 朱熹 [1130–1200, Neo-Confucian philosopher] interpretation as the only worthy one) for any deviation from the orthodox interpretation led certainly to failure”; Liu Kwang-ching, “The Confucian as Patriot,” 5; and Bastid, *Educational Reform*, xv: she gives evidence for this view in order to deny it in her conclusions (*ibid.*, 90). Wong Young-tsu (“Universalistic and Pluralistic Views”) also refutes this view, using the examples of Kang Youwei and Zhang Binglin. For further examples, see note 16 to this chapter.

37. Eisenstadt (*Tradition, Wandel und Modernität*, 180) argues that some traditional societies took tradition as a given, the center of their collective identity, the creator of all social and cultural order, and hence the legitimator of change and its limitations. In his view, again, not only is tradition a symbol of continuity, but it sets the limits to creativity and innovation, a point I would like to challenge by arguing that it actually opens up the very possibility for meaningful innovation.

38. Alford, *To Steal a Book Is an Elegant Offense*, 21–22.

39. See esp. the impressive *Le Travail de la citation*.

40. For parallel observations on the uses of citations from the Bible until at least the Middle Ages, see Wim van den Berg, “Autorität und Schmuck.”

sors, his editing entailed much selection and adaptation.⁴¹ His program of transmission, which was the model for Chinese writers for centuries, was thus far less conservative than it may at first appear.⁴² He reinvented “antiquity” according to his own dreams, creating the image of the Zhou that was to become the yardstick of China’s civilization. For Confucius, citation out of context allowed him to maintain the power of the original while subverting its sense.⁴³ In the words of Pierre Ryckmans, the actual contents of antiquity “were highly fluid and not susceptible to objective definition or circumscription by a specific historical tradition.”⁴⁴

Nearly all the great Confucian reformers in Chinese history invoked—and thereby reinterpreted—the ancients to condemn the present and to induce change. In their interpretations, the golden age of antiquity became a utopian vision of the future.⁴⁵ As William Alford has observed, “Those with or aspiring to power sought to cloak themselves in the past while also tailoring it to suit their particular needs.”⁴⁶ In order to gain legitimacy for new ideas, they hid them behind traditional practices.⁴⁷ Even rebels seeking to dislodge those in power framed their alternative with the authority of the past.⁴⁸ Why should the journalist discard this useful measure?

Thus, Ryckmans argues, “the vital strength, the creativity, the seemingly unlimited capacity for metamorphosis and adaptation which the Chinese tradition displayed for 3,500 years may well derive

41. Cf. Alford, *To Steal a Book Is an Elegant Offense*, 25.

42. The case of Confucius shows that the Chinese understanding of “transmission” includes a concept of collaborative authorship excluded in the modern foreign usage of the term (see Cherniack, “Book Culture,” esp. 17). Thus, Confucius becomes the model for collator-editors: activism need not conflict with conservatism in Chinese traditions of textual criticism (*ibid.*, 18).

43. See the masterly study by F. Martin, “Le *Shijing*,” 22; and Miller, “Die Rolle des Zitierens,” esp. 167.

44. Ryckmans, “Chinese Attitude Towards the Past,” 8.

45. *Ibid.*, 8–9; Elman, “Relevance of Sung Learning in the Late Ch’ing”; and, most fundamental, Levenson, *Confucian China and Its Modern Fate*.

46. Alford, *To Steal a Book Is an Elegant Offense*, 21.

47. See Lydia Liu, *Translingual Practice*, 3. Consider also Eisenstadt, *Tradition, Wandel und Modernität*, 352: “Adaptive elites use tradition, on the one hand, in order to find answers to new problems in the social and cultural order. This is why they differentiate between different layers of tradition . . . and use them . . . to implement new goals and activities.”

48. Alford, *To Steal a Book Is an Elegant Offense*, 21.

from the fact that this tradition never let itself be trapped into set forms, static objects and things, where it would have run the risk of paralysis and death."⁴⁹ It was precisely because the past was preserved in writings rather than in buildings that Chinese had this flexibility. To illustrate this point, Ryckmans relates an anecdote about a Buddhist monastery near Nanjing, famous for its purity and orthodoxy. The monks conformed strictly to the original tradition of the Indian monasteries: whereas in other Chinese monasteries an evening meal was served, in this particular monastery, the monks received only a bowl of tea every evening. However, these "bowls of tea" contained a nourishing rice congee, not unlike that provided at night in other Chinese monasteries. Ryckmans concludes: "I wonder, if to some extent, Chinese tradition is not such a 'bowl of tea,' which under a most ancient, venerable and constant name can in fact contain all sorts of things, and finally anything but tea. Its permanence is first and foremost a Permanence of Names, covering the endlessly changing and fluid nature of its actual contents."⁵⁰

The congratulatory article to Sun Yatsen cited above shows this "bowl-of-tea theory" in practice. Sun Yatsen, the president of a republic, leading an industrialized country under the solar calendar, appears in the guise of the perfect rulers of antiquity. Radical change and even fierce iconoclasm are camouflaged by apparent constancy in terminology, and this constancy facilitates acceptance of change. The foreign medium and what it stood for were packaged in familiar terms even if these familiar terms carried unfamiliar meanings. This method of citing or invoking the Classics (*yinjing* 引經) had been established practice at least since pre-Qin times.⁵¹ In itself, it was nothing new, then, nor would any reader have considered it inappropriate. The use of proverbial sayings, allusions, and quotations purveying canonical values of universal validity could thus serve to legitimize the newspaper, the product of the foreign merchant and missionary. Not surprisingly, this method was used by foreign and Chinese newspapermen alike.

The motto, an integral part of the masthead of most Western newspapers (the *New York Times's* "All the news that's fit to print" being one famous example), was a good place to begin this game of

49. Ryckmans, "Chinese Attitude Towards the Past," 11.

50. *Ibid.*, 12.

51. Kao, "Rhetoric," 134.

making use of culturally accepted language to introduce imperceptible but irresistible change.⁵² Over the years, the use of classical mottoes became common practice, especially in missionary publications.⁵³ Citations from or allusions to Chinese sources lent a look of truthfulness and authority to the newspapers they graced. As we shall see, this was achieved in spite of their "original" or conventional meaning. Playing with the possible associations that would occur to a literate Chinese, newspapermen took license with the authoritative language they used, sometimes even contradicting it by inserting it in a new, at times antithetical, context.

One such method was to combine two different utterances of the sages, from different chapters of, say, the *Analects*, and preface the result with "The Master said." For example, the motto of the *Chashisu meiyue tongji chuan* 察世俗每月統記傳 (A general monthly record, containing an investigation of the opinions and practices of society) published in Malacca from 1815 to 1821⁵⁴ by Robert Morrison (1782–1834) and William Milne (1785–1822) of the London Missionary Society attributes to Confucius the saying: "Listen to many things: distinguish the good [among them] and follow it" 多聞，擇其善者而從之. The first part of this motto is taken from *Analects* 2.18. There Confucius explains that one should study not with the hope of receiving an official salary but simply with a view to improving one's self. The Master says: "*Listen to many things* and leave your doubts aside, speak cautiously of other things, and then you will seldom incur blame" 多聞闕疑，慎言其餘，則寡尤. He admonishes the student to pay attention to what he learns and not to be too quickly satisfied with what he has learned and proud of it. The second part of the motto is from *Analects* 7.22, where Confucius says: "If three people walk together, there must be one who can serve as my teacher. *I distinguish his good qualities and will follow them*, his weak points I will shun" 三人行，必有我師焉。擇其善者而從之，其不善者而改之. Again, it is an admonition not only

52. For a more detailed study of the mottoes employed in early Chinese newspapers, see Mittler, "Domesticating an Alien Medium."

53. This practice was also employed in books published by missionaries. Gutzlaff's novels, for example, have quotations from Zhu Xi on the cover (I thank Rudolf G. Wagner for this information).

54. A Chinese order of 1812 prohibited missionary activity on Chinese territory. It was not revoked until 1837. The publishers of the newspaper depended on travelers to carry their newspaper to China.

to select what one learns carefully but also to be willing to learn at any time and from anyone. The combined quotation essentializes these statements, by skillfully leaving out all the negative aspects mentioned in the originals, the doubts, the blame, the weak points. Implicitly, the Chinese reader, who would know the full texts of both passages, must understand how wonderful the reading of the newspaper described in this combination-motto must be, since it enables one to learn properly, without fear of blemishes. The combined quotation also eradicates the distinction between learning from things and learning from people found in the originals. The newspaper, the object that allows the reader to "listen to many things," becomes personified as the "teacher" one should "follow." The combination of citations plays with the reader's superior knowledge of the Classics: the reader not only decodes what is written but also supplies much information that is not.⁵⁵ In this synergetic process, the quotation creates new meanings. The citation is effective because of what it leaves unsaid, and its sense is enhanced and rhetorically amplified by this context.⁵⁶

Even more reductive, although this time true to the text of the *Analects*, was Walter Henry Medhurst (1796–1857) in his *Texuan cuoyao meiyue jichuan* 特選撮要每月紀傳 (A monthly record of important selections) of 1823–26, which was published in Batavia. His paper carried the motto: "The Master said: 'Everyone may tell his wishes' 子曰: 亦各言其志也已矣. This is a single sentence from a long anecdote related in *Analects* 11.24. A number of Confucius' disciples are chatting. The master asks them what they would do if a ruler were to recognize their wisdom and accept their services. Each tells a different story. After three have left, the last disciple asks for an explanation of Confucius' reaction. For even though he had encouraged each to say what he liked, he had smiled at one and agreed with another and thus evaluated each of their views rather than accepting them as equal. In Medhurst's newspaper, the phrase "Everyone may tell his wishes" probably stood for the paper's openness to different views and opinions, a virtue expected of the "ideal newspaper" in the foreign canon. The shorthand use of the *Analects* citation thus entails its radical re-interpretation. By being quoted out of context, it is given new mean-

55. Hirsch, *Cultural Literacy*, 33.

56. For the use of the term "rhetorical amplification," see Levi, "Quelques exemples," 41.

ing even as its “original” meaning is intentionally misunderstood. In the preceding example, the original was misquoted in order to make use of its traditional implications; here, the original is quoted but its connotations are misconstrued.

Karl Friedrich August Gutzlaff’s (1803–51) citation of *Analecets* 15.12 on the front page of his *Dongxiyang kao* 東西洋考 (Inquiry of the Eastern and Western oceans), which was published in Canton between 1833 and 1837, is evidence for yet another subversive practice of citation. In the original, Confucius reminds his disciples of the necessity of forethought and precaution: “If one does not think about what is far away, one will get into difficulties close at hand” 人無遠慮，必有近憂. By providing news from all over the world in his newspaper, Gutzlaff extended the meaning of Confucius’ words further afield than the sage intended. But Gutzlaff implied that those who do not think about foreign countries endanger China. Without being changed in the least, the original utterance acquires new meaning because of the context in which it appears. The citation is amplified and equated to something wholly unknown to the writer of the original. The familiar, well-known phrase introduces a new, mediated reality that comes into existence by the very act of equation through citation.⁵⁷

For whatever reason, the use of the classical motto was less frequently employed among the first commercial papers. Nevertheless, as we saw in the eulogy to Sun Yatsen and the editorial on water in Shanghai, the writers of the first commercial papers made frequent use of classical citations and allusions, especially—if not exclusively—for the introduction of changes.⁵⁸ From the very first day, *Shenbao* featured numerous direct citations from the Classics, as well as paraphrases of or allusions to passages in them.

57. For a similar argument, see Lydia Liu, *Translingual Practice*, 40.

58. There are few instances in which the past is used affirmatively of a conservative stance. One such example is an early article on the demise of morals in Shanghai because of open contact between men and women. “嚴責碰頭風俗論” (On serious punishments for the habit of social intercourse), *SB* 21.1.1873, argues that “the ancients” had already said that “contact between male and female is not close” and prescribed strict rites for any meeting between the sexes. The author condemns the practice of *pengtou* 碰頭, social intercourse between the sexes, in Shanghai; to his horror, it has spread to other places. He fears that these close contacts and the increasing use of improper language between the sexes will lead to a demise of general morals. For further discussion of this editorial, see Chapter 4.

Authority to Change?

There is a favorite technique used by those who know the old literature. When a new idea is introduced they call it "heresy" and bend all their efforts to destroy it. If that new idea, . . . wins a place for itself, they then discover that "it's the same thing as was taught by Confucius."

—Lu Xun 鲁迅 (1881–1936), 1927⁵⁹

The use of quotations from the Classics on the pages of the foreign-style newspaper can, like the employment of Chinese literary forms, be considered a reflex action by the Chinese journalist faced with the task of writing for an alien medium. But did the use of classical citations empower the newspaper to induce change, and if so, how? In order to answer these questions, the remainder of this chapter is devoted to an examination of *Shenbao* articles on two areas of great institutional and attitudinal change in the late Qing: trade and education. To what extent were newspapers in the forefront of these movements? Can they rightly be seen as promoters or even catalysts of change? If so, what role did the use of classical quotations play? In answering these questions, we will uncover the potential powers contained in this more or less consciously used tactic of assimilation.

TRADE AND PROFIT:
BETWEEN VIRTUE AND VICE

Men (and to a lesser extent women) came to Shanghai to make money.

—Nicholas Clifford⁶⁰

In the Confucian hierarchy, merchants and businessmen had for millennia been confined to the lowest position in society and ranked last among the four social groups, the *simin* 四民 (士農工商: scholars, farmers, artisans, merchants), because they sought selfish, private profit, *sili* 私利, a prime vice within the Confucian canon of virtues.⁶¹ This

59. For a translation of Lu Xun's speech, "老調子已經唱完" (That old tune is finished), delivered in Hong Kong on 9 Feb. 1927, see Chow Tse-tung, "The Anti-Confucian Movement," 310.

60. Clifford, *Spoilt Children*, 65.

61. For discussion of the Confucian background of this disgust for *sili*, see Munro, "Concept of 'Interest'"; and McMullen, "Public and Private in the Tang Dynasty." For the negative image of the businessman and profit, see also Leung, *Shanghai Taotai*, esp. 125, 146–47; and negative remarks made by Wang Tao (which

conservative position, although contested and repeatedly refuted, especially during times of considerable growth in commerce such as the Song and the Ming, never became irrelevant.⁶² Accordingly, the overwhelming majority of merchants in China felt excluded from political power and social prestige. Wealth per se never bought fame in China and even the immensely wealthy salt merchants felt their lack of repute keenly. Therefore, merchants became frantic status seekers: a "basic desire to be somebody else, to gain respectability through education and bureaucratic service, characterized the commercial spirit of China."⁶³

The second half of the nineteenth century was a time of drastic change in China's national and international trade. Merchants and traders, however despised, became more important. In cities such as Shanghai (a magnet for foreigners seeking to become rich), many Chinese, too, were interested primarily in trade.⁶⁴ Thus, it was only natural that discussions on the importance of merchants and trade became heated as it grew difficult to dismiss the greater part of the population as mercenary parasites. The *Shenbao* acted accordingly: it openly addressed a readership, inclusive of merchants, from its first editorial announcement,⁶⁵ and it discussed the difficulties and necessities of commercial practice frequently. Slowly but steadily, a new attitude toward businessmen and profits developed.⁶⁶

This process is reflected in the use (and abuse) of classical citation over the years. Generally speaking, editorials in the 1870s are ambigu-

he later qualified and changed), cited in Sinn, "Fugitive in Paradise," esp. 59 and 63-74.

62. Luffrano, *Honorable Merchants*, esp. 35-50, gives a detailed and nuanced account of the many different views on the status of merchants in late imperial China, emphasizing positive voices and various rewritings of the *simin* hierarchy. He concludes, nevertheless, that the more "radical notions of social equality and honor for merchants failed to dislodge the narrower orthodoxy of the government and the conservatives" (*ibid.*, 50).

63. Godley, *Mandarin-Capitalists*, 36.

64. See the observations made in Green, *Foreigner in China*, 13. See also *ibid.*, 15, and the introduction to Lu Han-chao, *Beyond the Neon Lights*.

65. "本館告白" (Announcement by our company), *SB* 30.4.1872. For similar statements, see also the announcements in *SB* 22 and 23.5.1872. The all-inclusive readership of the early *Shenbao* is discussed further in Chapter 4.

66. For a rather late, biting criticism of the merchant by a *wenren*-turned-journalist, see "大腹賈傳" (Biography of a fat businessman), *Youxibao* 遊戲報 (Entertainment), 11.4.1899, discussed in Catherine Yeh, "Li Boyuan."

ous; some are characterized by a sense of resistance, if not a completely conservative attitude, toward trade. Foreigners in particular are harshly condemned for selfish profiteering. Others advocate a new view of profit as a virtue useful to the community rather than the individual alone. Quotations are rather faithful to the source texts and used to enhance and amplify the arguments of the authors. In the 1880s articles begin to advocate some foreign trade practices but condemn Chinese who “subvert” these new practices for private profit. These orthodox criticisms (of unorthodox, foreign-influenced trade methods) are only seldom backed by classical quotations. In the 1890s and the first decade of the 1900s, trade and profit—in the foreign mode—are more insistently advocated and perceived as a necessity for “saving the country.” The foreigners who were models for China’s commercial development in articles from the 1880s appear more and more clearly as a threat. In these decades in particular, the more radical a piece, the more it resorts to classical quotations.⁶⁷ But although these articles do not always remain true to the cited text, subversions of the original are always presented as attempts to uncover the “true meaning” of the text. They are typical examples for what Levenson once described: “It was not the genuine principles of Chinese culture which were wrong. These had been perverted, distorted or suppressed.”⁶⁸ These journalists used classical quotations in their distinctively modern arguments and thus presented a reconsideration of these Confucian texts. By adopting the orthodox practice of textual exegesis, they claimed authority.

Reading more closely, one finds that in the 1870s a number of articles excoriated the negative consequences of trade. “Specializing in Profiteering” (“Zhuan li lun” 專利論, *SB* 26.10.1872) of October 1872 is a typical example. It is a reader’s letter—a belated response to the famous Garden Bridge Debate—and appeared in the news section of the *Shenbao*.⁶⁹ A certain Mr. Wills had built a bridge over Suzhou

67. For a parallel case in the use of classical form for the conveyance of radical ideas by the *Xinwenbao* 新聞報, see Janku, “Nur leere Reden,” 222.

68. Levenson, *Confucian China and Its Modern Fate*, vol. 2: 81.

69. The *Shenbao* in its early years did not have a separate section for letters to the editor (來函). They became a clear-cut category only after the turn of the twentieth century (see Vittinghoff, “Am Rande des Ruhms,” esp. chap. 6). Some of the relevant *Shenbao* articles in the Garden Bridge debate appeared earlier on 4.5 and 9.5.1872. For a discussion of the debate, which was also held in the *North*

Creek and was charging a toll for each crossing. The debate had begun in May, as outrage over the fact that Chinese had to pay to cross the bridge whereas foreigners did not. This turned out to be untrue, however: the Municipal Council was paying a yearly fee to Wills for foreign users, since foreigners in Shanghai were not in the habit of carrying money. The debate continued over the issue of making the bridge a public thoroughfare, free of charge to all. The discussions lasted several weeks. It is not clear, but *Shenbao* reporting may well have been crucial in instigating the Municipal Council to solve the problem: the council asked Wills to sell the bridge to the city of Shanghai. When he declined to do so, they promised to build a public bridge in its stead.

"Specializing in Profiteering" is a typical example of the rage that characterized the controversy. The writer begins: "All along, those people who specialize in seeking profit know profit and nothing else" 自來人之專於謀利者惟知有利而已. The illustration that proves the truth of this statement is Wills's case. The author concedes that Wills should be allowed to recover his investment in the construction of the bridge. The tolls have long since exceeded that amount; but instead of abolishing the toll, he has now, ten years after construction, increased it. The author calculates the yearly toll revenues as upwards of 50,000 *wen*, a profit that cannot be called minute" 不可謂不厚 (l. 7).

Moreover, although the toll was not too expensive for the average citizen of Shanghai, for coolies or carriers of melons, "one *wen* could be a life" 一錢如命也 (ll. 8-9). Wills never let anyone across without paying, but he was especially cruel to the poor: he was willing to extend credit only to the well-off (ll. 10-11). Despite these hideous practices, Wills insisted that he had built the bridge to "help the people," although in fact he had only "helped himself." Yet, he had been so successful in spreading this tale that while making a fat profit, he had garnered a good reputation as well 此橋者明為濟人實以濟己. 既得美名又得大利 (l. 12).

The writer contends that by now it is fairly obvious, even to the Municipal Council, that Wills is interested in nothing but profit. Even though alternatives such as ferry services and bridges initiated by the

China Daily News (see 4-II.5.1872), see Mittler, "Verkehrte Welten"; and Virtinghoff, "Am Rande des Ruhms," 237-38.

Chinese have begun to decrease his revenues, he is self-satisfied and considers it his duty to collect money. The writer concludes: "This bridge owner is indeed what is called *one conversant with profit!*" 則所謂喻於利者, 即此橋主也夫 (ll. 18-19). These final words may look rather innocent at first: they do, after all, follow logically from the author's argument. But these apparently innocent words are in truth a harsh verdict on Wills. In *Shenbao* articles, what is introduced with "what is called" 所謂 is usually a proverbial phrase derived from the Classics. And indeed, "one conversant with profit" is the last phrase of *Analects* 4.16. Every Chinese reader would have known what Confucius said in this chapter: "The mind of the superior man is conversant with righteousness; the mind of the mean man is conversant with profit" 君子喻於義, 小人喻於利. Wills is included in the lowest category of humanity, he is a *xiaoren* 小人, a mean, a petty, man. This echoes with the axiomatic statement at the beginning of the article that those interested in profit neglect all else, including virtues such as righteousness. The verdict on Wills is there by connotation, evident to all, even the worst-educated readers. The importance of the verdict is underlined by the particular choice of the pseudonym by the letter's writer. The article is signed: "Draft from the Recluse of Liuquan" 六泉居士未定艸. This pseudonym is typical of one group of names used frequently in letters to the *Shenbao*'s editor; it assumes the traditionally well-established role of the scholarly recluse who—in all his righteousness—has withdrawn from the world of corruption.⁷⁰ By clever use of a proverbial phrase, whose value is supported by the authority of the speaker hidden behind this Confucian pseudonym, the article becomes a tour-de-force against Wills, the businessman, and against his trade, the pursuit of private profit, *sili*. Wills, a foreigner, is condemned according to a Chinese catalogue of virtues and vices. The *Analects* is evoked in order to support an orthodox argument.

This is not to say, however, that only conservative views are bolstered by allusion to the Classics. One striking example of a radically different approach is the article "On How to Attain Wealth" ("Zhi fu lun" 致富論, *SB* 14.11.1872), which appeared in November 1872. It portrays the American dream for China, as it were, defining profit as a positive value that serves the community rather than the individual

70. On pseudonyms in the *Shenbao*, see Vittinghoff, "Am Rande des Ruhms," chap. 3, 127-28.

and suggesting how to attain it.⁷¹ Clearly marked citations are used at the core of the argument. A passage from the *Great Learning* is cited: “*There is a great method 大道 for the creation of wealth 生財*” (l. 3). An old saying follows: “*Small wealth lies within the power of man*” (l. 4). Both of these sources of wisdom are elaborated in a quote from Lord Tao Zhu, a proverbially rich man who lived during the tumultuous Spring and Autumn era (8th–5th century BCE):⁷² “*Each thing has its own appropriate way of growing and being grown. To use the useful things in the world in order to exchange them for those materials that are not sufficient in the world and so to attain wealth, this is the type of wealth that man by his own power can attain.*” The accumulation of citations amplifies their meaning. But each of the quotations is already an amplification. The phrase from the *Great Learning* comes from the last chapter (10/19),⁷³ in which it is explained that the attainment of wealth must be based on virtue.⁷⁴ The “great method” of creating wealth is to

71. A similar argument is made in the editorial “商賈論” (On merchants and businessmen), *SB* 11.5.1872. It ends with a memorable sentence admonishing those “responsible for coming generations” that what is useful for tradesmen is also beneficial to the state. The article argues that a healthy economy is based on the exchange of different goods, that networks of communication need to be improved, and that taxation ought to be equitable in order to ensure benefit to the merchants, the people, and thus also the state. The article continues that the sage-rulers had understood these facts. To prove this, it cites from the *Book of Documents*: “The *Book of Documents* says: ‘In trade one exchanges what one has for what one has not and disposes of accumulated stores.’” In the *Book of Documents*, this sentence occurs as part of a dialogue with sage-emperor Yu in which he elaborates on some of his methods of government. Supported by this classical authority, the article advocates the necessity of improving trade. The quotation serves as a critical mirror for the real potentates in China, those “responsible for the coming generations.” A similar positive view of trade is promoted in “信局論” (On the postal system), *SB* 7.6.1872. Here, the editorialist argues that, unlike the Chinese, the foreigners strive for profit to benefit not only themselves but also the people in general. See also the editorials in *SB* 2.3.1874 and 9.1.1879, discussed in Vittinghoff, “Am Rande des Ruhms,” chap. 3, 123.

72. The *Bao Puzi* chapter on immortals (“Lun xian” 論仙) argues that despite all the famous poor men in Chinese history, one ought not to forget that there were quite a few rich people, too, Tao Zhu being one of them.

73. I have adopted the enumeration in Legge’s translation of the *Great Learning* (*Chinese Classics*, vol. 1: 355–81).

74. *The Great Learning* 10/7: “德者本也—virtue is the root. 財者末也—wealth is the tip.” This expression is so well-known it can be called proverbial: cf. Arthur H. Smith, *Proverbs and Common Sayings from the Chinese*, 41.

ensure that producers are many and consumers few. If effort is exerted in production and frugality is practiced in consumption, then there will be sufficient wealth for everyone. The chapter ends with the assertion that a country should not pursue profit for profit's sake but only for righteousness' sake. These statements would have been present to everyone who read the citation.⁷⁵ Such knowledge serves to amplify the short phrase given in the article and provides a powerful background to the author's own words: "When the sage-kings ruled the world, they considered it an urgent task to care for wealth and to connect traders" (l. 3). The classical (con)text generates sympathetic vibrations with this "modern" argument.⁷⁶

Thus, a short citation may have ramifications beyond the single phrase of which it consists. This is true of Lord Tao Zhu's words as well. According to his biography in the *Shiji*, as a high official in the state of Yue, he had helped subdue Wu and had become extremely rich through trade. When he ceased to get along with the king of Yue, he left office. Following a prophecy, he gave all his assets to friends and, with only one-tenth of his wealth, settled far away in Tao, calling himself Lord Zhu of Tao 陶朱公. In a short time, his wealth grew again to an amount of several tens of thousands of cash. Tao Zhu thus illustrates that indeed, as the proverb put it, the attainment of wealth "lies within the power of man."⁷⁷ This background—self-evident to the

75. Arthur H. Smith, *Proverbs and Common Sayings from the Chinese*, 41.

76. This is the case with the writer's argument against tax collecting, too, which again can be traced to the last chapter of the *Daxue*. There it is said that wealthy rulers should not employ tax collectors who retain too much of what they collect. For tax issues as discussed in the *Shenbao* in 1874, see Vittinghoff, "Am Rande des Ruhms."

77. Tao first appears in the "Commentaries on the *Laozi*" ("Jie Lao" 解老) chapter of the *Han Feizi* (韓非子, ca. 280–ca. 233 BCE): "As for those who discard the *dao* 道 and all principles and make arbitrary motions, although they have the honor and influence of the Son of Heaven and the feudal lords and possess ten times the wealth of Yi Dun and Tao Zhu, they will eventually lose their subjects and ruin their financial resources." The chapter is devoted to an explanation of a saying from the *Laozi* that all happiness is based on misery. In the *Han Feizi*'s interpretation, misery instigates fear in the hearts of the people; fear straightens out their conduct, and this leads to careful thinking and thus to attainment of the principles (*li* 理) in all affairs. This, in turn, leads to success in all walks of life. Thus, the conclusion of this chapter in which Tao Zhu appears is that life is in the hands of the people—they have only to act accordingly to become rich and powerful.

Chinese reader—illustrates the use of quotations as shorthand. The Tao Zhu quote and its classical context also echo and thus serve to substantiate the quoted proverb and the phrase from the *Great Learning*; amplification is at work on many different levels here. Through skillful juxtapositioning, citations from various sources enhance one another. The proverb and Tao Zhu gain authority by being mentioned alongside the “great method” from the *Great Learning*. The phrase from the *Great Learning* is made concrete through the proverb and the example of Tao Zhu. In this way, the article manages to counter a fatalist view of poverty and wealth. It encourages people to take their lives into their own hands and gather a fortune. In the end, these quotations give force to the author’s argument that it is indeed possible, and possibly even a good thing, to strive for personal wealth.

This and a number of similar articles appearing in 1872 argue a pragmatic view of profit, trade, and wealth. By clever use of citations, they provide unorthodox statements with authoritative status. As a whole, the articles discussed here reveal that the evaluation of trade and profit in the early 1870s was full of ambiguities. The orthodox view of profit as a vice as well as the “heterodox” view of profit as a virtue are supported by quotations from the Classics. Significantly, only Chinese are praised for their pursuit of trade and profit, however: Tao Zhu is a positive model of a rich man; foreigners, as exemplified by Wills, are condemned for a “Chinese vice,” their selfish love of profit.⁷⁸

Again, in the 1880s, a great number of articles deal with trade and profit, but from an entirely different perspective. In articles devoted to improper methods of trade such as smuggling (which, significantly, in Chinese is simply *si 私*, the word for “private,” “selfish,” and, accordingly, “illegal”),⁷⁹ the accused are no longer foreigners but Chi-

78. Foreigners frequently defended themselves against this accusation, as did the *Shenbao* in “論本館作報本意” (On the original purpose of our company in making a newspaper), *SB* 11.10.1875. An American who wrote to the *Shenbao* (his letter was printed as an editorial on 17.12.1882) defended the establishment of his Sino-Western bookstore 中西書院, which, he says, was decidedly not established to make a profit (l. 1). For another attack on foreign interest in profit, see *SB* 20.1.1902, discussed in the next section.

79. See “論緝私難而不難” (What’s easy and what’s difficult about catching smugglers), *SB* 19.1.1887; and “緝私不可擾民說” (On the fact that smugglers must not disturb the people), *SB* 19.4.1887.

nese: foreigners may have initiated the practice of smuggling opium in China, but the Chinese have continued the "business." According to one author, smuggling really came to flourish only under indigenous auspices. Indeed, the foreigners, who are trying to eradicate smuggling, now become the models. They are said to be more public-spirited even in their methods of trade (including smuggling) than the Chinese.⁸⁰ A similar "anti-Chinese" argument is offered in an article of April 1887 that deals with Chinese abuses of trading rights established for foreigners.⁸¹ In these articles, trade is condemned in an orthodox voice, which, significantly, does not draw on classical authority. Only one article briefly invokes Mencius' disdain for profit,⁸² and somehow it negotiates with the ancient master by contrasting "private profit" (*sili* 私利) with "public profit" (*gongli* 公利),⁸³ in an attempt to find a compromise between the unaccepted vice and the virtuous possibilities it offers. Rich men may be willing to engage in charities, and surely Mencius would not have objected to profits if they were put to public use.

The ambiguous views of trade and profit to be found in the 1870s are still prevalent in the late 1880s, if under somewhat different premises. Trade continues to be seen as problematic, but it is taken more and more seriously. Classical quotations play only a minor role in these articles, which condemn trade in orthodox tones. Foreigners who had been styled into villains earlier have become role models. This corresponds with historical trends. In the 1880s, the Chinese treaty port-community made repeated efforts to overcome the trade advantages enjoyed by foreigners by seeking assistance from their own government and working to eliminate traditional restrictions on the economy, according to foreign models.⁸⁴ The renewed emphasis on

80. See "論緝私難而不難," *SB* 19.1.1887. The article cites a common saying but does not refer to the Classics. For a similar argument that the foreigners brought carriage riding and gambling to Shanghai, but now the Chinese cannot be stopped from indulging in these vices despite Western laws, see the editorial "論上海風俗" (On the customs and mores of Shanghai), *XWB* 27 and 30.8.1903, discussed in Chapter 5, pp. 37-41.

81. "緝私不可擾民說," *SB* 19.4.1887.

82. "論放利之害" (On the harms of indulging in profit), *SB* 27.10.1887.

83. For a detailed discussion of these concepts, see Munro, "Concept of 'Interest': and McMullen, "Public and Private in the Tang Dynasty," 5-6.

84. Sigel, "The Treaty Port Community," 92-93.

“public profit” as a positive value—which appears in negotiations with classical sources—reflects such changes.

These tendencies become more pronounced in the 1890s.⁸⁵ In “On Public Profit” (“Gongli shuo” 公利說, *SB* 9.1.1897), for example, the argument that profit can be useful for the community rather than the individual alone is taken up again. The article begins: “The world’s greatest need is called profit; the world’s greatest sore is called profit. Since Confucius said: ‘*The mean man is conversant with profit*’ and since Mencius answered the King Hui of Liang with ‘*Why must you speak of profit?*’ . . . profit has been reviled by Confucians.” But, so the author argues, surely (*qi* 豈) this does not mean that one ought to emphasize only the roots and make light of the tips: encouraging wealth does not mean that one cannot also uphold virtue and righteousness (l. 3). Even great rulers such as the Duke of Zhou did not shun talk of profit: they had to profit their country and only then could they talk of virtues such as humanity and righteousness (ll. 3–4). The editorialist argues that almost any human action, be it caring for a country or finding a wife, depends on profit (ll. 5–6), but he acknowledges that people rob and kill for profit, too (ll. 7–10). He concludes: “The world’s greatest need is the world’s greatest sore. And if asked what the difference between the need and the sore is, one usually says: public and private and that is all” (ll. 10–11).

The author offers a rereading of *Analects* 4.16 and the *Mencius* 1A1, which were often used to condemn any undertaking for profit.⁸⁶ The frequent use of the same citations to achieve dissimilar ends in itself works to subvert the inherent meanings of the phrases. Here, however, the author employs a number of clever methods to present his subversive rereadings as the only proper readings and to imply that others have misread the sages. He uses the rhetorical interrogative *qi* “how

85. See, e.g., “論今昔商情之不同” (On the differences between business conditions past and present), *SB* 25.2.1892, which advocates awareness of changes the foreign presence has made in trade. This article contains some less familiar quotations from the Classics. See also “論巡緝私鑿” (A critique of the handling of smugglers), *SB* 12.3.1892, which cites the *Guanzi* among others to make a critical point about corrupt officials, whose misbehavior ought not to be taken as the general standard, however.

86. The quotation from the *Analects* appears, for example, in the article on the Wills case discussed above (see pp. 137–39), and the quotation from the *Mencius* in *SB* 27.10.1887 mentioned in note 82 to this chapter. More examples follow.

could it be different?" effectively. He frames the classical arguments in sententious statements that serve to relativize them. The statement that profit exists in negative (*si*) and positive (*gong*) forms is such a common axiom that the reader immediately accepts the author's authority. An allusion to the *Great Learning* (10/7) further enhances his standing (l. 3): everyone knows that although virtue may be at the root of a well-governed state, wealth, too, is a crucial factor. The example of the Duke of Zhou, a great favorite of Confucius, further supports the truth of the author's interpretation. By the end of the argument, the reader must shake his head at all those who have misread the two sages as condemning profit. Through clever contextualization of the citations, the meaning of their words is reconfigured. The new message, on the other hand, which the author creates by the techniques of framing and juxtaposition, appears once more to reveal the original meaning contained in the words of the sages.⁸⁷

Not only, the author contends, had Mencius and Confucius known that there are two types of profit, they were convinced that it is possible to change hearts bent on private profit into hearts bent on public profit. Strangely enough, he finds that "if I look at the world today, the Westerners indeed seem to have achieved the meaning of this" (ll. 14-15). Why? Because they are not hampered by Chinese hierarchies. Instead of being the lowest group in society (the author cites the four Confucian social groups *simin*, ll. 15-16), merchants are as highly esteemed in foreign countries as the scholars are in China. In fact, they are scholars themselves, since they must attend a special school before they are allowed to engage in trade. The author advocates the establishment of such schools in China. In order to prove that a regard for public profit is instilled in these schools, he points out that foreigners engaging in trade form enterprises called 公同 *gongsu*, a term that literally means "publicly managed."⁸⁸ This name, he argues, shows that these companies work for

87. See Lackner, "Citation et éveil," 121, 125.

88. The term was first used in this commercial sense in the 1830s to refer to the United East India Company and around the 1850s came to be used for all foreign companies (Masini, *Formation of Modern Chinese Lexicon*, 174). Philip Kuhn, in his ongoing research on Overseas Chinese, has researched the "sinification" and amplification of the term in Southeast Asia (mentioned in a talk given at Harvard University, "Is There a History of the Overseas Chinese?" 4 Dec. 1997).

public, not for private, profit (ll. 20–25).⁸⁹ It must have been evident, to readers and editorialist alike, that public profit in the sense advocated here was the least of foreign companies' aims, despite their name. Yet for argument's sake, the editorialist adheres to an interpretation of the "publicly managed company," *gongsi* (a subversion this time of a foreign model), as an apt name corresponding to reality, in no need of a rectification of names (*zhengming* 正名) in the Confucian sense.

He continues that, unlike foreigners, China's merchants and artisans and even its gentry and common people are lacking in public spirit. He advocates teaching children the importance of public profit (ll. 22–23) so that the next generation will not, like its elders, engage in the hypocrisy of talking about humanity, righteousness, and morality only to camouflage the search for private profit. He concludes that the Chinese need to stop avoiding talk of profit and develop a healthy appreciation of public profit.

The article takes its authority from the Classics, to which the author restores the only rightful reading, and from a Confucian-style interpretation of terms along the lines of a rectification of names. These serve to prove the author's equation of foreigners and ancient Chinese sages.⁹⁰ Traditional authorities thus enable the author to promote a new view of trade and profit: trade is useful, even necessary, for the flourishing of a country, and profit—if correctly practiced and taught—is a virtue rather than a vice. To fulminate against trade but secretly to strive for personal profit—which the author characterizes as common behavior in China—is the true vice and calls for a rectification of names.

This radically new view of profit—presented as ancient wisdom rediscovered in foreign institutions—becomes ever more prominent in writings of the same year, such as the editorial "On the Use of Capital" ("Yong cai shuo" 用財說, *SB* 10.3.1897). It begins with a question:

89. The etymology of "company" comes close to this naïve literal interpretation of the translated term—*companio*, a word occurring in vulgar Latin derived from *con* (with) and *panis* (bread) and thus means "one who eats his bread with me."

90. For the topos of foreigners as inheritors of the wisdom of the Chinese sages, see the examples given in the Introduction and in Mittler, "Domesticating an Alien Medium."

“Ought capital to be considered important?” 財當重乎。The author answers the question by expressing a series of doubts. He points out that the character for money (錢) contains the “spear” radical (戈), and the character for profit (利) the “knife” radical (刀). Both words are thus connected with killing and murdering, which is why, according to the editorialist, both Confucius and Buddha called for restraint in matters involving money and profit. But does this mean that one ought not to consider capital important? The next five lines present select citations interspersed with questions by the author taking up the doubts that he expects from his implied readers.

1. Confucius said [*Analects* 4.16]: “*The petty man is conversant with gain.*” He also said [4.12]: “*He who acts with a constant view to his own profit will be much resented.*” Mencius said [1A1]: “*If righteousness be put last and profit first, [people] will not be satisfied without snatching all and everything.*” In view of this, why is capital considered so important? Would it be possible to take capital lightly?

2. The books mention the Zhengde 正德 emperor [of the Ming, r. 1506–22] for his use of profit to sustain the livelihood [of the people]. In the section “Eight Methods of Government” in the “The Great Plan” chapter [of the *Book of Documents*], it is said: “*One is called food, and the second is called commodities.*” In the “Xici” 繫辭 section of the *Book of Changes* [“Xici xia,” 1], it is said: “*How does one assemble people? He said ‘By wealth.’*” Mencius says (2B7): “*If you have no capital, you cannot become happy.*” So how could one say that capital is something that could be taken lightly?

3. How can one evaluate it [capital]? As for evaluating it, in the words of the *Great Learning* (10/19), it is put: “*There is a great method of creating wealth. Let the producers be many, and the consumers few. Let there be activity in production and economy in expenditure.*” It also says (10/8): “*If he make the root his secondary object, and the tip his primary, he will only wrangle with his people and teach them rapine.*” It also says (10/20): “*The virtuous by means of his wealth makes himself more distinguished, the vicious accumulates wealth at the expense of his life.*” It also says (10/10): “*Commodities acquired by improper ways will take their departure in the same way.*”

By presenting these quotations in ever new combinations, the author comes to the conclusion that there is evidence both for and against the importance of capital. He then reminds his readers that the word for money had once been written with a different character, *quan* 泉 (spring), a character that contains the semantic element “water” 水. And indeed, money is similar to water, for is not water the

thing that brings people to life (*Mencius* 7A23)?⁹¹ After this introduction in which the author leads the reader in a series of free associations from one etymology to a list of quotations to another etymology, from one question to a contrary question, the text that follows reads like a commentary on the classical phrases cited.

The author illustrates their meaning with a news report he read in the *Shenbao* several days earlier about two beggars at a temple: one an old man, and the other a heavily made-up girl strumming a Chinese lute (*pipa* 琵琶) and singing lewd songs. Strangely enough, at the end of the day, the pitiful old man had always collected less money than the young woman. The author cites this “unimportant” story to show the tendency of people to spend their money on the wrong things. He continues with a tirade against Shanghai, where he finds numerous examples of Confucius’ “mean men,” the *xiaoren* exclusively interested in profit and much resented for this very reason. To him, Shanghai spendthrifts are perfect examples of the fact that an emphasis on profit makes people unbearably covetous (as observed in *Mencius* 1A1 and the *Great Learning* 10/8). Indeed, their behavior is exactly the opposite of what the *Great Learning* had called the “great method” of accumulating wealth: what they practice is everything but frugal consumption. Improperly accumulated wealth is predictably being put to improper use (*Great Learning* 10/10).

The editorialist skillfully uses his selection of quotations. In the opening lines, he produces a mosaic of equally authoritative arguments for both positions—condemnations of profit from the *Analects* and *Mencius* (in paragraph 1) and praises of profit from the *Book of Documents*, *Book of Changes*, and *Mencius* (paragraph 2). Finally, he provides evidence that there are two different categories of profit, a virtuous and a vicious type, from the *Great Learning* (paragraph 3). He is careful never to deny the truth and value of any of these statements and contents himself with posing strategically placed questions. As we have seen in other articles, this technique of juxtaposing classical sources—which here even puts the *Mencius* at both ends of the argument—has a revelatory effect. The new message pretends to be faithful

91. The author here alludes to the line from the *Mencius* also quoted in the article on water pollution in Shanghai (*SB* 28.2.1873); see p. 126: “*The people cannot live without water and fire.*” He argues further that water and wealth were similar in another way: both were in constant flux and thus difficult to contain.

to the meaning of the old text and to disclose its true meaning. Yet in his clever arrangement of quotations, the author prompts readers to rethink their hypocritical and prejudiced attitude toward profit. Through the illustrative story, the author takes up some of the classical arguments against profit and criticizes his contemporaries for committing all these faults. At the same time, he accuses his compatriots of neglecting some of their sages' most important convictions (the necessity of public profit): Why would they rather give money to a lewd girl than to a miserable old man?

Two days later, another editorial on the topic appeared and warned of an impending trade war—which the Chinese with their love of private profit will never win, because the foreigners understand the uses of public profit.⁹² The sense of urgency found in this article is even more pronounced in another article that appeared five days later arguing for improving China's trade situation and discarding prejudices against profit. The title of this article, "Ten Thousand Weapons in Trade" ("Wan bing yu shang shuo" 萬兵於商說, *SB* 17.3.1897), foreshadows its tense and hostile rhetoric. It begins:

92. "論商務以公司爲最善" (On the fact that business is best done with companies), *SB* 12.3.1897. This editorial does not make use of classical citation but interprets—once more (see *SB* 9.1.1897)—the foreign term *company* (*gongsi*). It explains that companies are useful because they pool money to make great investments. The reader is told of the huge budgets needed to build "the world's longest railway line" and asked: "How is this huge sum accumulated?" The answer is that if several million people work together in a company, the investment as well as the profit will be great, and the more people that join together, the greater the profit will be. Rather than making people covetous or selfish, the involvement in companies binds them together, according to this author. The reader is then given examples that are of national concern: in order to prove that the establishment of companies has beneficial effects, the author reminds the reader that all the railways, telegraphs, and mines established by foreigners in China are immensely profitable. The author also warns that a trade war has become imminent. The foreigners, ganging up as China's enemies, accumulate capital, while China does nothing to defend itself. Even worse, there is a lot of infighting among the Chinese. He attributes the weakness of Chinese business to the fact that the Chinese as a people are not united at heart—because they do not form companies. The Chinese indulge in the vice of love of private profit; foreigners, on the other hand, appreciate the importance of public profit. The article contains no classical citations but openly advocates the acknowledgment of profit as a virtue and alludes to the classical concept of *gongli* (public profit) in its discussion of the *gongsi* (publicly managed company).

All along when rulers talked of wealth, they would necessarily also talk of strength; and when they talked of strength, they would definitely first talk of wealth. Confucius said [12.7]: "*There ought to be sufficient food and sufficient military equipment.*" And he talked of military equipment being no more important than sufficient food. King Hui of Liang asked Mencius: "*Are you about to profit my kingdom?*" [1A1] And in what he answered, wealth and power were contained.

After classical quotation, the author next resorts to historical precedent. In China's golden age, the sage-rulers stressed agriculture. During times of peace, even soldiers were used in agriculture. In the present, it is appropriate to emphasize trade instead of agriculture; if soldiers were once used in agriculture, why not use them in trade today (ll. 1-3)? He condemns the Chinese government's modernization efforts for emphasizing the military almost exclusively and advocates reforming the trade structures instead.

He then makes a rather revolutionary point: the overseas Chinese, those "lost sons of China," ought to be re-integrated into the Chinese body politic and encouraged to help their homeland by investing their profits in China rather than in "enemy countries." For a long time, Chinese had been forbidden to leave and thus to return to China.⁹³ Even though the official order was rescinded in 1893,⁹⁴ merchants returning from sojourns overseas faced discrimination from local magistrates well into the twentieth century: to leave one's family to search for wealth in far-off places violated the basic Confucian principle of filial piety and the stricture against the pursuit of profit.⁹⁵ To call for extending a warm welcome to these merchants was still a rather daring step in 1897.

Therefore, the author was careful to make his radical argument palatable with classical citations and historical examples. And yet, these

93. Godley, *Mandarin-Capitalists*, 60.

94. *Ibid.*, 77: "On 21 August 1893, the ambassador in London memorialized to the throne and requested the complete rescinding of the existing prohibition against emigration. He further asked the throne to begin steps to protect overseas Chinese who could be induced to come home." This request was answered by an imperial order on 13 September 1893 (*ibid.*, 78): "Henceforth all Chinese merchants irrespective of how long they have been abroad whether married or with children may return home to practice their trade upon receiving a pass from the Chinese minister or consul." Effectively, this meant a lifting of the ban on emigration.

95. *Ibid.*, 3.

curtseys to authority must be treated with caution: the *Analects* passage stems from a discussion of the art of government between Confucius and Zigong 子貢. Confucius reckons that good government is characterized by three things: sufficient food, enough weapons to allow the state to defend the country, and the people's confidence in their ruler. Zigong inquires which of these elements could be discarded first, and the sage answers: military equipment, then food. The trust of the people, however, is an absolute necessity. Obviously, the editorialist uses only those of Confucius' words that are useful to him. Like Confucius, he stresses the people's livelihood over military equipment. But the trust of the people, which, in the original, is the most important element in the discussion, simply does not fit into his argument and thus remains unmentioned. The citation is manipulated to serve the writer's intentions. This is all the more evident in the treatment of the quotation from the *Mencius*. King Hui of Liang indeed asks the question the editorial author cites, but Mencius answers with disgust: "Why must your Majesty speak of 'profit'?" (1A1) Only much later in the text (1A3 and 1A5) does Mencius talk to the king about maintaining the people's livelihood and thus, by implication, about strengthening a country. But he does not use the terms "wealth" and "power" (key terms, of course, in late Qing political debates) as suggested in the article. The author is careful not to mark what he manipulates as quotations. He paraphrases the statements of the sages ("he talked of," "in what he answered was") and bends the texts to fit his own context, with new emphases and new terminology. And his readers would have known this (and, as we shall see, some readers openly pointed this out). His (ab)use of citation is an open yet subtle subversion.

During the late 1890s, editorials in the debate over profit and trade attempt to show both sides of the coin, stressing that profit could be positive if used properly. These arguments grew out of an ever more pressing concern with the weakness of China and the power of the West, which were attributed to the vicious and the virtuous uses of profit, respectively. The passion to be found in these criticisms arose from the very real threat that the foreign powers would partition China. The authors' effective use of quotations subverts the meaning of certain classical passages, and not always subtly. The newspaper text uses quotations to create unforeseen meanings. It leads an intertextual dialogue not on subordinate but rather on equal terms with the original text. Finally, the newspaper text comes to the conclusion

that this new evaluation of the old quotation is its best possible interpretation.⁹⁶ Using the same passages from the Classics for different arguments, these authors make their radical rereadings appear to reveal the true meaning of the quoted texts and create new associations that are then presented as natural and inevitable. These efforts at Confucian reformism can be considered some of the last threads of “authentic Confucian commitment,” as Levenson once put it in his seminal study on the fate of Confucianism in modern China, but they may be much more at the same time.⁹⁷ As did many of the reformers discussed by Levenson, these newspapers call on the timelessness of the Confucian texts for their own purposes. They summon up antiquity to sanction innovation.⁹⁸ Citing the Classics no longer primarily serves to represent the past but rather to point to and to illuminate a new and changed present.⁹⁹ It is impossible to measure the effects of such “Confucian” propaganda. The clever use of quotations in articles advocating a new attitude toward trade and profit may have helped to induce real change. Nevertheless, it appears that these efforts at Confucian persuasion were not totally successful, as the number of articles dealing with the need for improvements in trade after the turn of the century shows. The sense of urgency and of threat, which in 1897 was already associated with foreign trading power, is still felt in these articles and led to even more criticisms of Chinese officials and the Chinese. It also resulted in another shift. In the 1870s, the foreigner had been viewed as a vicious animal interested in nothing but personal profit; in the 1880s and 1890s, he became a somewhat ambiguous model, menacing and yet convincing in his practice of public profit; after the turn of the century, he was perceived both as a glamorous model and as a grimacing threat.

An article from September 1902 begins with a well-known quotation from the *Book of Changes* (“Xici xia,” 2): “If one [modification]¹⁰⁰ was brought to its end, they changed it, and by [constant] changes, they created

96. Tolic, *Das Zitat in Literatur und Kunst*, 75–77, calls such practice “creative” or “illuminative” citation (*kreative, illuminative Zitathaftigkeit*).

97. See Levenson, *Confucian China and Its Modern Fate*, vol. 3: 7, 27.

98. See *ibid.*, 70.

99. Tolic, *Das Zitat in Literatur und Kunst*, 73–74, distinguishes between the quotation’s functions as representation (*repräsentative Funktion*) and presentation (*Funktion der Präsentation*).

100. 易窮則變變則通. The initial *yi* 易 (modification), is omitted in the article.

connections."¹⁰¹ In the *Book of Changes*, this phrase describes the sages Yao and Shun as wise rulers who knew the most opportune time to implement reforms. Not so the present rulers: whereas other countries have for a long time worked to establish trade connections, China has fallen far behind. The author sees this failure as the reason for China's loss to foreigners of Southeast Asia, which he describes as something like the "lung" of trade between China and the West. China had missed its chance in the Ming, and now it must quickly connect up with the foreigners not only because a belated profit is better than no profit at all, but even more so because otherwise the West will take it over.¹⁰² Few of these articles omit classical phrases completely and simply argue for changes in trade while ignoring those aspects that Confucian-educated Chinese would have been suspicious of.

Obviously, the sages were not easily defied by silencing them: the problem of profit as a vice returns repeatedly. The editorial "On Preserving Wealth" ("Bao fu shuo" 保富說, *SB* 19.12.1907), for example, admits that "the Chinese Confucians did not talk of profit" 中國儒者不言利 (l. 1) and that only the *Rites of Zhou*—a work neglected in Chinese statecraft—took a positive stance toward profit. The reader is given several historical examples of the damage caused by the derogatory view of profit. In the twentieth century, the century of international trade connections, China has lost out precisely because of this negative attitude. Profit can be useful, the author argues. The rich (ll. 13-17) in any "civilized country" 文明國家 provide grain for the starving. In case of war, they pay the soldiers, and when the country is in debt, they help. They build schools and set up banks and factories. "Civilized countries" can rely on the rich, and therefore "civilized countries" have special tax laws for the wealthy. Not so China.

101. "通商論" (On creating trade connections), *SB* 20.9.1902.

102. A similar view is taken in an editorial of November 1902 ("保利說" [On preserving profit], *SB* 12.11.1902). It argues that even though China is one of the poorest countries, its people remain unaware of the fact. The author reminds the readers that foreign goods had not always dominated the market. The first foreigners to reach China had appreciated its goods. But now neither China's tea nor its silk is up to the world's best standards, and without an effort in science and technology, China's trade deficit will grow. Without resorting to classical phrases, the author preaches that foreign-style trade is the only panacea for China. In his view, the Chinese, ignorant and unaware of what is going on around them, mistakenly blame foreigners for their own failings.

The editorialist illustrates his arguments by telling the story of a merchant from Guangdong who had returned to China with great wealth but was maltreated by corrupt officials. He had died of anger, and his sons had left China with all his money. The author concludes that this is the reason China's businessmen flee the country, never to come back—to the detriment of their homeland.

The problem addressed in this article was a very real one. Zhang Bishi 張弼士 (1840–1916), one of China's earliest and most famous entrepreneurs, was convinced that if the Qing government could “get the overseas Chinese to trust it, these merchants would use their great financial force and managerial expertise to strengthen the nation.”¹⁰³ In a memorial to the emperor in 1903, he suggested changes similar to those mentioned by the *Shenbao* editorialist and met with great resistance.¹⁰⁴ Probably because of this opposition, the editorial does not ignore the issue of the negative image of profit in classical sources. By admitting that “the Chinese Confucians did not talk of profit,” the author takes up their well-known predicament only to demolish it completely through his forceful argument. The strength of his examples (backed by the mention of the *Rites of Zhou*) defeats the Confucian sages and—with their own weapons—proves them wrong. It is obvious, however, that even at this point in time, when trade was one of the most openly discussed and promoted topics on the pages of the newspaper, profit was still viewed with suspicion. Indeed, profit was never unambiguously hailed as a virtue. This situation would not change in the coming years, nor even after the founding of the Republic.¹⁰⁵

An editorial of January 1907, “On the Weak Points in People's Character Today” (“Lun jinri renxin zhi xianni” 論近日人心之陷溺, *SB* 26.1.1907), for example, argues that people (that is, the Chinese) are

103. Godley, *Mandarin-Capitalists*, 110.

104. Godley (*ibid.*) relates the contents of this memorial. One of Zhang's most interesting proposals to raise the status of returning overseas Chinese businessmen was his suggestion that the throne should award honorary titles and positions to them.

105. See Chapter 6 for a number of Republican-era articles dealing with the abhorrence of selfishness. One further prominent example for this trend is “去私篇,” *SB* 5.5.1912. A 1913 guide to Shanghai contains a vicious attack on Chinese in Shanghai who are interested in nothing but profit, especially hotel owners, who charge outrageous prices for filthy rooms (cf. Wong Tsao Ling, *Huren baojuan*, 108–9). Lu Xun would later take up the problem of the reflexive association of individuality and selfishness (Lydia Liu, *Translingual Practice*, 85).

all the same—selfish in nature—all have their hearts set on making a personal profit (ll. 8–9). They do not care if they carry to the grave their “original heart” (*benxin* 本心), which (according to Mencius) was once good (l. 14: 喪其本心). Although they attempt to hide their ugly hearts behind façades such as that of the patriot (*aiguoazhe* 愛國者), that is only for show (ll. 17–20). The author reminds the reader of the ancient Confucian sages’ distinction between righteousness (a public virtue and the law of heaven) and profit (a private vice and a human desire) (ll. 25–26). Although this author does not speak openly “in the words of the sages” or cite from any particular work to argue his conservative view, he adapts the spirit of the Confucian Classics.¹⁰⁶ The great man (*junzi* 君子), he says, measures right and wrong before acting, whereas the mean man (*xiaoren*) calculates profit and loss (ll. 29–30). As is typical of Chinese prose modeled on the Classics, he uses parallelism to juxtapose first these and then a whole litany of opposing images: “Those who measure right and wrong base [their action] in public-mindedness 公, and therefore their matters will definitely be accomplished. Those who measure profit and loss base their actions on selfishness 私, and therefore their harvest will definitely be shallow” (ll. 30–31).

The author illustrates these axiomatic statements in traditional fashion by giving an illustrative example (ll. 31–34). In former days those who entered the new schools (*xuetang* 學堂) did so because they knew that the old examination system (*keju* 科舉) was wrong and the new schools were right. It was a case of measuring right and wrong before acting. Today, however, those who enter the new schools do so only because it is considered profitable. The editorialist hopes that people break with their proclivity for profit and scrutinize right and wrong instead. Only thus can the country become powerful again.

We have now come full circle from the condemnation of Wills (the paradigmatic foreigner) for his single-minded focus on private profit in 1872 to a condemnation of the Chinese for a similar selfishness some 35 years later (and, as we shall see in Chapter 6, the theme continued to recur far into the Republican years). Did nothing change, except perhaps the object of the criticism? In reality, outside the pages

106. This editorial contains a string of buzzwords from the Confucian canon, such as 本心, 私 and 公, 利 and 義, 是 and 非, and it is written in a style reminiscent of the authoritative writings of the sages.

of the *Shenbao*, a great number of things had indeed changed: more and more foreigners had begun to invest in and profit from trade and industry in China. On the other hand, the rise around the turn of the century of the likes of Zhang Bishi, originally a merchant in Southeast Asia, who returned to highest official honors,¹⁰⁷ as well as the increasing numbers of successful Chinese compradors appreciated for their competence in foreign affairs,¹⁰⁸ is evidence for the increasing respectability in real life of merchants in the late Qing, the “ennoblement of the businessman,” so to speak.¹⁰⁹ In the newspapers, too, new ideas had been raised for discussion: the idea that private profit might benefit the country; the idea that foreign ways of doing business were really ways of making a public profit—something China’s ancient sages had advocated; and, last but not least, the idea that those who had left China to make money ought to be invited back so as to bring public profit to their home country.

The persistent obstinate bass on profit as selfish throughout these three decades of *Shenbao* commentaries betrays the suspicion expected of readers, however. The idea of trade and profit apparently continued to trouble Chinese readers, in spite of historical developments (and in spite of Luffrano’s conviction that “most of society during the late imperial period had come to accept commercial activity as a necessary part of life and to regard those engaged in commerce as respectable members of society”).¹¹⁰ Introducing trade on the pages of the foreign-style newspaper, itself an openly for-profit undertaking,¹¹¹ was obviously not a simple matter. Chinese concepts of private and public

107. For his and other such success stories, see Godley, *Mandarin-Capitalists*.

108. Hao, *The Comprador*, esp. 6–8 *et passim*.

109. For this process of ennoblement, see Wang Ermin, *Zhongguo jindai sixiang shilun*, 233. This new caste of men is celebrated in the novel *Voices of the Merchants* (1908) by Ji Wen. In this novel the merchants are the virtuous Confucians, and the scholars are incredible money-grubbers out for private profit. The merchants vow, “with all the earnestness of determined Confucians, to revolutionize China’s economy.” For a discussion of the novel, see David Wang, *Fin-de-siècle Splendor*, 231–32.

110. Luffrano, *Honorable Merchants*, 35.

111. See “論本館作報本意,” *SB* 11.10.1875, which begins with the bold statement “Our reason for starting this newspaper is to sell papers” 夫新報之開館賣報也, but is quick to point out that contrary to notions that the press is only and exclusively interested in “making a profit,” it is the first and foremost duty of the newspaper to be devoted to propagating righteousness.

profit reacted with the foreign idea of trade: Wills's behavior was normal and acceptable in the West but not in China. There, a classical moral concept was used to condemn changes taking place through foreign influence. On the other hand, the very same classical ideas about profit would lead to a conversion of the foreign joint-stock venture, the company, into a public-spirited corporate body. Chinese conceptions of profit were transformed by foreign notions of trade and then reinterpreted in a Chinese way. Thus, if foreign ideas changed from being China's foremost enemy to the best way to promote trade—and foreign trading methods were discovered to be based on the ideas of China's ancient sages.¹¹²

One of the aims of studying the use of classical language in the foreign-style newspapers was to show how effective classical citations were in introducing and marking change. An interesting pattern emerges. Articles advocating change tend to rely on marked and direct quotations from the Classics rather more heavily than those defending the status quo.¹¹³ We can surmise that it took little courage to talk of selfish profit as a vice—Chinese had done so at least since the days of Confucius. On the other hand, those arguing that the pursuit of profit was beneficial probably felt the need of a higher authority. The pattern seems to suggest that advocates of change on the editorial board of the *Shenbao* and other such newspapers felt that they had to hide their own thoughts and arguments behind those of long-standing repute. Did they fear that a bold and outright statement of “the facts of contemporary life” would chase readers away? Were they trying to convince themselves of the acceptability of these ideas, many of which still smacked of their foreign origins? And how successful were these reinterpretations of the past in convincing readers of the necessity of

112. See Lydia Liu, *Translingual Practice*, 27.

113. The only pro-change article in the set of articles analyzed above that does not contain any direct quotations is “保利說,” *SB* 12.11.1902. All other articles that do not contain direct quotations condemn one or another aspect of trade (e.g., the anti-smuggling articles in *SB* 19.1 and 19.4.1887 or the anti-selfishness article in *SB* 26.1.1907). On the other hand, the only article opposing change that contained an (unmarked) quotation from the Classics was the article on Wills's Bridge in *SB* 26.10.1872. A similar pattern emerges in articles published in the *Shanghai xinbao*, as a survey of writings in November and December 1872 shows. See, e.g., “義利說” (On virtue and profit), *SHXB* 25.11.1872; “多利爲害說” (On the harm of too much profit), *SHXB* 10.12.1872; “重利爲害說” (The harm of emphasizing profit), *SHXB* 25.12.1872.

reform and revolution? These questions are difficult to answer, but the analyses presented here suggest that the use of a Chinese style of writing was not per se a hindrance to the introduction of change. In these editorials, when morsels from the Classics were juxtaposed with one another and with the editorialists' arguments to create new meanings, sometimes contradictory to those perhaps intended by the sage who uttered them, they actually became an effective language of change. The use of citations from the Classics did not preclude the advocacy of reform or even revolution; to the contrary, it facilitated it.

MODERN EDUCATION:

REINTRODUCING ANCIENT PRACTICE

An editorial of February 1877 calls reforms in education second only to trade reforms as the primary duty of every good government.¹¹⁴ Time and again, the article returns with variations on this theme (ll. 5, 7, 11, and the concluding lines). To support this, the author quotes the *Record of Rites* (18.2): "A man who does not study does not know the meaning of the *Dao*." "Therefore," he concludes, "we must establish schools to teach people." Foreign countries have long understood this ancient Chinese precept: in these countries, the gentry, the rich, kings and queens, almost as a matter of course, set up schools, including schools for women. Accordingly, the editorialist admonishes his government that to learn from the West in military matters is not enough; it is especially not as urgent as ensuring the livelihood of their people through the profits from trade and as educating them.

This coupling of trade and education is by no means exceptional.¹¹⁵ Both were hot issues in late Qing China. Here a statement from the Classics is again introduced to justify reforms. It appears that the words of the sages had as crucial a role in introducing changes in education as they had in discussions on profit and trade. What tactics did editorialists advocating a modern educational system use? Was citation

114. "論治國當以富教為先務" (Discussing wealth and education as primary duties in governing a country), *SB* 27.2.1877.

115. "論近日人心之陷溺," *SB* 26.1.1907, discussed above, is one such example. "新說" (On the new), *SB* 6.2.1897, calls for a renewal in moral values (and thus a re-evaluation of profit) through a renewal of education and thus combines the two topics. It cites a number of classical sources, such as the *Mencius*, *Book of Changes*, and *Book of Documents*.

of the Classics again employed to justify radical ideas? Is the 1877 editorial just cited typical in its equation of foreign ideas with models envisioned long ago by Chinese sages? Did a journalist advocating reform in education always have to return to Chinese antiquity to get his point across? And what happened to "Chinese antiquity" in the process?

The Chinese education system was based on the assumption that education served one goal: to create a refined person who could serve the ruler. Education was preparation for official life.¹¹⁶ As early as the Han dynasty, in 136 BCE, the philosopher Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒 (179–104 BCE) had persuaded Emperor Wu to establish an educational and examination system that trained potential government officials in the Confucian Classics and selected them on their knowledge of that canon. For a good two thousand years, variations of this examination system determined entry into the bureaucracy and social prominence.¹¹⁷ Education was mostly a private undertaking,¹¹⁸ and most people were educated in family and clan schools. Few public schools existed: education was not a universal good.

The curriculum was restricted to the teaching of the Classics, dynastic histories, and current laws and statutes.¹¹⁹ In the Qing, the official examinations tested candidates' knowledge of the Four Books and the Five Classics and their ability to compose poetry and to write essays on passages from the Classics, historical subjects, and "contemporary problems" (*shiwu* 時務).¹²⁰ Changes in China's education system began

116. Tilemann Grimm, *Erziehung und Politik*, 15; Miyazaki, *China's Examination Hell*; and, most comprehensively, Elman, *A Cultural History of Civil Examinations*.

117. Oliver, *Communication and Culture*, 124; Biot, *Essai*, 551; and Miyazaki, *China's Examination Hell*, 18–19. Miyazaki does not acknowledge the early Han origins of the examination system and believes that it originated in the sixth century under the Sui.

118. For the official schooling system, see Miyazaki, *China's Examination Hell*, 36–37; and Biot, *Essai*, 494–95.

119. Miyazaki, *China's Examination Hell*, 14; and Biot, *Essai*, 499–500: within the logic of this system, mathematics was left to merchants, and science and technology to artisans.

120. Tilemann Grimm, *Erziehung und Politik*, 63–64; Biot, *Essai*, 509–11; Miyazaki, *China's Examination Hell*; and Liu Zhaobin, *Qingdai keju*. Kuo Ping Wen (*Public Education*, 42) mentions questions on contemporary problems as early as the Tang.

at the private level, with the establishment of missionary schools during the late Qing and the new subjects offered there: religion, foreign languages, natural sciences, music, and physical education.¹²¹ Even though the Chinese government considered certain aspects of "modern" education dangerous (for instance, the study of law, short-term teacher training, coeducation, and workers' education),¹²² the Qing government made several (more or less abortive) attempts to change the educational system. It began to introduce new subjects to the old curriculum; foreign learning, for example, was an optional subject in the 1887 examinations; the government established new types of technical schools, such as the Tongwenguan, Jiangnan Arsenal, and Fuzhou Navy Yard School;¹²³ it began to send students to study abroad.¹²⁴ Increasingly, private schools adapted the aims and methods of "modern education," and graduates from these new-style schools were awarded Chinese examination degrees.¹²⁵ In 1905, the examination system was abolished. One of the last significant changes under the Qing was the official introduction of women's education in 1907.

How were these changes reflected in the pages of the *Shenbao*? And how were citations used in introducing these changes? Articles from the 1870s and 1880s attempt to explain the advantages of the foreign schooling system by hiding them among examples from Chinese antiquity—finding Chinese origins for the Western practices according to the formula of *Xixue Zhongyuan* 西學中原. They criticize common practices by using the mirror of China's golden age and quotations from the Classics. Shortly before the turn of the twentieth century, this situation changed slightly, as the foreign model gained more and

121. For the influence of these schools, see Biggerstaff, *The Earliest Modern Government Schools*, 3-4.

122. Bastid, *Educational Reform*, 64.

123. The primary aim of these institutions was to strengthen the military might of the country (Biggerstaff, *The Earliest Modern Government Schools*).

124. See Miyazaki, *China's Examination Hell*, 124; Biggerstaff, *The Earliest Modern Government Schools*, 9-30; Y. C. Wang, *Chinese Intellectuals and the West*; Saari, *Legacies of Childhood*; Borthwick, "Students and Revolutionary Culture in Late Qing Schools"; and Lo Hui-min, "Ku Hung-Ming: Schooling." For Li Hongzhang's suggestions, see Liu Kwang-ching, "Confucian as Patriot," 33-34. A reference to changes in the education system can also be found in the court gazette, *jingbao*, reprinted in *SB* 15.5.1902.

125. See, e.g., Borthwick, "Students and Revolutionary Culture in Late Qing Schools," 94.

more authority. From the turn of the century on, Chinese and foreign sources are quoted with almost equal frequency. As with the reform of trade practices, citation is used to introduce radical ideas. Changes in education, even those that followed a foreign model, were apparently never perceived to be quite as radical as those in trade, however: they did not involve reinterpreting a vice as a virtue. Accordingly, quotations not only play a lesser role but also need to be bent less for the purpose of introducing new practices.

An 1875 editorial "On Education" ("Lun dushu" 論讀書, *SB* 30.6.1875) begins by quoting Song emperor Taizu (r. 960–76): "For prime minister, you must use an educated person." The editorialist deduces that ideally, all officials, indeed everyone, ought to be educated. Historical precedent is cited: peasants, artisans, women, and children wrote songs and poems during the Three Dynasties; this shows that these groups were educated during China's golden age. Even merchants knew the rites and music and were able to write important works such as *Mr. Lü's Spring and Autumn Annals* (*Lüshi chunqiu* 呂氏春秋), ascribed to Lü Buwei 呂不韋 (d. 235 BCE), a merchant from Han who later became chancellor of the Qin. A passage from the Xia dynasty section of the *Book of Documents* is cited: a herald walking along the streets proclaims: "Ye officials able to direct, be prepared with your admonitions, ye workmen engaged in mechanical affairs, remonstrate on the subject of your business" (l. 5).¹²⁶ Again this shows that everyone was educated in antiquity. Indeed, all of China's sage-rulers were convinced that the people must be educated 無非欲人之讀書而已 (l. 7). Regrettably, this golden age ended, however, with the abolition of the well-field system and; with it, local primary schools.¹²⁷ The acquisition of knowledge was now restricted to the literati.

But even they did not learn the right things. The poet Su Dongpo 蘇東坡 (1037–1101) is quoted: "If they had studied ten thousand scrolls but not the laws, even accomplished sage-rulers such as Yao or Shun would not have been so artful in the end" (l. 9). The editorialist explains that only people who know their rights are able to act lawfully and understand

126. The translation follows Legge, *Chinese Classics*, 3: 164.

127. The late Qing featured a number of protracted debates on the necessity of reviving the well-field (*jingtian* 井田) system, which was described as proto-socialist. For the significance of this concept in the works of Kang Youwei, Hu Shi, Tan Sitong, and Hu Hanmin, see Levenson, *Confucian China and Its Modern Fate*, vol. 3: 19–37.

punishments. Therefore—and here he returns to the quotation of Song Taizu—the prime minister must be educated in the laws and statutes as well as the Classics, and not the prime minister alone but all the people (ll. 1-12). Accordingly, a general and universal education has many advantages:

For those above: if civil servants are educated, they can reach the state of prosperity and bliss found under Tang and Yu. If military officials are educated, they can take responsibility over thousands of cities.

For those below: if peasants are educated, the methods for growing plants will be perfected; if artisans are educated, what they produce will be of good quality; if merchants are educated, trade and commerce will be excellent; if businessmen are educated, then the art of trade will be accomplished; if women are educated, then they will know filial piety and respect, harmony and obedience, and thus can be in charge of the kitchen and helpful around the house. (ll. 12-14)

The editorialist concludes his list with an incredulous rhetorical *qi* 豈 (how could it be?!) question: Since the benefits of such a system are so obvious, how could anyone neglect education (l. 15)? He continues with a tirade at incompetent officials whose interest is aroused only when they “see a woman” 見婦女則加意 (l. 18). They have no education, neither in the laws (which leads to many unjust convictions, l. 20) nor in the Classics (since they are only trained to write *bagu* and nothing else, l. 21). Only a program of general and universal education can change the present demoralized state of the country into one of perfect government.

The author must have known that he was dealing with two of the most controversial points in educational reform: the introduction of universal education and the inclusion of legal education in the curriculum. Therefore, he backed his harsh and open critique of the government with a large number of citations, a practice repeated in later articles dealing with the need for universal education.¹²⁸ Moreover, in

128. See also “論書院流弊” (On the spread of corrupt practices in academies), *SB* 19.3.1887, which quotes Han Yu 韓愈, Laozi, and Zhuangzi; “教子嬰孩廣義” (Teaching small children ought to be general practice), *SB* 25.2.1897, which cites the *Analectics*; “議院不可行於中國說” (On the fact that a parliament cannot be implemented in China), *SB* 20.1.1902, discussed below, which cites from the *Book of Documents* and the *Mencius*; and “論學堂課程宜簡 并宜設立專門學堂” (On the fact that the curriculum in general schools ought to be simplified and that spe-

advocating the concept of universal education, this author carefully avoids referring to the foreign source of this model, which must have been obvious to readers, and presents it instead as a system practiced in Chinese antiquity.

A similar tactic was used in an 1882 editorial dealing with attitudes toward foreign learning.¹²⁹ The editorial congratulates the government for its modernization measures. Nevertheless, it also warns the reformers not to make fun of officials who would call the modernization measures a waste of money and a blind following of the West: "Since they are men, too, I do not wish to laugh at them. No, I only pity them: they are Chinese but have never indeed read Chinese books" (l. 4). If they had, they would know the ingenuity of the ancients, their technological inventiveness, their scientific theories, and their interest in translation. The editorialist spends a full six lines (a third of the article) elaborating on these achievements, all of which were clearly "engendered in China" (ll. 4-10). All the foreigners have done, he declares, is to follow in Chinese footsteps. Therefore, he concludes in a proverbial phrase, imitating the foreigners is like "looking for one's lost ritual manners among barbarians" 禮失而求諸野者 (l. 10); it is ridiculous to consider foreign knowledge the roots and Chinese knowledge the tips. He ends by quoting Mencius (3A4), who says in scorn about turning against the teachings of the Duke of Zhou and Confucius: "*I have heard of birds leaving dark valleys and moving to lofty trees, but I have not heard of their descending from the lofty trees to enter the dark valleys*" (ll. 10-11).¹³⁰

Although this author favors the speedy introduction of foreign technical equipment and knowledge, he clearly caters to an audience that he pretends not to "wish to laugh at," the conservative officials who consider the imitation of foreign practices a matter of national shame. Yes, it would be wrong to imitate foreigners blindly, but it is right to adapt foreign methods with open eyes, since they have Chi-

cialized schools ought to be established), *SB* 11.11.1902, which cites a number of ancient sayings and proverbs (古云).

129. "崇尚西人之學辯" (Debating reverence for the Westerner's learning), *SB* 23.1.1882.

130. For a similar argument, see "論奇機不獨出自泰西" (On the fact that strange machines don't stem just from Western countries), *SB* 3.3.1892, which again argues for foreign technical achievements by comparing them to technical achievements in Chinese history.

nese roots. For the sake of his conservative readers, this editorialist pretends to despise the West. The clever use of the citation from the *Mencius* and the proverbial saying show that "the media may be most successful in spreading revolutionary messages when these are presented as defenses of tradition and the status quo, rather than as incitements to sudden change."¹³¹ As is typical when Chinese origins are found for foreign knowledge and ideas (*Xixue Zhongyuan*), it turns out that much of the "new" knowledge is rather "old" and a long-lost Chinese tradition.¹³²

This argument is seemingly repeated in an editorial of 1902 on the need for universal education before China can introduce a parliamentary system.¹³³ It begins with a sigh about the horrible weakness of China. The editorialist argues that one solution is to follow the foreign example and establish representative government. According to him, under the Zhou, parliament may not have existed in name but it did exist in practice. Government carried out the wishes and suggestions of all the people, and indeed one can even find equivalents of a bicameral legislature. To prove this point, he cites passages from the "Great Plan" chapter of the *Book of Documents* (ll. 5-6) and from the *Mencius* (1B7, l. 7). Having established this equivalence, he argues that the situation prevailing during the Zhou has long ceased, however.

His point is well taken. He finds a parallel for a foreign institution in the Chinese past through a clever choice of citations but does not argue that this institution can be revived. Indeed, he turns the familiar argument upside down: China is presently in such bad shape that only drastic measures would allow it to recover its golden age. To back this statement, he quotes not the Classics but contemporary authorities from foreign countries: all of them consider education an urgent duty. Only China does not do so, a failure that is a sign of its great delusion 夫泰西各國皆以教養為急務，中國獨莫之講，此大惑也 (ll. 18-19). There has been a shift in the argument: like the authors of the early articles, the editorialist advocates the implementation of universal education by reference to China's golden age. Unlike them, however,

131. Popkin and Censer, "Lessons from a Symposium," 8.

132. This argument also reappears in "論譯學" (On translation), *SB* 28.11.1902, which gives a long list of historical instances of translation in China before admonishing the government to take an increased interest in translation.

133. "議院不可行於中國說," *SB* 20.1.1902.

he does not leave the West out of the picture or disparage it. The Classics are cited for their authority, but apparently the foreign model has gained some power and can, at this point, be quoted without apology. The analogy between foreign and Chinese knowledge is no longer used to sneer at foreigners “but we had it first”; instead it signifies an affinity and congeniality between what is foreign and new and what is Chinese and old. Newspaper discourse thus echoes what has been observed for other text genres around the turn of the century: the once powerful argument of “Chinese origins” lost ground between 1895 and 1900, most probably in connection with the humiliating defeat by a small but obviously successfully “Westernized” Japan in 1895. At the same time, “foreign origins” became more and more of an authoritative argument.¹³⁴

This trend is evident in a masterpiece of rhetoric by Cai Yuanpei 蔡元培 (1868–1940), the leading liberal educator of early twentieth-century China: his suggestions to the newly established Republican Ministry of Education, published in the *Shenbao* on three consecutive days in February 1912.¹³⁵ He equates Confucian values with those of the French Revolution and praises both. He quotes Jesus, Mencius, Zhang Zai, Kant, and the Duke of Zhou, and proverbs, both foreign and Chinese, play a crucial role in his argument. When Cai calls for the teaching of “public morals,” *gongmin daode* 公民道德, for example, he explains that these consist of the goals of the French revolution—liberty, equality, and fraternity. These terms are in turn defined through citations from Confucius and Mencius, the *Great Learning*, and Zhang Zai. Thus Cai equates liberty with virtue *yi* 義, equality with reciprocity *shu* 恕, and fraternity with humanity *ren* 仁. Later, when urging that students ought to be trained in global terms, he argues: “Some call it the *Dao* 道, some the *Taiji* 太極, some God, some the Consciousness of the Dark, some the Unconscious—its names are manifold, but the attitude is always the same in all the different schools of philosophy and the different religions.”¹³⁶ Cai thus completes the hesitant steps taken by earlier editorialists: he equates the

134. Xiong, *Xixue Dongjian*, esp. 716–23.

135. “教育部總長蔡元培對於新教育之意見,” *SB* 8–10.2.1912.

136. For a contrasting view of different religions, which also equates Confucius with the religious leaders of other countries, however, see “論教” (On religion), *SB* 15.12.1877.

foreign and the Chinese heritage in the “modern education” to be introduced in Republican China.

But after 1895 even such equations between Chinese precedent and foreign present were not always considered necessary to justify changes in education. Some articles simply promote the foreign model. One such article of April 1897 draws a dismal picture of China in comparison with the thriving countries across the sea.¹³⁷ Could it be that foreign institutions are superior to those of China? Rather than luring the reader into believing that China can take pride in its history and its great sages, this editorial begins on a disquieting note. Although the editorialist raises the incredulous questions of readers who cannot believe the precarious situation of China by repeatedly asking “How can this be” (豈, e.g., ll. 2 and 4), he soon invokes harsh realities. China is in dire straits and the only solution is to do what foreign countries have long done. All foreign talent derives from the West’s superior educational system; it is this system that China must adopt. Since the Chinese defeat in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–95, the editorialist says, it has become all too obvious that harm comes from not changing one’s ways and not studying the West (l. 6). The author admits that quite a number of schools have been established as an answer

137. “論設立學塾宜籌持久之計” (On the fact that in establishing schools one ought to consider how to sustain them for long), *SB* 29.4.1897. For a few more examples, see “義學關係人才宜兼教西學說” (How the influence of charity schools on human talent ought to be combined with the teaching of Western knowledge), *SB* 9.1.1882, which is the earliest article I found that makes no use of either historical precedents or classical quotations. This article (in the typically self-confident manner of a *shuo*) argues against the ineffectiveness of Chinese schooling and for the introduction of foreign standards: only from foreigners could one learn useful things. Similarly, “宜亟振興西學議” (Discussing the appropriateness of establishing Western-style schools with urgency), *SB* 10.1.1892, already admonishes the Chinese government to establish more schools, particularly primary schools, that emphasize teaching of subjects other than *baguwen* and follow the model of the Tongwenguan in introducing practical and scientific knowledge. Again, this article resorts neither to historical precedent nor to citation (in describing China’s current predicament, however, it uses some of the same phrases from *Mencius* 1B1 [疾首蹙額] cited in the eulogy to Sun Yatsen above). See also “講開西學特科議” (A discussion on teaching Western subjects as special courses), *SB* 23.3.1902, which boasts only one passing reference to Ming Taizu, when *baguwen* is mentioned critically as one of the few subjects in the Chinese curriculum. The editorialist argues for a change in the examination system and an introduction of foreign disciplines.

to the crisis,¹³⁸ but the mere fact that these foreign-style schools have been established is no guarantee that in five, ten, or even twenty years, the Chinese will have caught up, much less overtaken, the foreign countries as many believe (ll. 9–10). It is easy to establish schools; what is hard is to sustain them (l. 12). Here again, the editorialist takes on Chinese self-satisfaction.

The author explains in painstaking detail (even giving exact tuition fees) the different types of schools in Britain, France, Russia, and finally Japan (ll. 12–20).¹³⁹ Having amazed his readers with the perfect state of education in foreign countries, where schools can be found even in the smallest hamlet, he returns to China, remarking that despite the recent craze for establishing schools, not all districts had their own public school (ll. 20–24). Once more, this horrible situation is contrasted with that in the West, where not only is everybody able to study but everyone is able to complete his education 人人得以入學, 人人得以學成 (l. 24).

Clearly, this editorialist did not feel a need to polish his language, sinify his argument, or quote the sages. And yet, he is out to shake up the same implied audience for whom other editorialists had adopted a classicized tone. This is evident in his use of rhetorical questions, which ironically take up the very questions of these readers, as well as in his derisive remarks about their anxious response to the crisis coupled with their shortsighted “Great Leap Forward mentality.”

As these analyses indicate, editorialists advocating a modern educational system did quote the Classics. They did so primarily to justify some of their more radical ideas, a tendency that decreased by the turn of the century, however, when foreign models become substitutes for classical authorities. As in the case of trade practices, references to the foreign model shift from disparaging to admiring. Moreover, in both cases, many new ideas are packaged in images from China’s past: foreign methods of education are typically camouflaged as ancient Chi-

138. Kuo (*Public Education*, 69) demonstrates how after the Sino-Japanese War, even quite elderly scholars sought foreign learning by attending missionary schools, by employing private tutors, by forming reform clubs, and by reading translations of foreign books. The same phenomenon recurred after the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–5 (Peake, *Nationalism and Education*, 48).

139. Japan was frequently used as a model for education not just in the Chinese press but also in the Ottoman and Persian press of the late nineteenth century (Pistor-Hatam, “Progress and Civilization,” esp. 116–18).

nese practices, touched up and ornamented to look as if they were new.

On another lever, however, the use of classical examples and quotations to promote modern education differs from those used to support profit as a virtue: quotations from the Classics were less often subverted in the case of education. Admittedly it was less of a stretch to argue that the ancients approved of universal education than it was to argue that they approved of profit, and obviously a more real and tangible resonance exists between the classical texts and the "new" methods of education. Moreover, education was traditionally venerated, and the authors of these editorials must have felt there would be less resistance to their advocacy of changes in education. Unlike profit, which many still saw as a vice, education, whatever its mode, was a familiar virtue. This is another reason why many editorials dealing with education apparently saw no need always to use classical citations or to dismiss the model of the West.

This is supported by another observation. In the case of education, the editorials attack mostly the Chinese government and conservative officials, who are often presented as negative images of the implied reader. In the case of profit, the implied target appears to be the Chinese as a people: they are the ones who pursue the wrong kinds of profits, they are the proficient smugglers, and they despise successful businessmen from Southeast Asia willing to use their wealth to benefit China. Accordingly, the articles on profit appear to react to much more deeply anchored emotions than do those dealing with education.

Conclusion

Every educated Chinese is supposed to be a mammoth literary spider, able to spin out of his own bowels whatever he may need.

—Arthur Smith¹⁴⁰

The changing situation in education and the changing status of merchants and of profit-seeking are reflected on the pages of Shanghai's news media. Such outside changes influence the newspaper as a text only rather marginally, however: citation is used throughout the period under scrutiny here, most often to support innovative rather than conservative arguments. Throughout this chapter, we have en-

140. Arthur H. Smith, *Proverbs and Common Sayings from the Chinese*, 8–9.

countered different methods through which editorialists spoke “the language of the Books” 書上的話: often they gave a reference for their citation, “the *Book of Documents* says” 書曰 or “the *Mencius* says” 孟子曰, for example. At other times, the editorialist paraphrased the words of the sage or mentioned what some “ancient sages” or “the ancients” had said, without giving a direct reference 聖人云, 古言, 古人有言, 古云, 古語云.¹⁴¹ Sometimes, the journalists merely alluded to the words of the sages, many of which had already become proverbial. On an even more vague level, readers were reminded of the utterances of the ancients through historical references, *gudian* 古典.

Whatever the category to which a particular “citation” belongs, the “line between mere quotations, and quotations which by attrition of ages of constant use have been worn smooth into proverbial currency . . . is a somewhat vague one, and perhaps no two persons would draw that line at the same place.”¹⁴² I would argue that all served the same purpose: short expressions from the Classics were used to point to much larger contexts. Thus, they could convey a sense of the “truth”; they created a “jargon of authority.”¹⁴³ Or to use the Chinese phrase, one used the old to verify the new 托古証今.¹⁴⁴

Quotations, in all their different shapes and forms, were used as a cover-up, like the monks’ “bowl of tea.” They served as familiar wrappings for unfamiliar ideas. The more untraditional the content, the more traditional the language. The use of the Classics may have been a reflex for any educated Chinese of the period. The fact that most of the quotations are taken from the canonical textbooks is an important indicator here,¹⁴⁵ but the reflex appears to have been

141. See e.g. *SB* 14.11.1872, 17.12.1872, 27.2.1877, 4.12.1877, 11.2.1882, 3.4.1882, 11.11.1882, 5.1.1887, 6.1.1892, 17.3.1897, and 11.11.1902.

142. Arthur H. Smith, *Proverbs and Common Sayings from the Chinese*, 40.

143. Cf. A. C. Smith et al., *Paper Voices*, 240.

144. Li Liangrong, *Zhongguo baozhi wenti fazhan gaiyao*, 23.

145. The canon in Ming and Qing China was Neo-Confucian in direction and consisted of the Four Books (*Analects*, *Mencius*, *Doctrine of the Mean* [*Zhongyong* 中庸], *Great Learning*, with the commentaries by Zhu Xi) and the Five Classics (*Book of Odes*, *Book of Documents*, *Record of Rites*, *Book of Changes*, and *Spring and Autumn Annals*, with commentaries) and readings from the dynastic histories (as well as from the laws and statutes of present and former dynasties); see Tilemann Grimm, *Erziehung und Politik*, 92, 99–100; and Peake, *Nationalism and Education*. The *Records of the Grand Historian*, one of the histories in the canon, contained a large number of writings of the Legalist school, such as chapters of

stronger, the more alien the matter to be introduced was.¹⁴⁶ Reporters were responding to the demands of their implied readership. Their message was not to be distinguished by originality; indeed that would have been considered a defect.¹⁴⁷ The value of the words of the sages lay precisely in the fact that they were not original or individual, but traditional and communal.¹⁴⁸ The use of citation in Shanghai's newspapers shows how authors and readers are—time and again—made by the narratives they have consumed within their culture: these narratives produce silent understanding.¹⁴⁹

Despite using the accepted canon of teachings, however, *Shenbao* authors subverted some of their most fundamental meanings by strategic omissions or by juxtapositions with other quotations (some of them extra-canonical) that served to amplify and thus to transform the meaning of the Classics—manipulations sometimes criticized in letters

the *Han Feizi* and citations from Shang Yang's *Shangjünshu* 商君書 (my thanks to Hans van Ess for reminding me of this). Therefore, the frequent use of Legalist citations should not surprise us. Other books in the canon of readings appear less often in the citations, since they are of a more "practical" nature. For a listing, see Tilemann Grimm, *Erziehung und Politik*, 92, 99–100; and Peake, *Nationalism and Education*, 42.

146. Salmon (*The Newspaper and the Historian*, 336) explains a similar strategy for advertising in foreign newspapers of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: "The more an industry realizes that a large part of the community holds it in disfavor, the more it associates with its advertisements the names of the great men of history." The article introducing the bicycle to China, "腳踏車將來必盛興說" (On the fact that bicycles must flourish in the future), *SB* 1.4.1898, paraphrased in Appendix A, p. 428, is a case in point: although clearly written after the pivotal date of 1895 and thus openly advocating a foreign model (the Prussian as well as the Japanese army among others), the article, which introduces something wholly unknown and rather despicable in Chinese eyes, since it involves physical exertion, begins with a citation from the *Book of Odes*.

147. My investigation has focused on the *Shenbao*. A rough survey of writings in the *Shanghai xinbao* of November and December 1872 reaped a similar harvest, however: I found an abundance of classical citations, too. See, e.g., "牆倒傷人" (A wall crashed and hurt people), *SHXB* 6.11.1872; "義利說" (On virtue and profit), *SHXB* 25.11.1872; "雜論" (On miscellaneous subjects), *SHXB* 28.11.1872; "正本清源論" (On correcting the roots and clearing the springs), *SHXB* 30.11.1872; "續海外奇談" (Sequel to strange relations from abroad), *SHXB* 6.12.1872; "勸孝歌" (A song advocating filial piety), *SHXB* 9.12.1872; "重利爲害說" (The harm of emphasizing profit), *SHXB* 25.12.1872.

148. Oliver, *Communication and Culture*, 267.

149. Booth, *Rhetoric of Fiction*, 415.

to the editor and later caricatures.¹⁵⁰ Explaining the strange and unfamiliar in terms of the familiar meant that the familiar as well as the strange had to be bent and adapted. I have shown how, in the process, a number of more or less violent reactions occurred between ancient text and modern context.¹⁵¹ These subtle or even not so subtle variations in the interpretation of the Classics opened up new avenues of thinking for the Chinese and began to shape new meanings. This is how citation, in spite of itself, became a motor of change: to talk adamantly of the bowl of tea was to tip it over eventually.

Although the use of classical citations on the pages of Chinese newspapers created an effective language for facilitating change, I remain skeptical as to what extent real-life changes were in fact *instigated* by the newspapers using this language. The—albeit cursory—comparison of newspaper articles on trade and education with historical evidence undertaken here suggests that newspapers lagged behind contemporary developments most of the time. Despite the powerful rhetorical devices they employed, they were always more conservative than reality, always written from hindsight.¹⁵²

The present chapter and the preceding one have traced the evolution of Chinese newspaper prose. Many of the values and ideas introduced in the modern Chinese newspaper were distinctly foreign. On the pages of the *Sherbao*, however, these elements appeared in a language based on traditional sensibilities. The new product created in this process, the new(spaper) prose, *xin wenti*, is characterized by disjunctions between the modern content and the ancient language and the forms in which it is couched. This makes it impossible, in the end, to draw a clear line between the traditional and the modern.¹⁵³ The text of the newspapers suggests that it was not just accepted but indeed

150. For exemplary letters, see Vittinghoff, "Am Rande des Ruhms"; the caricatures appear in a series in the "Free Talk" ("自由談") section (beginning on 27.8.1912) and are entitled "Misunderstanding the Four Books" 誤解四書畫.

151. In the words of Stephen Owen (*Remembrances*, 139), in citation, allusion, and reference, "the writer may claim one simple ground of comparison, but the old text is very powerful and may do strange things to the situation in which it is applied." The same can be said for power of the new context over the old text.

152. I provide further evidence for the rather indirect influence of newspapers on developments in Shanghai and China in Chapters 4 and 6.

153. Lydia Liu (*Translingual Practice*, xix) reaches similar conclusions on the new and the traditional in China's May Fourth literature.

the intention of its creators that the Chinese host medium (Chinese language and form) should violate, displace, and usurp the authority of the guest medium (the foreign newspaper) in the process of translation—as well as being transformed by it: only thus was the *Shenbao* to become a newspaper for China!¹⁵⁴ In discussing the *Shenbao*'s particular use of Chinese form and language, I have traced how the foreign medium hoped to convey its message. Before I turn, in Part II of this study, to the interplay between this message and its readership, I deal in the next chapter with the intentional choice of particular contents by the newspaper's creators as part of their strategy of making their medium into *the* message for China. Once more, with the decision to include the court gazette, *jingbao*, on the pages of the foreign-style newspaper, we will see an example of how China's journalists found sustenance in a past that—in their nationalist quest for change—they were subverting and thus destroying at the same time.¹⁵⁵

154. *Ibid.*, 27.

155. For the destruction of tradition by the attempt at its preservation, see Levenson, *Confucian China and Its Modern Fate*, vol. 2: 126 *et passim*. For the function of foreign influence in this regard, see Mark Elvin, "How did the Cracks Open?"

CHAPTER 3

Making the Chinese State Go Public?

Power and Vision in the Jingbao Reprint

Following Marshall McLuhan, it is often said that media, not their messages, form and structure patterns of cultural interaction. The medium, by making one type of communication possible, changes the environment in which it is operating, and thus the medium itself may become the m(e)assage.¹ The preceding chapters have shown the opposite, however: the foreign-style newspaper as a medium could aspire to function most successfully within the Chinese public sphere by changing, by adapting to its environment, by choosing certain accepted forms and ways of writing. Perhaps the most intriguing aspect of this sinification is the reprinting of the court gazette, *jingbao* 京報, on the pages of the foreign-style Chinese newspaper. In this chapter, I attempt to trace the reasons for this appropriation and to discuss its significance. I begin by asking why commercial newspapers decided to include the official gazette at all. Did the medium change in order to be a message? Did the incorporation of the *jingbao* into the foreign-style newspapers after the 1850s add to their symbolic power? And what happened to the *jingbao* when it was included in a commercial paper? Did its message change?² What happened when an internal communications device exclusively intended for the political class was transformed into a source of information beyond the court's reach?

1. McLuhan and Fiore, *The Medium Is the Massage*, 19, 67.

2. The significance of the environment for the message of a certain medium is discussed in Dong, "Communities and Communication," 87: "A yamen, after all, was a yamen, and a rumor would change its nature upon entering its yard, acquiring new significance and potency."

Obviously, the foreign publishers of Chinese-language papers, while trying to distinguish their type of paper from the *jingbao*, accepted it as a source of news and prestige.³ The inclusion of all or parts of the *jingbao* verbatim was intended to enhance sales. This act, however, also meant that the *jingbao* was now included on par with any other news item in the foreign-style newspaper and that any editorial or news report might contradict it. This in turn forced the traditional state to enter the arena of public deliberations, even with its most authoritative pronouncements.

The Vision: Why Reprint the Jingbao?

A singular barrenness of all news is the most distinguishing characteristic of the Peking Gazettes. No attempt is made on the part of those who are charged with the duty of compiling them to render them in any respect readable; in fact every endeavour seems to be made in the opposite direction, by selecting for insertion the most unimportant and the most uninteresting memorials that reach the throne.

—*The Chinese Recorder*, 1870⁴

The old Chinese gazette press, metropolitan and provincial, was a highly developed system for diffusing official act and thought. . . . This press covered a great ambit of general interest and rather preempted the field, leaving only a small place for the popular newspapers.

—Roswell Britton, 1933⁵

Many contradictory statements have been made about the nature of the *jingbao*.⁶ Some have described this official gazette as an open forum with room for discussion and criticism, particularly in its memo-

3. See some of the *Shenbao* editorials (*SB* 13.7.1872, 18.7.1873) on the difference between the foreign-style papers and the *jingbao* quoted and discussed in the Introduction.

4. "The Peking Gazettes," 10. The author is convinced that "without any difficulty whatever, and without in any way trenching upon sacred ground, the Gazettes might be rendered most interesting. . . . We can hardly expect the Cabinet to reveal any thing of a strictly private nature, but what we should like to see is a selection of papers, from the immense mass that must at all times accumulate, containing solid and valuable information in them; in this, the Gazettes are immeasurably deficient."

5. Britton, *The Chinese Periodical Press*, 15.

6. This is partly due to the scarcity of source material; see Huang Zhuoming, *Zhongguo gudai baozhi tanyuan*; and Yao Fushen, "You guan dibao jige wenti."

randa;⁷ others consider it the voice not of public opinion but of orthodoxy.⁸ It is also unclear whether the *jingbao* was an official or an unofficial publication.⁹ Was it accessible to the general public?¹⁰ Did it bore them or amuse them?¹¹ No consensus has been reached on the nature of this publication.¹²

7. See Alcock, "The Peking Gazette," 248-49; Scarth, *Twelve Years in China*, 173; Vittinghoff, "Am Rande des Ruhms," esp. chaps. 2 and 7. Jonathan Ocko ("The British Museum's *Peking Gazette*," 45) even calls the *jingbao* the "only authorized public means of horizontal communication in an empire where vertical communication was stressed." Lin Yutang (*History*, 11) argued that edicts and especially memoranda, by their very nature learned essays containing the considered opinions of contemporary scholars on important social and political reforms, included a great amount of tendentious facts and criticism bearing on current problems. Roswell Britton (*The Chinese Periodical Press*, 13) argues that it was precisely the inclusion of controversy in the *jingbao* that led to an increasing foreign interest in it.

8. Wolfgang Mohr (*Die moderne chinesische Tagespresse*, 15) argues that open criticism could be voiced in the *guanbao* only after Yuan Shikai 袁世凱 (1859-1916). See also Lust, "The *Su-Pao* Case," 411.

9. Cf. Ocko, "The British Museum's *Peking Gazette*," 38; and Hao Yen-p'ing, "Importance of Archival Palace Memorials," 79. Hao defines the *jingbao* simply as "an unofficial reprinting of notes and documents issued at court." Sir Rutherford Alcock ("The Peking Gazette," 251) called it "a semi-official publication."

10. Lin Yutang, *History*, 12. Lin argues that "this official press was far from being an important organ of information, having to do chiefly with news of official appointments, promotions or dismissals" (*ibid.*, 4). For similar views, see Oliver, *Communication and Culture*, 1; and Alcock, "The Peking Gazette," 246-47.

11. Qin Shaode (*Shanghai jindai baokan shilun*, 9) declares that because the *jingbao* was heavily censored, although news could be extrapolated from it, it was basically a dry and boring state organ. The contrary view is argued in Britton, *The Chinese Periodical Press*, 12-13; Williams, *The Middle Kingdom*, 1: 328; Chien, *Das alte chinesische Nachrichtenwesen*, 63; and Lin Yuanqi, *Dibao zhi yanjiu*, 143-45. Huang Tianpeng (*Zhongguo xinwen shiye*, 31) gives a long list of quotations from Tang and Song poems that mention reading and enjoying reading the *dibao*. Huang Zhuoming (*Zhongguo gudai baozhi tanyuan*) shows that during the Song the *dibao* became more and more of a popular paper, a point not difficult to prove (I thank Hans van Ess for providing me with quite a few examples of references to the *dibao* in literati letters and writings from the Song). See also Yao Fushen, "You guan dibao jige wenti," 109, for a Song author who remarks that he read the *dibao* while eating. The question of popular readership is taken up in detail below (see pp. 204-7). See further sources in note 122, p. 205, to this chapter.

12. Even in one and the same book, the *jingbao* may be described, on the one hand, as a "comprehensive record of the daily activities of the government . . . without editorial opinion . . . authorized statements only . . . published without

The introduction of foreign-style newspapers to China during the nineteenth century did not threaten the existence of the *jingbao*.¹³ The last official *jingbao* appeared in March 1912,¹⁴ and until then, it was reprinted in different versions within both foreign and Chinese newspapers.¹⁵ Why? *Shenbao* editorials on this question, cited in the Introduction to this book, do not provide an answer. To the contrary, they argue that the *jingbao* was rather boring in comparison with the new-style papers, *xinbao* 新報, since it exclusively “disseminated court politics.”¹⁶ These editorials portray the *jingbao* as restricted in both coverage and readership. Why, then, was the court gazette an integral part of the *Shenbao* from the beginning?

comment” (this is the self-definition of *The United States Daily* begun at Washington in 1926, which is said to fit the image of the *jingbao* in Britton, *The Chinese Periodical Press*, 7–8) and, on the other hand, as: “By ancient usage, every imperial edict explicitly gave reason for whatever was decreed. Memorialists always defended their recommendations and petitions. Even reports were rarely mere recitals of fact. On occasions of great national problems the throne often commanded viceroys and governors to submit suggestions, and the responses formed symposiums of high opinion. Furthermore the censorate made good use of [it] . . . and exposed and attacked abuses with a candid vigor which is one of the most astonishing things in Chinese absolutism. Criticisms extended to the Emperor himself, and even these were released to the gazettes” (ibid., 13).

13. On the coexistence of foreign-style and Chinese newspapers, see Huang Zhuoming, *Zhongguo gudai baozhi taryuan*, 5–6, 158. A statement made in the *London Times* (quoted in *NCH* 9.6.1877, 565) arguing that the demise of the *jingbao* was accelerated by the issue of foreign-style newspapers is obviously wrong. As an illustration, this article gave circulation figures of 8,000 for the *Shenbao* and 300–400 for the *jingbao*. It is not clear where these numbers come from (Narramore, “Making the News in Shanghai,” 373; gives a circulation of 5,000 for the *Shenbao* in 1877. Mohr, *Die moderne chinesische Tagespresse*, 13, gives a circulation figure of 10,000 for the *jingbao*); the *London Times* figures for the *jingbao* might have been circulation figures for only a single *jingbao* publishing house, the so-called *baofang* 報房 (of which there were a dozen in Beijing; see the discussion below).

14. Huang Zhuoming, *Zhongguo gudai baozhi taryuan*, 162. With the inauguration of the *Zhengzhi guanbao* in 1907, the *jingbao* became superfluous (Li Siyi, “Qingmo 10 nian guanbao huodong gairong,” 144), but it did not immediately die.

15. E. H. P. Parker, “The ‘Peking Gazette,’” 73–75.

16. “郵報別與新報論” (On the difference between the official court gazette, *dibao*, and the new[s]paper), *SB* 13.7.1872.

A VIEW FROM HISTORY: THE
JINGBAO AS AN INSTITUTION

In order to explain this paradox and to answer the question why foreign-style newspapers reproduced the court gazette, we must reconsider the nature of the *jingbao*. How official was it? How dull was it? A short survey of its history may help answer these questions.

Many scholars follow Ge Gongzhen and argue that the earliest predecessor of the *jingbao* dates to the Han, and that, therefore, the Chinese had the "most ancient press in the world."¹⁷ Opponents of this view consider these early *dibao* 邸報, which designated internal communications written by *di* officials, in charge of liaison between the court and regional administrations, nothing more than official letters, however.¹⁸ Throughout the following centuries a large number of newsletters modeled on Han *dibao* and sometimes still using that name appeared.

One can never be sure that the same term in Chinese newspaper history describes the same reality, however.¹⁹ The term *dibao*, for

17. The quotation is from Henriot, "Nouveau journalisme," 5. See also Patterson, "The Journalism of China"; Mayer, "Die Presse in China"; Imbault-Huart, "Le Journal et le journalisme en Chine"; Flessel, "Early Chinese Newspapers," 62; Chien, *Das alte chinesische Nachrichtenwesen*, 46-47; Huang Tianpeng, *Zhongguo xinwen shiye*, 27; Lin Yuanqi, *Dibao zhi yanjiu*.

18. For this viewpoint, see Huang Zhuoming, *Zhongguo gudai baozhi tanyuan*, 1, 11-17, 18. He rejects the appellation "newspaper" for *dibao*, since they did not appear on a regular basis and were not spread systematically throughout the empire. Huang argues that the real beginning of newspapers in China is to be found in the Tang. Only then do we find records stating that papers, such as the handwritten *Kaiyuan zabao* 開元雜報 (Miscellaneous announcements from the Kaiyuan reign period), could be read daily (but exclusively by the bureaucrats, see *ibid.*, 28) and throughout the empire. Ge Gongzhen's view is also refuted in Yao Fushen, "You guan dibao jige wenti," 117-18.

19. Yao Fushen ("You guan dibao jige wenti") begins his essay with a long list of the various names for the *dibao*. See also his earlier study "Zhongguo gudai guanbao ming shikao." Liu Yongqiang ("Ming-Qing dibao yu wenxue zhi guanxi," 438-39) makes a similar argument. Huang Zhuoming (*Zhongguo gudai baozhi tanyuan*) shows impressively how impossible it is to designate one thing by one name in Chinese newspaper history. Constant renamings or redefinitions led to such confusion that even Huang's careful work has not completely clarified the history. In the following I try to bring some order to the chaos; the explanations and Table 3.1 are

Table 3.1
Changes in the Names of Official and Private Papers in China

Period	Official	Private
Han	<i>dibao</i> 邸報	
Tang	<i>Jinzouyuan zhuangbao</i> 進奏院 狀報	<i>dibao</i> (by officials but in their private interest)
Song	(<i>Jinzouyuan</i>) <i>zhuangbao</i> <i>chaobao</i> 朝報	<i>dibao</i> or <i>xiaobao</i> 小報 (by <i>Jinzouyuan</i> officials, but printing everything that did not go into the <i>chaobao</i> , sometimes leaking documents before they were approved)
Yuan		<i>dibao</i>
Ming	<i>dibao</i> <i>tangbao</i> 塘報 (military post courier gazette)	<i>chaobao</i> (in regional versions with differing names) <i>paibao</i> 牌報 <i>jingbao</i> (from 17th century on, printed)
Qing	<i>dichao</i> 邸抄 (sometimes still called <i>dibao</i> according to Ming usage; handwritten, under strict military supervision in the early Qing, from Xianfeng (mid-19th century) on, also printed <i>tangbao</i> <i>jingbao</i> 京報 (printed version of <i>dichao</i> , by private <i>baofang</i> 報房)	

SOURCES: Huang Zhuoming, *Zhongguo gudai baozhi tanyuan*, 9, 68–70, 94–95; and Chien, *Das alte chinesische Nachrichtenwesen*, 49.

example, still used for the *jingbao* as late as the Qing,²⁰ was the name used for the official journal since late Tang times, also called the “gazette from the Capital Liaison Office” (*Jinzouyuan zhuangbao* 進奏院狀報, or for short *zhuangbao* 狀報; see Table 3.1).²¹ During the Song, what was called the *dibao* had entertainment value and circulated

based mostly on Huang’s and Yao’s findings and are subject to further revision as the history of the early newspaper in China is further investigated.

20. Huang Zhuoming, *Zhongguo gudai baozhi tanyuan*, 96–100.

21. Huang Tianpeng, *Zhongguo xinwen shiye*, 28, 31.

widely among the populace: it could be found and purchased in markets and other public places.²² It contained extracts from official documents (sometimes even before they were completed and promulgated),²³ but it was concerned mainly with reporting general news. It circulated rather quickly, a piece of news appearing no later than five days after the fact.²⁴ During the Yuan, on the other hand, when the tradition of official newspapers appears to have been interrupted, *dibao* was the name of a completely independent paper that did not rely on official sources or official institutions for either its contents or its production.²⁵ During the Ming, *dibao* was again the name for an official paper, apparently avidly read by bureaucrats, who also conducted their factional struggles on its pages.²⁶

In 1723, during the reign of the Yongzheng emperor, *jingbao* was prescribed as the official term for the printed version of the official gazette. However, *dibao* remained in use (as the *Shenbao* editorial mentioned above demonstrates),²⁷ as did *dichao* 邸抄 and some of the other terms used to describe various forms of more or less official papers throughout Chinese history, for example, *chaobao* 朝報 (imperial gazette) and *tangbao* 塘報 (military post courier gazette).²⁸ Before its official circumscription in the Qing, a paper called *jingbao* had been more of a private enterprise during the Ming; it took its material from official sources, but, much like the *dibao* during the Song, never omitted more gory stories. The pre-Qing versions of the *jingbao* were mostly handwritten copies, but sometime during the early seven-

22. Huang Zhuoming, *Zhongguo gudai baozhi tanyuan*, 51-53.

23. *Ibid.*, 58.

24. *Ibid.*, 53-55.

25. *Ibid.*, 73-75.

26. *Ibid.*, 79, 82; Yin Yungong, "Lun Mingdai dibao"; and Liu Yongqiang, "Ming-Qing dibao yu wenxue zhi guanxi," 450.

27. "邸報別與新報論," *SB* 13.7.1872.

28. For an overview of these terms and their use, see Table 1. *Dichao* was the official designation of the handwritten version of the *jingbao*, which circulated among a much smaller group of people than the printed version. For the term *dichao*, see Huang Zhuoming, *Zhongguo gudai baozhi tanyuan*, 109. On the *chaobao*, see Yao Fushen, "You guan dibao jige wenti"; Huang Zhuoming, *Zhongguo gudai baozhi tanyuan*, 90-91. For the *tangbao* 塘報, see Huang Zhuoming, *Zhongguo gudai baozhi tanyuan*, 86, 92-93. Henriot, "Nouveau journalisme," 5-6. For the term *jingbao*, see Yao Fushen "Zhongguo gudai guanbao ming shikao," 121-25.

teenth century (when is a subject of debate),²⁹ publishers began to print the late Ming *jingbao* with movable type,³⁰ a sign of the paper's popularity,³¹ especially since the official paper of the time, the Ming *dibao*, was still handwritten.³²

The short terminological survey presented in Table 3.1 shows that alongside the official papers there existed other types of newspapers in China, often—if not always—originating from the same sources as the official papers but nevertheless private ventures. During the Qing, so it appeared to contemporary observers, the only source of news for the Chinese reader was the *jingbao*, however. It was, indeed, the “officially recognized means by which documents approved for publication were copied, printed, and transmitted [mostly] to the high provincial officials in order to acquaint them with affairs outside their own jurisdictions.”³³ But was it—strictly speaking—an “official” paper?

In theory, the *jingbao* was prepared in Beijing by each province's superintendent of courier posts (*titang* 提塘), who daily received documents from the *neige* 內閣, the Inner Cabinet or Grand Council (to which he also often went personally, to speed up the process by copying the documents posted there). He then would have them printed at his own publishing house (*baofang* 報房) and then sent the gazette out by official post.³⁴ An example of this version of the *jingbao*, the so-called official edition (*guanben* 官本), which appeared daily at least since 1644, is the Shandong edition; measuring seven by four inches

29. See Yao Fushen, “You guan dibao jige wenti.”

30. Huang Zhuoming, *Zhongguo gudai baozhi tanyuan*, 105; Yin Yungong, “Lun Mingdai dibao.” Yao Fushen (“You guan dibao jige wenti,” 108) conjectures that some printed copies may have circulated even as early as the Tang.

31. See Qin Shaode, *Shanghai jindai baokan shilun*, 8 (misled by its name, Qin seems to consider the Ming *jingbao* an official paper, however); and Huang Zhuoming, *Zhongguo gudai baozhi tanyuan*, 101–7, 164. Popularity also led to harsh competition between the different *baofang* and thus to a difference in contents; see Huang Zhuoming, *Zhongguo gudai baozhi tanyuan*, 166.

32. Huang Tianpeng, *Zhongguo xinwen shiye*, 32.

33. Ocko, “The British Museum's Peking Gazette,” 37.

34. Cf. Huang Zhuoming, *Zhongguo gudai baozhi tanyuan*, 5. For an elaborate description of the *jingbao* organization, see E. H. P. Parker, “The Peking Gazette,” 75–76; and a memorandum dated 14.4.1874 (FO 233/58, 18) (thanks to Rudolf G. Wagner for letting me use this material); also published in Mayers, “The Peking Gazette.” See also “The Press of China To-Day,” *NCH* 6.3.1909, esp. 591–92; and Fairbank and Teng, *Ch'ing Administration*, 25.

inches and printed in movable type, each issue had at least ten pages (each of which had seven columns of fourteen characters), a table of contents, and proper elevations and spacing for references to the throne.³⁵ This official edition was efficiently and privately commercialized, however: it was sold by hawkers on the streets—at approximately the same price as the foreign-style newspapers, at the time. Those who found the purchase price too expensive could rent a copy to read.³⁶

In practice, since at least the second half of the nineteenth century, the *baofang* had come under the control of private bookshop owners, who received the documents through the *titang* officials or went to the Cabinet themselves to make copies of official documents.³⁷ An angry memorial of August 1842 by the Zhejiang governor shows that this development did not immediately win official approval; nevertheless, the greater efficiency of these *baofang* became the key to their success. The memorial reports: “The matters that they publish are comparatively more detailed than the news sent by the superintendent of courier posts, and their transmission rate is also relatively faster. . . . Many officials and gentry buy and read these gazettes at great expense.”³⁸ Soon, the private *baofang* were successfully producing the greatest number of *jingbao* editions.

35. I worked with this edition at the British Library. In a letter (3.8.1972) by Jonathan Ocko to Howard Nelson, contained in the *jingbao* file at the British Museum, he calls it “a more official version of the gazetteer . . . one that was sent through official posts.” Imbault-Huart (“Le Journal et le journalisme en Chine,” 41) appears to describe the same edition. The format of this type of gazette differs from the one that Fairbank described as “standard official document form” with six columns per page and twenty characters per column. Only the lower eighteen spaces are commonly used; the upper two spaces are employed for elevations. References to imperial palaces are given one space of elevation, references to the emperor and his edicts or rescripts, two spaces, and references to heaven and earth or the ancestral temples three spaces (Fairbank and Teng, *Ch'ing Administration*, 98–99).

36. Chien, *Das alte chinesische Nachrichtenwesen*, 52–53; Alcock, “The Peking Gazette,” 252; and “Peking Gazette,” 506.

37. Ocko, “The British Museum’s *Peking Gazette*,” 37; Chien, *Das alte chinesische Nachrichtenwesen*, 57–58. For a long description, see also Huang Zhuoming, *Zhongguo gudai baozhi tanyuan*, 42.

38. From the “Documents Supplementary to the I-wu Shih-mo,” cited in Fairbank and Teng, *Ch'ing Administration*, 97. The translation has been modified slightly. A longer excerpt from this memorial reveals some of the dangers that the court saw in accepting the private versions of the *jingbao*: “We would humbly ob-

Several *baofang* were involved in copying and selecting material (more than ten operated in the capital, all situated near the Zhengyang Gate 正陽門).³⁹ Furthermore, each *baofang* had a different format for its version of the *jingbao*. The "long copies" (*changben* 長本), for example, take their name from their unusual format (nine by four inches, mostly with seven or eight columns of 20–25 characters per page).⁴⁰ Initially, the variable *baofang* editions of the *jingbao* were printed off wax sheets; later movable wooden or metal letters were used.⁴¹ They carried the publisher's imprint and sometimes had a table of contents. They appeared earlier than the *guanben* edition and were

serve that the Capital News (*ching-pao*) respectfully copies the Edicts and Rescripts which are publicly issued from the Emperor every day, and it also inserts memorials (*tsou-che*) from the ministers at the capital and in the provinces. Its original purpose was to acquaint the provincial authorities in detail with the affairs of the empire. All matters with which it is concerned can be dealt with forthwith; for this reason it has not been forbidden. But as all councils of state are uniformly inserted in it in detail, it is essential that it be kept secret. . . . (Measures would therefore be taken to apprehend the traitors who conveyed it to the English.) . . . As to the Capital News which your servants read every day, it is copied and sent out by the Superintendent of Courier Posts (*titang*) stationed at the capital, and relayed by the Superintendent stationed at the provincial capital. But we have heard that aside from this there are also a Liang-hsiang News (i.e. from Liang-hsiang Hsien in Shun-T'ien Fu, Chihli) and a Cho-chou News (i.e. from Cho-chou, also in Shun-t'ien Fu, Chihli): The matters which they publish are comparatively more detailed than the Superintendent of the Posts' News; and their transmission is also relatively faster. We hear that at Liang-hsiang and Cho-chou there are men who manage this business; and many of the officials and gentry at great expense buy and read these Gazettes. Consequently in the affairs of each province there are things of which the officials have not yet been informed and which others know ahead of them, and there are also things which the officials do not know and others do know. We would humbly observe that the transmission of the Capital News to the rebellious barbarians surely is the deed of traitorous natives in the other provinces, and it is to be feared that the men who copy and send it for them also are not limited to one place" (*ibid.*).

39. Lin Yuanqi, *Dibao zhi yanjiu*, 143.

40. Chien, *Das alte chinesische Nachrichtenwesen*, 54–55.

41. Alcock ("The Peking Gazette," 252) says that after 1820 wax was no longer in frequent use. Memorandum 14.4.1874 (FO 233/58, 18), however, mentions that as late as 1874 the *baofang* used a wax-printing technique, especially for the *changben* edition and the provincial reprints.

much more expensive, too (about four to ten times the price of the official editions).⁴²

The British Library has a selection of private *jingbao*: the Hecheng Baofang edition 合成報房 in eight columns, characterized by a woodblock print of an official on the cover page; the Jüxing Baofang edition 聚興報房, usually in eight columns (it sometimes had pages that folded out to make a page of eleven columns); and the Jüheng Baofang edition 聚恒報房, usually with six or seven columns. In comparing these private editions to the more official Shandong edition 山東塘務 or the “manuscript edition” (*xieben* 寫本), mentioned below, one realizes that their methods of “gatekeeping,”⁴³ of selecting and publishing news items earlier or later, are in fact rather different.⁴⁴ The private editions also tend to omit or misspell words or, at times, neglect to observe the marks of respect toward the emperor.⁴⁵ These are signs of hurried production, but perhaps they are something more: these versions of the *jingbao* were commercial under-

42. Imbault-Huart, “Le Journal et le journalisme en Chine,” 44; Memorandum 14.4.1874 (FO 233/58, 18). The private manuscript edition mentioned below was particularly expensive. The *baofang* editions were less expensive, the official editions least expensive (see *The Evening Gazette* 11.7.1874, 599). For a discussion of relative prices, see Vittinghoff, “Am Rande des Ruhms,” 56/57.

43. This term, which has long since entered newspaper studies through the work of David M. White, was coined by his teacher, Kurt Lewin (1890-1947), in a study of the psychology of selection of goods for consumption by housewives (see Lewin, *Field Theory in Social Science*). For an introduction, see David M. White, “The ‘Gatekeeper.’” A. C. Smith et al., *Paper Voices*, 18, give the following definition: “Gatekeeping is based on a system of meaningful choices, and these choices are ‘epistemic’: they are clues to the epistemology of those who produce and employ them.” One important aspect of gatekeeping is its potential normative function, which is discussed in Chapter 4.

44. These observations are based on my examination of different *jingbao* editions at the British Library.

45. The *Shenbao*, on the other hand, adhered quite strictly to the common practice of elevation. For a heated discussion over the omission in several *jingbao* editions of the proper spaces in front of “England,” see the documentation from the Public Record Office, FO 230/89 and FO 230/90 (thanks to Rudolf G. Wagner for letting me use these documents). Vittinghoff, “Am Rande des Ruhms,” chap. 5, also studies the implications of this discussion. The court at times resorted to simply declaring the *baofang* reprints “unofficial” and their mistakes “insignificant” (see the letter from Prince Kung to Wade, 25.3.1872, FO 230/90, 19, and Memorandum 4.4.1872, FO 233/58, 7).

takings⁴⁶ and thus, we may conjecture, attempted to satisfy the demands and interests of the market.⁴⁷

For the same reason, it was possible to buy separate parts of the long-copy editions if the entire edition proved too expensive.⁴⁸ One section of the paper, the *gongmenchao* 宮門抄 (“palace gate jottings” or court news), was apparently so popular that it came to be sold separately on the night the news first appeared. It sold at a good price even though it was, of course, much thinner than the more complete morning editions (and was less well printed; often it was just a copy of the manuscript the copyist had brought back from the Cabinet). Some people obviously wanted to know as soon as possible who had been summoned to an audience with the Emperor, who was asking for sick leave again, and who had been honored with a peacock feather.⁴⁹ Another version of the *jingbao*, the *yuzhe huicun* 諭摺彙存 (collection of official emanations), published between 1875 and 1908, was a news digest. It appeared every few days and offered a selection of the most interesting news over a number of days.⁵⁰ Those who had been away or simply too busy to read the gazette every day could keep informed by reading this edition.⁵¹

Some of the documents appearing in different versions of the *jingbao* are also contained in small handwritten booklets, three by six inches, inscribed “memorials” (*zoubao* 奏報) or “imperial edicts” (*shangyu* 上諭) (or both). According to Jonathan Ocko, these booklets were

46. Lin Yuanqi, *Dibao zhi yanjiu*, 143, 152; and Alcock, “The Peking Gazette,” 252.

47. According to Lin Yuanqi (*Dibao zhi yanjiu*, 144), the *baofang* had no gate-keeping policy. They chose documents for inclusion according to length. A close analysis of the differences between the *baofang* editions, a task far too large to be engaged in here, is needed. A number of interviews with *baofang* owners—as yet unpublished—were conducted by Huang Zhuoming (*Zhongguo gudai baozhi tanyuan*, 163). It would be important to know whether these owners had any views on gatekeeping or the interests of their readers.

48. Chien, *Das alte chinesische Nachrichtenwesen*, 54–55.

49. See Lin Yuanqi, *Dibao zhi yanjiu*, 154; Huang Zhuoming, *Zhongguo gudai baozhi tanyuan*, 164, 167; and Chien, *Das alte chinesische Nachrichtenwesen*, 56.

50. Chien, *Das alte chinesische Nachrichtenwesen*, 55.

51. Wang Kangnian (*Shuji*, 1: 745) explains that even the *yuzhe huicun* had the advantage of promulgating news earlier than official copies of the *jingbao*. He writes that it “is no different from the *jingbao* except that the documents appear a number of days earlier.”

“a more expensive edition whose contents were copied down by hand within the actual offices of the Grand Secretariat rather than from boards outside the office.”⁵² This and the fact that the manuscript edition in the British Library (six columns per page, with fourteen characters per line) does not have an imprint of a private *baofang*, suggest that these may have been publications of a private nature by officials similar to the *dibao* and *xiaobao* 小報 of the Song.⁵³ Although the booklets were restricted in size (they also did not contain a table of contents), the documents appeared in this venue much earlier than they did in the printed editions. According to Ocko, “edicts seem to have appeared in the manuscript gazette the same day on which they were issued, whereas the other . . . gazettes printed them anywhere from one to ten days later.”⁵⁴

The wealth of different formats and sizes of the *jingbao* and the variety of publishers in the capital, which were multiplied by branches in the provinces,⁵⁵ shows that however official its contents, the business organization of the *jingbao* was quite unofficial. The abundance of formats and publishers also means that one *jingbao* of any given

52. Letter (21.7.1971) from Jonathan Ocko to Howard Nelson in the *jingbao* file at the British Museum. His unsupported conjecture that this could not have been an edition for intra-government circulation only is very probable in view of the fact that the British Museum has an almost complete set of this manuscript edition. If it had been just for internal circulation, it would have been quite difficult for the British minister in Beijing to obtain copies regularly.

53. Evidence for the existence of such practices can be found in Memorandum 14.4.1874, FO 233/58, 18.

54. Ocko, “The British Museum’s *Peking Gazette*,” 42. See also Wade to Alabaster 7.3.1872, FO 228/513, 10. Wade’s assertion that the *gongmenchao* section was not contained in these editions could not be verified. It may not be called so, but the daily fare of the *gongmenchao*—snippets about audiences, promotions, and sick leaves—can be found on the first few pages of the British Museum’s holdings of *shangyu zoubao* that I saw.

55. Lin Yuanqi, *Dibao zhi yanjiu*, 144–45. The *jingbao* was meant to be “transmitted to the high provincial officials in order to acquaint them with affairs outside their own jurisdiction” (Ocko, “The British Museum’s *Peking Gazette*,” 37), and indeed a provincial official was in some ways dependent on the Gazette for news even about his own bailiwick, especially when he had sent in a memorial. More often than not, the responses to routine memorials, were “recorded in the rescript slip . . . but the memorialist never received it. Instead, the routine memorialist in the provinces usually learned the court’s responses to what he had written by reading it in the *Peking Gazette*” (Bartlett, *Monarchs and Ministers*, 56).

date is never the same as another *jingbao* of the same date and that is why some writers rightly talk of the *jingbao* as being a Hydra.⁵⁶ Although there is indeed some overlap between the different versions of a particular day's gazettes, their content is not so similar that a researcher can rely on one to the exclusion of another.⁵⁷ A time-consuming but ultimately fruitless attempt to match up *jingbao* reports in the *Shenbao* and the *North China Herald*, for example, only served to verify that the two papers obviously did not use the same *baofang* edition(s) between 1872 and 1912.⁵⁸ This instability of the *jingbao* text may also be the reason for the British ambassador's decision to purchase several editions of the gazette in order to assure the broadest coverage possible.⁵⁹ It may also explain some of the contradictions in the perception of the *jingbao*.⁶⁰

As Britton succinctly put it, these gazettes were "issued by various publishers under various names, printed in various formats on various grades of paper, and sold at correspondingly various prices"; but, so he continues, they "all were alike in that they contained only official communiqué released by the throne through an office of the Nei Ko 內閣, the Inner Cabinet or Grand Secretariat, at the imperial palace in Peking."⁶¹ Was the *Chinese Recorder* hence justified in calling them "boring" and pointing to a "singular barrenness of all news" as "the most distinguishing characteristic of the Peking Gazettes"?⁶² The variety of formats and publishers for the *jingbao* is evidence of the great

56. MacCormick, *The Flowery Republic*, 380.

57. Ocko, "The British Museum's *Peking Gazette*," 38-40.

58. Ocko (*ibid.*, 49n18) conjectures that the *North China Herald* must have used "the Long-Copy-Gazette" rather than the official *guanben* version because it complained on 21.9.1867 that the *Peking Gazette* was "illegibly printed on paper of poorest quality." This remark does not really help identify the *jingbao* edition used by the *North China Herald*, however, since there were so many different long-copy editions.

59. The wealth of different *jingbao* editions at the British Museum testifies to this.

60. Chien, *Das alte chinesische Nachrichtenwesen*, 55: "The contradictions in the characterizations by several European observers of the *jingbao* are due to this fact: most of them have only seen one particular *jingbao* from one or another place and by one or another publisher. Accordingly, their descriptions could not but be inadequate and cause confusion."

61. Cf. Britton, *The Chinese Periodical Press*, 7-8.

62. Cf. "The Peking Gazettes," 10.

interest this paper had for a sizable number of readers. A closer examination of *jingbao* texts will allow us to appreciate further their nature and news value for both officials and the general public. My sample here consists of selections from the *jingbao* as reprinted in the *Shenbao* and the *North China Herald*, which, just like the *Shenbao* had included selections from the *jingbao* ("Peking Reporter") beginning with its very first issue. Even though the *Shenbao* catered to an exclusively Chinese audience and the *North China Herald* to a mixed one, both foreign and Chinese, and even though they obviously used different *jingbao* editions, both papers covered a similar (and most probably representative) range of topics in their selections. From this analysis, then, we can draw a number of conclusions as to the commercial strategies and the implied readerships both of the official newsletters and of the newspapers that decided to reprint them.

A VIEW FROM THE TEXT: THE JINGBAO AS NARRATIVE

The full version of the *jingbao* consisted of three parts. The *gongmenchao* were written by cabinet ministers and scribes, who posted them outside the cabinet offices for copying by the *baofang*. The second part consisted of decrees and rescripts by the emperor (*yu* 諭, *zhe* 摺). The third part consisted of memorials (*zou* 奏) from the provinces, ministers, and censors and news on appeal cases, appointments, and promotions. Only memorials already read by the throne were printed, which explains why they either have rescripts attached to them or are marked *qin ci* 欽此, meaning "This has been respectfully received [from His Majesty]."⁶³

Some *jingbao* editions clearly segment the news by category and even indicate when there are no edicts to report (thus leaving the second section empty).⁶⁴ Initially the *Shenbao* separated the different parts of the *jingbao* by spacings; later it used circles.⁶⁵ The *North China*

63. In my translation of the term, I follow Fairbank (*Ch'ing Documents*, 23-24), who argues convincingly that the phrase does not mean "respect this" (the *North China Herald's* translation).

64. In the manuscript edition in the British Library, *wu shangyu* 無上諭 (no edicts) was added.

65. In the first few days, *gongmenchao*, *shangyu*, and *zou* were separated by one space (see, e.g., *SB* 30.4 and 2.5.1872). A few months later, the different sections and

Herald mentions whether it is quoting from the *gongmenchao*,⁶⁶ an edict, or a memorial. While different in format, all three sections treat the same topics.

The *gongmenchao* begins with something like a table of contents: it mentions the number of edicts and lists them. Next it contains short news items under headings (or subtitles), sometimes set off by a space, such as *qing'an* 請安 for leave requests, *xie'en* 謝恩 for grants of leave, *xun* 訓 for instructions, or *zhao/yinjian* 召/引見 for summons to court (see Fig. 3.1).⁶⁷ The second section, the edicts, with a redundancy typical of authoritative texts,⁶⁸ always indicates the author (XY) of the memorial to which the edict is a response (e.g., 上諭 X Y 奏欽奉).⁶⁹ Similarly the memorials (*zou* 奏) and supplementary memorials (*pian* 片) in the third section give the name and official position of the memorialist, followed by such phrases as “kneels and memorializes” 跪奏 (see, e.g., SB 15.5.1872, l. 9), and end with “Your minister respectfully wrote this memorial and humbly begs the Empress Dowager and the Emperor to favor it with their Imperial glance,”⁷⁰ followed by the comment “noted” 知道了 or “respectfully received” 欽此.⁷¹

The *gongmenchao* published in the *Shenbao* and the *North China Herald* consisted of the activities of the imperial family and the emperor's public program for the next day; audiences; short items on

the news items within a section were separated by circles (SB 15.8.1872); even later, the sections were separated by two circles, and news items within a section by one circle (SB 10.8.1877). This practice seems to have continued until the *jingbao* was placed in a supplement (*fuzhang* 附張) in 1882 (SB 8.3.1882). The circles make it easier to skim through the *jingbao* for specific contents.

66. “Court Circular” appears in brackets. For this practice, see Hardy, *John Chinaman at Home*, 130.

67. This example is taken from a *jingbao* contained in the Fryer Collection at the University of California at Berkeley (4660.1 0044 v. 2).

68. Cf. Bartlett, *Monarchs and Ministers*, 96; Fairbank and Teng, *Ch'ing Administration*, 72; Fairbank, *Ch'ing Documents*; Alcock, “The Peking Gazette,” 252.

69. See, e.g., SB 22.6.1872, l. 6; 29.6.1872, l. 5; 22.7.1872, l. 11. See also the section “edicts reverently recorded” (*yuzhi gonglu* 諭旨恭錄) in SB 8.6.1882, and the *jingbao* supplement in SB 8.5.1892, l. 7.

70. For an example of a *zou*, see SB 8.5.1872, l. 33; for an example of a *pian*, see SB 1.6.1872, l. 35. There is a stock way of referring to previous rescripts, memorials, or edicts as well.

71. See Bartlett, *Monarchs and Ministers*, 272–73; and Silas Wu, “Memorial Systems,” 33.

光緒貳年拾月叁拾壹月初壹日
 拾月叁拾日理藩院審儀衛光祿寺正白旗值日無引
 見莊浪城守尉崇光謝恩待衛處奏派查驗箭枝之
 大臣派出勤貝勒加拉布
 恩候請假十日
 召見軍機崇光
 拾壹月初壹日吏部翰林院正紅旗值日無引
 見
 吉和謝醫廣州滿洲副都統恩內閣奏派驗放之大臣
 派出毛昶熙鑄德椿唐壬森文奏派稽察本軍之大臣
 派出阿昌阿吏部奏派揀選盛京同庫等官之大臣

Fig. 3.1 The *gongmenchao* in a commercial edition of the *jingbao*

memorials, edicts, and rescripts; news on promotions, transfers, and leaves; duty rosters of officials and banner guards; leaves of absence granted to ministers; verbal mandates of the emperor; unusual events; and official announcements. In some ways, the *gongmenchao* thus served the function of the short items found in the "People and Events

in the News" familiar from foreign newspapers, but most prevalent in tabloids or the penny press.⁷²

Natural disasters, famines, flood control, relief efforts, and charitable acts were favorite topics. Requests such as that from the governor of Shandong asking the court to "send a person for river works and flood prevention" (*SB* 8.5.1872, 29.6.1902) and appeals to the government for help in times of drought or flooding, appeared frequently in the *gongmenchao* and were reflected in subsequent edicts and rescripts (e.g., *SB* 15.5 and 22.5.1872).⁷³ An 1872 edict, for example, orders that a soup kitchen in Beijing be kept open (*NCH* 18.5.1872). A report of the same year notes the finishing of an embankment for the Yellow River within the "incredibly short period of 25 days" (*NCH* 25.5.1872).⁷⁴ Li Hongzhang 李鴻章 (1823–1901), one of the more prominent officials in late Qing history for his role in the suppression of the Taiping Rebellion, memorializes on a flood in Suzhou (*SB* 8.6.1872).⁷⁵ Another report gives a dramatic description of a flood and describes the efforts of both officials and the people in fighting the flood "from dawn to night" and "risking their lives" more than once (*SB* 7.5.1872). The need to help and support the people (愛民, 親民) in poverty-stricken areas is mentioned repeatedly (*SB* 22.5.1872, 29.5.1872, 1.6.1872, 22.6.1872, 3.8.1882), and the establishment of schools is discussed (*SB* 15.7.1872). A charitable organization in Tianjin is praised (*NCH* 21.7.1882), and Zuo Zongtang 左宗棠 (1812–85), another important military leader and administrator of the late Qing, memorializes on the need for relief measures in the Liangjiang provinces, still suffering from the chaos caused by the Taiping Rebellion (*NCH* 1.9.1882). A rescript of 1892 applauds the contributions to flood and drought relief of Chinese from America (*NCH* 29.7.1892); a woman who subscribes money for Beijing University is rewarded with the title "Lady of the First Rank" by the

72. German semi-official newspapers in the eighteenth century such as the *Schlesische Privilegierte Zeitung* and the *Mannheimer Zeitung* included court news on the title page (Ursula Koch et al., "Sommer 1789," 204–5; Christel Hess, "Redaktion und Zensur in einer Hand").

73. See also Ocko, "The British Museum's *Peking Gazette*," 41.

74. Waterworks are one of the most frequently mentioned topics; see also *NCH* 7.7.1882, 22.7.1892, and 19.8.1892; and *SB* 22.7 and 29.7.1892.

75. Reference to this flood reappeared in two *pian* by Li and a reaction to his earlier memorial in *SB* 15.6.1872. See also *SB* 15.6.1902, 13.1.1905, and 15.1.1905, for similar requests for help in dealing with natural disasters.

Empress Dowager (*NCH* 4.6.1902). The Empress Dowager responds to a memorial from a censor recommending the establishment of a number of places in the capital where poor people may obtain cholera medicine free of charge (*SB* 26.6.1902, *NCH* 2.7.1902).⁷⁶ Such items were meant to encourage positive and discourage negative behavior. The protagonists were described in eulogizing, even heroic terms. It is evident, too, from the promotions and honors bestowed on them, that such behavior was rewarded—yet another reason for copying it.⁷⁷

News on official postings was also a staple of the *gongmenchao*. It carried news on recommendations, such as the request that the throne “raise a certain Ah Xiaman” (*SB* 8.5.1872). Routine transfers of officials to other posts were noted, too (*SB* 1.6.1872), as were requests from officials for promotion, often in the form of memorials. In one such memorial, a subprefect is “requested to be promoted to the rank of salt controller and to have a flowered peacock feather conferred on him”; it also demands that another official “be noted in the merit book” (*SB* 8.5.1872). The memorial ends: “It is fitting and proper and [thus] earnestly begged that the Divine Favor may kindly write a special imperial decree of permission so that [their merits] be displayed in order to rouse and exhort others to put forth an effort in their duties . . . [for] in admitting ministers one should . . . choose the best” (*SB* 8.5.1872).⁷⁸ Nor were demotions neglected: one edict notes that an official who “allowed the escape of a prisoner from jail” and someone else who created a “default in the amount of 62,000 taels” were disciplined (*NCH* 18.5.1872). Again, these people and their fates are mentioned in order to provide positive or negative models. Their stories are a profane version of the sacred system of recompense and retribution for one’s deeds; each reader, by measuring his own behavior against that of the people described, could estimate his position on an imaginary official “ledger of merits and demerits.”

Reports on imperial activities also occupied a substantial portion of the *gongmenchao*, such as proclamations of edicts (*SB* 29.6.1872), audiences (*SB* 8.5.1872), and the (private as well as public) activities of the

76. Compare the discussion of the related edict-editorial “讀本月十九日 上諭 謹書於後” (Respectfully written after reading the edict of this [lunar] month, nineteenth day), *SB* 26.6.1902, below, on pp. 227–28.

77. See also *NCH* 3.8.1872 and 3.6.1892.

78. For similar memorials on promotions, see *SB* 1.6 and 15.6.1872. The latter deals with Li Hongzhang.

imperial family (*NCH* 25.5.1872). The emperor also had ritual functions, and ritual information often comes in the form of "weather reports" in the *gongmenchao*. News items such as one from the metropolitan prefect that "more than 3 *cun* of rain have fallen in the capital" (*SB* 15.6.1872) appear regularly.⁷⁹ These reports have direct bearing on the emperor. In mid-July 1892 the emperor repeatedly prayed for rain (*NCH* 15.7.1892), yet still there was not enough. It was not until mid-August that his prayers were answered:

During the last few days a number of heavy showers have fallen in the neighbourhood of Peking. . . . His Majesty will therefore express his deep gratitude by burning incense at certain temples; while he deposes some of his ministers to visit other shrines for the same purpose. (*NCH* 12.8.1892)

The imperial prayers proved a bit too efficacious on this occasion, however. A week later the *jingbao* reported:

But after the land had been sufficiently wetted, heavy storms fell continuously day and night, till the young crops appeared to be in a state of considerable danger. In order therefore to obtain fine weather, the Emperor on the 14th . . . will offer incense at some temples in person, and at others by deputy. (*NCH* 19.8.1892)⁸⁰

The emperor always had to be careful of his Heavenly Mandate; he, too, served as a model, and heaven's reactions were read as his personal ledger of merits. Therefore, almost every issue of the *jingbao* carried reports on imperial manipulations of the heavenly temperament: an expected solar eclipse, for example, is interpreted as "Supreme Heaven will utter its solemn warning."⁸¹

The emperor's ritual function is also seen in requests for the bestowal of honors on certain gods and the writing of honorary tablets for their temples.⁸² Here we find another distinctive area of *jingbao*

79. See also *NCH* 29.6.1872, 21.4.1882, 7.7.1882, 4.8.1882, and 9.9.1882.

80. A similar situation occurred in 1902. See *NCH* 25.6 and 16.7.1902.

81. *NCH* 29.6.1872. A week later (*NCH* 7.7.1882), the Astronomical Board submitted a diagram of the forthcoming eclipse of the sun, which was also published in the *gongmenchao*. A very different response to similar criticisms appeared in *NCH* 15.9.1882.

82. There are numerous discussions of such promotions for gods. See, e.g., a memorial (*NCH* 29.6.1872) in which the governor of Shanxi reports "a miracle by the God of War" and requests that a votive tablet be made and the corresponding edict (*NCH* 22.6.1872). Another memorial asks that a title be conferred on a City

writing. In May 1882, in the “Gonglu yuzhi” 恭錄諭旨 (Reverently recorded edicts), a section established by the late 1870s,⁸³ sometimes also called “Yuzhi gonglu” 諭旨恭錄 (Edicts reverently recorded), and appearing on the first page of the *Shenbao*, a decree acknowledged that several temples at Balikun “have clearly manifested divine manifestations” (*SB* 15.5.1882, l. 1). Several months later, this incident is also reported in a *jingbao* quoted by the *North China Herald* (*NCH* 4.8.1882):⁸⁴

At the time of the Mohammedan rebellion when the Imperial troops, in 1866, after driving the rebels before them in all directions, were on patrol duty before Pa-li K'un, officers and men were frequent witness of supernatural sights and sounds: mailed warriors appeared standing erect on the battlements brandishing their swords and the distant tramp of men and horses was borne to their ears. On one night when the rebels by means of scaling ladders swarmed up the north east corner of the wall with the speed and agility of monkeys, and their first detachment had already made good its footing on the wall, they found their further passage opposed by a celestial commander. Fear and consternation seized them at the sight, and the Imperial troops, ascending the wall, fell upon them and beat them off with gun and pike.

The presence of the miraculous in an official publication should not surprise us.⁸⁵ It not only is a staple of “stories of the strange” (*zhiguai* 志怪), themselves considered “veritable records” for the longest time in Chinese history, but also is an integral part of local gazetteers (*difangzhi* 地方誌) and the *wuxing* 五行 sections of the dynastic histories (see Chapter 1, pp. 93–104). The assumption that gods deserve credit for their merits in the same way as ordinary humans need not surprise us either: the Chinese pantheon is a reconstruction of earthly bureaucracy. In this case, the emperor expressed his gratification at the divine intervention with suitable rewards.

Throughout the pages of the *jingbao*, the emperor appeared as the mediator between heaven and the earth, as the embodiment of the

God (*NCH* 29.6.1872), who warded off the Taiping. Further examples are *NCH* 13.7 and 27.7.1872.

83. I have found first evidence in my sample from 1877, but this may not be the first date of its appearance.

84. See also *NCH* 20.4.1882.

85. For descriptions of such miraculous happenings as reflected in the *jingbao*, see Lyall, “Official Polytheism”; and Alcock, “The Peking Gazette,” 343.

Heavenly Mandate.⁸⁶ But the emperor was also depicted in his more mundane daily activities, as the official who wrote edicts and rescripts, who met with his ministers, and, last but not least, who led something like a “private” (if always representative) life. It was reported, for example that “at 7 A.M. His Majesty will receive the [birthday] congratulations of the Court in the Chen-ching Palace” and that at 8 A.M. “the theatricals in the Ningshou Palace will commence . . . [and] the Emperor will take his seat at that hour” (*SB* 15.5.1872, *NCH* 25.5.1872).⁸⁷ There are memorials discussing the emperor’s gifts to and celebrations of officials and princes (*SB* 16.8.1872; *NCH* 18.8.1882, 12.8.1892) as well as arrangements for imperial weddings, one of which listed in detail “thirty-nine court and dragon robes, [and] two hundred dragon and serpent robes for presents” (*NCH* 29.6.1882), for example.⁸⁸ This type of memorial—imperial gift lists so to speak—occurred regularly. Its detailed descriptions of “six hundred squares of bright red silk gauze with dragons in the corners and the character for ‘happiness’” or “two hundred sheets of glazed papers, six feet by three of different colours and spotted with gold” (*NCH* 22.7.1892, see also *SB* 16.8.1872) provided a vivid eyewitness view of the material wealth of the court, opening the doors of the Forbidden City to those who would never be able to enter there. Apart from drawing a picture of the emperor as a virtuous and beneficent ruler, who gives as much as he takes, this type of report may also have satisfied a readership that could, by reading the *jingbao*, live vicariously in this world of riches.⁸⁹

Although this was “official information,” it was the kind of information that would have interested a broader public, too. But the *jingbao* also contained notices on rather technical official matters. The *gongmenchao* reported who has been on duty on a certain day at a cer-

86. Cf. Lyall, “Official Polytheism,” 101.

87. Another report gives 8:30 A.M. I am not quite clear, apart from the obvious entertainment value, why the *North China Herald* would print such information some three weeks after the fact; it was certainly too late for anybody to join.

88. See also *NCH* 4.8.1882.

89. Ong (“The Writer’s Audience,” 14) argues convincingly about *Time* magazine that this type of news attracts the reader because of its intimacy with those in superior positions: “*Time* magazine adds omniscience, solemnly ‘reporting’ . . . in eyewitness style, the behaviour and feelings of a chief of state in his own bedroom as he answers an emergency night telephone call and afterwards returns to sleep. . . . *Time* provides its readers, on a regular weekly basis, companionship with the all-knowing gods.” To an extent, the *jingbao* fulfilled this function, too.

tain board (*SB* 8.5.1872), who had arrived to take up a new post (*NCH* 25.5.1872) or had been asked to remain at his post in order to write a supplementary memorial (*pian* 片) about the prevailing situation (*SB* 15.6.1872), and who had asked for sick leave (*SB* 22.5.1872, 22.7.1882, 22.5.1892). Readers could even learn that the "wearing of the summer hat will commence on the 29th" (*NCH* 23.6.1882).

Memorials and edicts printed lists of successful examination candidates or expectant officials (e.g., *SB* 8.5.1872),⁹⁰ and they reported on an official's day-to-day problems and prescribed in meticulous detail the best way to govern for both civil and military officials (*SB* 15.5.1872).⁹¹ The implied reader of such news is the acting or the expectant official who needs to be kept informed on the current political situation and on proper ways of conduct and behavior.

A different type of technical official news gave exact budgets for certain government projects and repeated the imperial orders given to the treasurers to pay out these sums (*NCH* 8.6.1872; *SB* 8.6.1902). Such reports mentioned the figures for tax exemptions in the different provinces (e.g., *NCH* 7.7 and 4.8.1882) or other financial matters (*SB* 15.5.1872, 22.5.1872, 14.8.1878, 9.5.1902), kept readers informed on the delivery of the tribute rice (*NCH* 18.5.1872; *SB* 1.7 and 1.8.1872),⁹² and discussed the salt trade (*NCH* 11.8.1882).⁹³ The *jingbao* also carried information on the development of mining works and the arrival of material for armaments (*NCH* 3.6 and 29.7.1892). Although all these are manifestations of state economic involvement, potentially interested readers could include merchants, who might have been happy to learn, for example, that a state factory was experiencing a shortage of looms because it had been ordered to produce cloth for an imperial wedding (*NCH* 10.8.1872).

Apart from these technical matters, news on official affairs also came in the form of scandals. An edict about the demotion of a governor in 1872 explained that he "invited prostitutes to the place, has employed illegal tortures, and established a mint on his own account" (*NCH* 25.5.1872; for a similar case, see *SB* 12.8.1878). Another edict reprimanding the imperial eunuchs reminded them to refrain from establishing shops in Beijing and the suburbs and forbid such improper

90. See also *NCH* 15.6.1872; and *SB* 22.7.1872, 29.7.1872, and 29.5.1892.

91. See also *NCH* 3.6 and 15.7.1892.

92. See also *NCH* 7.7.1882, 29.7.1892, and 12.8.1892.

93. See also Alcock, "The Peking Gazette," 347-48.

proceedings as keeping "a company of play-actors to perform theatricals in the gardens and villages" (*NCH* 6.7.1872).⁹⁴ The Suzhou magistrate and some of his colleagues are accused of "taking pleasure trips everywhere," with the best government horses and carriages, and of withholding important information—such as an enormous flood—and are consequently stripped of their offices (*SB* 8.6.1872). A censor accused a high official of fraud, as well as forestalling goods and selling them at inflated prices and keeping the profits. The memorial called this "the scandal which is just now in every body's mouth" (*NCH* 3.8.1872; see also a number of similar cases reported in *SB* 29.6.1882). There is cheating on the examinations (*NCH* 3.8.1872); the suicide of an official who was afraid of being reprimanded because he failed to manage the rice transports (*NCH* 8.6.1872); reckless behavior in the army (*SB* 29.6.1882); the removal of an official from his post for hushing up a murder (*NCH* 18.8.1882); the discovery and subsequent decapitation of a man who had taken someone else's papers and was using them to impersonate an official (*NCH* 3.6.1892); a crazed official who murdered his wife with a fire shovel and knife and danced about with the knife in his hand in front of his father-in-law (*NCH* 3.6.1892);⁹⁵ and the oppression of the people by a group of soldiers sent to help them against rebels (*SB* 28.8.1904). On the one hand, these stories serve as cautionary tales; they are told to warn against corrupt behavior.⁹⁶ On the other hand, they appeal to two universal human interests: sex and crime. Whether the governor actually invited prostitutes to his residence, whether the eunuchs truly hired actors, whether the official really danced around clutching a dagger is not the point. These texts were obviously written to be read by a public that enjoyed a good story.⁹⁷

This is also true of the reports of criminal cases appealed to the central government. As background, each case is recounted in detail (see, e.g., *SB* 19.8.1878, in which the entire life story of one of the culprits is

94. For a discussion of this kind of accusation against eunuchs as a trope in the long history of eunuch bashing, see Mittler, "A Fire and Its Causes."

95. A few weeks later (*NCH* 22.7.1892), a graduate working together with thieves to make a profit is mentioned.

96. See Schiller, *Objectivity and the News*, 7: "Crime news helps to 'redefine the moral boundaries of communities.'"

97. Yin Yungong, "Lüelun *Wanli dichao*," 82–83, makes a similar argument for the attractions of the Ming gazette.

given). These stories frequently continued in successive numbers of the *jingbao*, depending on the length of the judicial process (e.g., *NCH* 11.8 and 15.9.1882). By reading the consecutive editions of the *jingbao*, the reader became familiar with the characters and perhaps started to sympathize with them. The protagonists in these "stories" came from all strata of society. Thus, even a lower-class reader might find his situation and point of view reflected, especially since by their very nature appeal cases were often critical of fairly high officials.⁹⁸

Not just the criminal cases, but memorials and news on crimes, which occupy a high percentage of *jingbao* space, are sites where the common people protrude into official space.⁹⁹ Rebels are pacified or delivered to court (*SB* 29.5 and 15.7.1872), sometimes by as important a military leader as Yuan Shikai 袁世凱 (1859–1916), later president of the Republic, personally (*SB* 6.5.1902). Robbers break into the house of an official (*NCH* 15.6.1872), a double murderer escapes from prison (*NCH* 23.9.1882),¹⁰⁰ a gambler commits murder (*SB* 15.5.1902), and time and again, a wife is slaughtered (*SB* 7.3.1882, 15.5.1902). These narratives are characterized by a distinctive storytelling tone; the following is a typical example:

One day in the autumn, he came home after selling his melons. Being thirsty he thought he would like a melon. Just as he was cutting one up and eating it, his wife came along and asked him for some money to buy cloth with for making stockings. He refused, but she put her hand into his pocket and took out two small pieces of silver. He bade her return it, because he had not yet divided the money with his partner. As she would not do so, he lost his temper and began to abuse her. She thereupon ran at him and in brandishing the knife to frighten her away, he accidentally drove it through her thigh. His partner's wife came to help and they nursed her as well as they could, but she died a few hours afterwards. (*NCH* 10.6.1892)

This short excerpt begins with an idyllic situation, a melon seller innocently enjoying a fruit himself. Along comes his wife chatting and laughing, attempting to get some money out of him. Suddenly, his temper changes, and in an unexpected outburst of brutality, he bran-

98. See *NCH* 7.7.1882, 3.6.1892, and 29.7.1892.

99. See *The Evening Gazette*, 11.7.1874, 599. For the same phenomenon in foreign papers, see Schiller, *Objectivity and the News*, 68–69.

100. For other attempted escapes, see *NCH* 17.6 and 12.8.1892.

dishes the knife and hurts her. The story ends tragically, as the wife “with whom he had lived happily,” dies. The reader is captured by the effective changes in mood and moved by the accidental tragedy. Many of the crime stories in the *jingbao* (e.g., *SB* 7.3.1882) appeal through such literary qualities; they are told as stories, creating tension, fooling readers with red herrings, and astonishing them with incredible facts.¹⁰¹ Although many of these reports appear incredible to the modern reader,¹⁰² contemporary readers probably considered them factual—partly because they were well written.

Perhaps for similar reasons, another type of news also finds its way onto the pages and into the edicts and memorials of the official *jingbao*, something one could perhaps term “action reports.” Many of them concern aborigines (*NCH* 19.8.1892), rebels (*NCH* 22.6.1872; *SB* 8.6.1872, 10.8.1877, 18.8.1878, 19.8.1878),¹⁰³ robberies (*NCH* 12.8.1892), fires (*SB* 12.8.1878), and sinkings at sea (*NCH* 15.6.1872, 17.6.1892). The *jingbao* thrives on crises (e.g., *SB* 8.6.1872: 勢甚危). The protagonists—usually officials and gentry—are inevitably caught in great danger (e.g., *SB* 15.5.1882). The natural or human forces against which they fight are enormous. The texts talk of the burning down of a dozen houses at once (*SB* 12.8.1878), of being threatened at knifepoint (*SB* 29.6.1892), or “hotly pursued” by adversaries in enormous numbers (*SB* 10.8.1877, 7.3.1882; *NCH* 3.6.1892). Sometimes they are badly wounded (*SB* 10.8.1877), yet they are, most often, victorious (e.g., *SB* 15.5.1882: “But all the time, danger could be changed into safety”). Thus again, these

101. One particularly complex and confusing murder involves four people: a husband; his wife; a friend of the husband, who helps the husband with his work and, with the husband's permission, is having an affair with the wife; and—to make things even more complicated—another of the wife's lovers. When the husband invites the friend to live with the couple, for the sake of convenience, the other lover rushes in and kills the friend in a fit of jealous rage. The husband, wife, and second lover then sew up the body of the dead man (his bowels had been hanging out) and throw him into a river. When the body is discovered, the entire story is uncovered (*NCH* 8.7.1892).

102. One is reminded of recent scandals about sham news stories; see Straßmann, “Gut gefälscht.” Nevertheless, even the contemporary readers obviously needed to be reminded of the facts of the matter: remarks such as “the foregoing is corroborated by eyewitnesses and persons well acquainted with the whole story” are common in these reports (e.g., *NCH* 3.7.1872).

103. Rebels are most frequently mentioned. See also *NCH* 3.6.1892, 10.6.1892, 1.7.1892, 2.7.1902; *SB* 29.6.1892, 6.5.1902 (on Yuan Shikai's efforts), 22.6.1902, 28.8.1904; and Alcock, “The Peking Gazette,” 350–51.

stories, however official they may be, appeal to a reader interested in observing and reliving the adventures of others. Just like foreign newspapers, the court gazette probably found the greatest number of readers when it related catastrophes or other exciting news.¹⁰⁴ But apart from their excitement, these are didactic cautionary tales. They inform the reader and warn against negative elements in society.

A similar function is fulfilled by reports on the personal lives and conduct of officials, too. An integral part of the *gongmenchao* was the listing of requests for sick leave (e.g., *SB* 29.7.1872). Sick leave was granted only for good reasons. It was always unwise to ask for sick leave since this could give rise to slander. Accordingly, officials tended to elaborate on their bodily problems in long memorials, a practice perpetuated into the Republic: as late as 1912, in a section now headed "Presidential Mandates" 大總統命令, officials "reporting ill-health through overwork" asked to be excused from their duties and were granted sick leave.¹⁰⁵ One typical early example for this practice deals with a military governor who some time before

had a stroke of paralysis in the left side, rendering his left arm and leg nearly useless. In his anxiety to get better, he took so much medicine that, as might be expected, he has injured his constitution, and is suffering from giddiness in consequence. His arm, however, is a little better and he can move it about; but his leg is still weak and he is unable to walk alone. His spirits, too, though not so jaded and prostrate as they were a short time ago, have not recovered their old buoyancy. Still, having been entrusted with the important duty of guarding the frontier, he dares not think, especially at such an important time, as the present, of his own ease and comfort. While he can work, he will. (*NCH* 22.6.1872)¹⁰⁶

It is clear that this example is cited not to make the reader understand the particular nature of the governor's illness but to make him appreciate the governor's dedication to his work and to the Qing government. The same must be said for a sick report recorded in the *Shenbao* (*SB* 15.8.1872): the official in question asks for an extension of his leave since his medical condition, which he elaborates on, has not become

104. Cf. Liu Yongqiang, "Ming-Qing dibao yu wenxue zhi guanxi," 442.

105. *NCH* 4.5.1912. For similar descriptions and requests, see *NCH* 29.6.1872, 20.7.1872, and 4.6.1902. See also the section "Mandates" 命令 in the *Shenbao*, e.g., 12.8.1912.

106. For similar examples, see *SB* 15.7 and 29.7.1872.

better in the two months of leave he had already been granted. He promises that if he is granted an extension, he will devote all his remaining years of life in complete and utter devotion to the empresses dowager and the emperor.

Thus, although sick reports do not serve as cautionary tales, their function is just as didactic: they are supposed to establish positive moral paradigms.¹⁰⁷ One interesting example for how this practice was nevertheless critically regarded, and even backfired at times, is an 1888 *Shenbao* editorial reflecting on a navy-inspection report published in the *jingbao*. The editorial praises the idea of publishing such a report but rants at the responsible official who had nothing better to do than abuse it for aggrandizing himself by publicly telling his personal sick story.¹⁰⁸

Illness was not the only cause for withdrawal from office. Chinese ritual stipulated mourning periods for various categories of deceased relatives (26 months in the case of parents), and officials were expected to observe them unless their services were required by the court. Serving officials had to request permission to leave their posts to fulfill their mourning obligations. The edicts granting permission noted when and where the official was to report for duty on completion of mourning. An order to one official "to await duty as an intendant once he has laid aside mourning . . . to remain in the province as first candidate to be promoted to the rank of salt controller" (*SB* 8.5.1872) is typical of these reports found in the *jingbao*.

107. In a similar case, a memorialist who begs to be allowed to retire notes that his condition began in the summer of the previous year: "It was aggravated by chills, taken . . . at the military examinations in the autumn and again in the winter when he was reviewing the troops and visiting the dockyard. His coughing was then incessant, and having been prescribed medicine which did not suit him, he became dangerously ill. Though he took a turn for the better at the beginning of February, he found it impossible to regain his strength and therefore he asked leave to retire. When travelling, he became worse again, and after he reached home, his throat was injured by the fatigue of replying to the numerous visitors who came to see him and make enquiries. He seemed likely to die immediately" (*NCH* 29.6.1872). This description goes on and on; the patient recovers for a while only to have a remission. The memorial concludes that it is the official's duty, given his precarious health, to turn over his job to someone who can take on the responsibility.

108. "書彭宮保巡閱水師事竣摺後" (Written after the navy inspection by court inspector Peng), *SB* 25.8.1888.

Filial duties were also offered as reasons for requesting a leave. As in the case of requests for sick leaves, the memorials pleading filial duties are personal and wordy. In 1882, for example, Li Hongzhang's mother was taken ill. He described her illness in detail and then concluded:

Now that the illness from which his mother has long been suffering still continues unabated, (the) Memorialist all night long tosses about in his trouble, and not for a single moment is his mind at rest. It is therefore his bounden duty to earnestly pray Their Majesties for an unusual extension of Their gracious kindness, and to beg that they will grant him a month's leave of absence. (*NCH* 14.7.1882)

The request was granted, yet on the day Li was about to depart, he received a note from his brother telling him that his mother had died.¹⁰⁹ He memorialized again asking for leave. Because of his importance to the court, however, he was allowed to take only 100 days for mourning instead of the usual period. He repeated his request in another memorial (referring to himself in the third person):

Before he could start on his long journey, he received the letter telling of her death. Remorse will consequently haunt him all his life, and there is a wound in his heart that prevents him, privately, from enjoying a moment's respite from pain, and publicly from being of any service to the State. His conflicting duties as a statesman and a dutiful son leave him perplexed and undecided . . . although [the] Memorialist holds high rank in the Grand Secretariat and an important post in the provinces, how can he, with the evil omen of guilt attaching to him, lightly venture to retain those offices? Though trusted to the fullest extent by his sovereign, a sense of shame would continue to harass him. He therefore prays Their Majesties in pitying recognition for the reality of their foolish servant's grief to recall their commands, and graciously permit him to vacate his posts and observe the full term of mourning. . . . Little by little, now with loud weeping and now with silent sobs, has Their Majesties' servant told them his piteous tale; and the anxiety with which he awaits their commands is beyond his power to express. (*NCH* 28.7.1882)

Neither in the case of sick reports nor in such cases as this can we be sure about the genuineness of the feelings expressed. The memorial provides public evidence of a private mental state in the same way as the memorials cited gave public evidence of the very private bodily

109. See his memorial in *NCH* 21.7.1882.

state of a person. Li's public display of personal agony was offered as proof of his filial piety, but it was also a clever move that enhanced his political status. From the beginning it was, of course, clear that he must accept the court's decision and return to his post after a shortened mourning period as proof of his loyalty to the state. The edict responding to his memorial had appeared a month earlier: in the *jingbao* an edict always precedes the memorial to which it responds.

We have, after careful reflection, come to the conclusion that a modification of existing usage is here necessary. . . . The questions of the hour are attended with much difficulty and the Viceroy [Li Hongzhang] should struggle to suppress his private sorrow, looking upon the affairs of state as of the first importance, and striving to make some return to Us for Our kindness to him. This will be the conduct that will inspire his mother's mind with the comforting conviction that her son . . . is devoting himself to the service of his country. (*NCH* 30.6.1882)

The *jingbao* is concerned with promoting virtue and disparaging vice in all its sections. The elaborate attention to Li Hongzhang's filial desires only makes his "sacrifice" to the state all the more glorious (his detailed descriptions of private grief may well have been calculated to achieve this end). Here, as almost everywhere in the *jingbao*, the moral issues are clear. A provincial governor's promotion of public works, a prefect's nonfeasance, the emperor's devotion to his subjects' welfare, or a mad official's murder of his wife—the attributions of good or bad, right or wrong, can usually be supplied with ease. Indeed, to "show what is good and what is bad"—the *baobian* 褒貶 principle—had been an important function in Chinese historical writings for centuries, and the *jingbao* could build on this heritage.¹¹⁰ By presenting models to be emulated, it served as another important mechanism of Confucian social control.

Accordingly, the *jingbao* also carried regular reports on exemplary persons. At least once every month, the *jingbao* featured a woman who died to preserve her chastity, for instance, and for whom a memorial arch was being erected. The stories about the circumstances of her death are as stereotypical as the paradigmatic function that she ful-

110. See Trauzettel, "Chinesische Geschichtsschreibung"; and Holcombe, "The Exemplar State," 115. *Baobian* remained the main aim of the *guanbao*, as one of the reform memorials (26.7.1898) concerned with this transformation argues (Britton, *The Chinese Periodical Press*, 104).

fills. She is usually a paradigm of filial piety, even to the extent of cutting flesh from her body to make a broth to cure her parents. She will have provided for her husband's interment, her parents-in-law, and her children before she takes poison and—handing over her trousseau to defray funeral expenses—quietly awaits a beautiful and dignified death (e.g., *NCH* 3.8.1872, 14.7.1872, 8.7.1892; *SB* 13.8.1878, 1.6.1892, 8.7.1892). To read one such case is to know how the others are described.¹¹¹

This woman is a stock character from the stock treasury of prescriptive, didactic “storytelling.” She appears and reappears in handbooks dealing with womanly virtues, in the dynastic histories, in Chinese literature, and, as discussed in Chapter 4, in Chinese-language newspapers such as the *Shenbao*. Although she is certainly a historical character, the exact and factual circumstances of her death do not matter. Here, as elsewhere, the official gazette is interested not so much in “spreading the news” as in “spreading the word.”¹¹²

This survey of the *jingbao* as an institution and as a text has shown that the gazette was obviously censored by high-level bureaucrats and that many of the published documents dealt with “official matters.” Nevertheless, this censorship did not reduce the value or interest of the gazette to readers. The craze for novels about officials, a fad at least since the appearance of Wu Jingzi's 吳敬梓 (1701–54) *The Scholars* (*Rulin waishi* 儒林外史) in the mid-eighteenth century, appeared to intensify in the late years of the Qing: “official matters” obviously did find a readership.¹¹³ In fact, knowledge of the court gazette and its contents is assumed in numerous dramas and fictional writings of the Ming and Qing.¹¹⁴ This is evidence that the gazette was being read—

111. See also Imbault-Huart, “Le Journal et le journalisme en China,” 49; Alcock, “The Peking Gazette,” 341; and *The Evening Gazette*, 11.7.1874, 599.

112. Britton, *The Chinese Periodical Press*, 12.

113. The popularity of novels on official life is obvious, first, from substantial circulation figures (see Sun, *Zhongguo tongshu xiaoshuo*, 228–30; thanks to Daria Berg of Durham University for pointing out this reference). Their popularity can be deduced, second, from the growing numbers of novels on “official affairs” published during the late Qing. For a good survey, see H. Martin, “Das Bild des Reformopportunisten”; and, more detailed, David Wang, *Fin-de-Siècle Splendor*.

114. This fact is elaborated in Liu Yongqiang, “Ming-Qing dibao yu wenxue zhi guanxi,” which cites numerous instances acknowledging the *dibao* as a source for fictional writings; see esp. 459. See also Hegel, *Reading Illustrated Fiction*, 42–43.

and enjoyed—by a great number of people even outside the bureaucracy.¹¹⁵ Although serving a didactic purpose and providing clues which “policies, behavior, and attitudes were condoned or condemned by the court,”¹¹⁶ the *jingbao* satisfied—first of all—an obvious appetite for official news.

Moreover, official news was not all the *jingbao* provided. As we have seen, it presented a panorama of Chinese social life. As a French observer put it in 1893: “One can get to know thousands of unknown facts as to the actions of the emperor and the imperial ceremonies, as to the bureaucratic and judicial structure as well as to the habits and customs, superstitions and folklore of the Chinese people.”¹¹⁷ For this reason, the gazette cannot be considered a “press service exclusively for the benefit of the official bureaucrats rather than of the people at large.”¹¹⁸ The *jingbao*, as Roswell Britton rightly argues, “served all kinds of different interests, literary and educational as well as economic or political.”¹¹⁹ The admirable, the miraculous, and the banal purveyed in its pages did find a readership. Anecdotal evidence in *biji* records¹²⁰ and letters testifies to the success of the *jingbao* and its predecessors. Even Wang Kangnian, a reformist official and main editor of the modern *Shiwubao*, stressed the reputation and excellence of the old-style *jingbao*.¹²¹

Since at least the tenth century, court newsletters, official and unofficial, had flourished, providing news of official as well as of trivial in-

115. See Liu Yongqiang, “Ming-Qing dibao yu wenxue zhi guanxi,” 452. Qin (*Shanghai jindai baokan shilun*, 26) argues that among the Shanghai official world and the literati generally “there were not a few who stressed the necessity of reading the *jingbao*.”

116. Ocko, “The British Museum’s *Peking Gazette*,” 46.

117. Quoted in Chien, *Das alte chinesische Nachrichtenwesen*, 63. The French observer indeed calls the *jingbao* the best contemporary source on Chinese customs and habits. For similar descriptions, see Imbault-Huart, “Le Journal et le journalisme en Chine,” 45; Alcock, “The Peking Gazette,” 246; and Lyall, “Official Polytheism,” 89.

118. Lin Yutang, *History*, 12. For similar views, see Huang Zhuoming, *Zhongguo gudai baozhi tanyuan*, 4; and Liu Yongqiang, “Ming-Qing dibao yu wenxue zhi guanxi,” 440–41.

119. Britton, *The Chinese Periodical Press*, 15.

120. For a large number of references to such records, see Yao Fushen, “You guan dibao jige wenti.”

121. Wang Kangnian, *Shuji*, 1: 122–23.

terest for readers in the capital as well as distant villages.¹²² At least in the late Qing a dozen *baofang* were able to make a profit by publishing the *jingbao*. They even published the news not just in one format but in many different editions in order to satisfy different readerships. They would not, for example, have printed an early evening edition if some curious minds had not been willing to pay for it.

These observations and the preceding survey of the *jingbao* text may serve to answer some of the questions posed at the beginning of this chapter: the *jingbao* was, on the one hand, the tongue of orthodoxy, spreading a message of the proper virtues and morality to be adopted by its readers. On the other hand, it supplied room for discussion and criticism, presenting the viewpoints not only of officials but, especially in its court and crime reports, of members of the lower strata of society. It was an official organ containing only officially approved information, but private agents printed it and served as gatekeepers. And it was read by many, not just officials, for entertainment as much as for instruction.

It appears to be true, as Britton claims, that even “the unofficial public could see the humor in the intrigues and vicissitudes of princes and politicians and enjoyed the whole political show through the pages of the gazettes.”¹²³ And because the *jingbao* was read by so

122. According to Samuel Wells Williams (*The Middle Kingdom*, I: 328), the gazette was “very generally read and talked about by the gentry and educated people in the cities, and tends to keep them more acquainted with the character and proceedings of their rulers, than the Romans were of their sovereigns and senate. In the provinces thousands find employment by copying and abridging the Gazettes for readers who cannot afford to purchase the complete edition.” Liu Yongqiang, “Ming-Qing dibao yu wenxue zhi guanxi,” 445, gives examples of readers of the *dibao* who lived in the countryside. See also Mayer, “Die Presse in China,” 590–91. That the *jingbao* could reach even the Shanxi villager, although often with great delay, is obvious in the diary studied by Henrietta Harrison (“Newspapers and Nationalism,” 90, 91–93). It is also suggested in a letter by Wang Kangnian (*Shuji*, 4: 3834), who bought the *jingbao* for a friend in the provinces regularly. One reason for the regular delay in the delivery to the provinces was caused by the fact that, theoretically, each province was to add a *yuanmenchao* 贛門抄 (“provincial gate jottings,” equivalent to the *gongmenchao* on the national level) to the editions of the *jingbao* as they arrived from the capital. Accordingly, I would agree with Liu Yongqiang (“Ming-Qing dibao yu wenxue zhi guanxi,” 463), who takes Ge Gongzhen to task for severely underestimating the breadth of the *dibao* readership.

123. Britton, *The Chinese Periodical Press*, 12–13.

many, it was a challenge for the foreign-style newspaper. The fact that the new-style newspapers felt a need to criticize the “boring indigeneous paper” in their editorials is an indication that indeed they were competing with it. As late as 1911, the pictorial *Tubwabao* 圖畫報 (Shanghai, 1911) juxtaposed the depictions of a newspaper boy delivering a foreign-style paper and another selling the “imperial gazette,” *chaobao* 朝報 (another name for the court gazette, see Table 3.1 above), on the street. The accompanying text asks provocatively why this old-fashioned paper is still being sold at all.¹²⁴ When the *Shenbao* and other such papers condemned the *jingbao* and its predecessors for being secretive, boring, and univocal, their aim is easily unmasked. *Shenbao* editorials argued that the *jingbao* was univocal because officials were not interested in writing critically about themselves—but in fact the *jingbao* was full of scandals and denunciations and even the occasional criticism of the emperor himself.¹²⁵ The editorials assert that the new paper is, of course, completely different, multivocal and all-inclusive of critical opinions. But the emotional quality of these tirades betrays the *Shenbao*'s fear that the public does not perceive the *jingbao* as univocal or boring. This apprehension was no doubt the reason the *Shenbao* and other foreign-style newspapers such as the *Xinwenbao* included the *jingbao* as an integral part of their publication from the start. They were interested in sales, and by including the *jingbao* and the kind of news to be found there, they could tap a sizable and pre-existing readership.

Indeed, since the *jingbao* satisfied an apparent appetite for official news, the commercial foreign-style newspapers, which had to please readers, continued that tradition not only by reprinting the court ga-

124. See *THB*, vol. 35, 1911. The double page is reproduced in Vittinghoff, “Am Rande des Ruhms,” chap. 2. See also her discussion of the rivalries in chap. 7.

125. This fact is noted by a number of foreign observers (see the discussion in Vittinghoff, “Am Rande des Ruhms,” chap. 7). Liu Yongqiang (“Ming-Qing dibao yu wenxue zhi guanxi,” 450) shows that the court organ would become a battlefield in times of internal conflicts. Huang Zhuoming (*Zhongguo gudai baozhi tanyuan*, 4) calls the *dibao* a “mirror of government infighting.” On the critical potential of the *jingbao*, see also Alcock, “The Peking Gazette,” 254–55. To give just one example: a memorial asking permission to build a commemorative temple is refused outright by the emperor who reckons that the official has committed a breach of loyalty (*NCH* 12.8.1892). Both the memorial and the edict are argued convincingly but to opposite effect. See also a memorial criticizing the two empresses dowager discussed below (*NCH* 13.7.1872).

zette but also by introducing caricatures, for example, which were featured prominently after 1907, and which often depicted officials. Much earlier, indeed from its first days, the *Shenbao* also carried fictional¹²⁶ and factual stories about officials. One report that appeared in August 1872 sounds almost identical to a *jingbao* report mentioned above: a certain Li is desperate enough to pretend to be someone else in order to find a job.¹²⁷ Another story tells about an official's problems with his kitchen personnel.¹²⁸ Entire subsections such as "Official Affairs" ("Guanshi" 官事) and "Official Affairs in Shanghai" ("Shanghai guanshi" 上海官事) or "Rumors from the Capital" ("Jingshi suowen: 京師瑣聞) and "News from the Capital" ("Jingshi jishi" 京師紀事) record scandals and reports similar to these contained in the *jingbao*.¹²⁹ Like the *jingbao*, the *Shenbao* informed and amused its readers by reporting cases from the different courts in Shanghai's concessions.¹³⁰ Nor, as we have seen, did the *Shenbao* neglect to print news of the miraculous either.

Thus, the foreign-style newspapers had the best of both worlds. They would argue that the *jingbao* was printed boredom, while printing it and the genre of news found in it as a means of attracting readers. This clever method increased both the status of the *xinbao* and its market value.

126. See, e.g., the serialized novel appearing in the summer of 1908, *Huanhai jiwen* 宦海紀聞 (Records from the world of government).

127. See "假官誑騙" (A make-believe official's swindle), *SB* 3.8.1872; and *NCH* 3.6.1892.

128. "清官笑柄" (An honest official's laughable fate), *SB* 8.8.1872. See also "日本官報" (A Japanese official paper), *SB* 18.3.1892.

129. See e.g., "官事," *SB* 29.3.1907; "上海官事," *SB* 24.3.1907; "京師瑣聞," *SB* 2.8.1882; "京師紀事," *SB* 23.8.1887; and "京邸瓊函" (Esteemed letters from the capital), *SB* 8.8.1888. All these sections include information very similar to that usually provided in the *gongmenchao*. Many other newspapers carried similar items, e.g., "北京官事" (Official affairs from Beijing), *XWB* 5.8.1902; and "官事" (Official affairs), *XWB* 18.8.1907.

130. The enjoyment of court cases as literature is evident in the fact that—unlike literature on officials—chivalric and court-case fiction abounded during the late Qing (David Wang, *Fin-de-Siècle Splendor*, chap. 3). To "uncover officials and judges—the symbols of law and justice—as the ultimate criminals," a particular pleasure associated with such literature Wang (153) contends, is what the readers must have felt in reading appeals court cases in the gazette and in the newspapers, too.

The Power: Why Reprint the Jingbao?

One reason for including the *jingbao* within the *xinbao* was the fact that they were addressed to the same general readership of gentry, officials, literati, and merchants. It was convenient and cost-effective, for example, to distribute the *Zhongwai jiwén* 中外記聞, published by Liang Qichao in Beijing in 1896, to the subscribers of the *jingbao*,¹³¹ and Wang Kangnian, too, suggested that his *Shiwubao* use the distribution channels either of the *Shenbao* or of the *jingbao*.¹³² Another reason may have been that the English models for newspapers such as the *Shenbao*—the *London Times*, for example—contained sections such as the “Court News” (1870s), the “London Gazette,” or “Parliamentary Reports” (1910s). English-language papers within China—the *North China Herald*, for example—also included selections from the “Peking Reporter” (i.e., the *jingbao* in translation) from its very first number (3.8.1850).¹³³ A third reason, important only in the earliest years of the *Shenbao*, however, may have been the simple fact that the editors needed to fill their pages.¹³⁴ The last, and arguably the most important, reason for including the *jingbao* was its authority, however. The name *Shenbao* 申報, readily understood as, and intended to mean, “Shanghai Newspaper” (申 being a traditional denomination for Shanghai),¹³⁵ can also be read as a “report, addressed by subordinates to superior officials.”¹³⁶ Thus, by its very name, the *Shenbao* “humbly” placed itself within the tradition of official reporting, only to manipulate its symbolic power.

131. Mohr, *Die moderne chinesische Tagespresse*, 15.

132. Wang Kangnian, *Shuji*, 1: 77.

133. The *North China Herald* also published yearly collections of the most important reports from the *jingbao*. The *Celestial Empire*, *Shanghai Mercury*, and the *Chinese Repository*, too, translated from the *jingbao*.

134. For the repeated calls to readers to send in manuscripts, see the early numbers of the *Shenbao*; and Vittinghoff, “Am Rande des Ruhms.” As my discussion below shows, however, by the late 1870s, the opposite was true, and measures had to be taken to restrict the amount of space taken up by *jingbao* reprints.

135. On the name, see Shenbao shi bianxiezu, “Chuangban chuqi de *Shenbao*.”

136. For this use of the term, see Silas Wu, “Memorial Systems,” 18. It appears, for example, in a memorial reprinted in the *Shenbao* on 8.6.1872, ll. 12, 21.

In Bourdieu's words, authority "affirms itself by affirmation."¹³⁷ Accordingly, by adapting certain attributes of the language associated with official power—its vocabulary, its style, its format—by employing familiar official genres such as *baguwen*, by quoting from the Chinese classics, by observing ritual spaces to honor the emperor and by using blue ink to announce his death and red to record his marriage,¹³⁸ the new-style paper effectively asserted its own symbolic might. The use of such practices, this "code-switching," constituted an *ideologue*, in Bakhtin's sense: a particular way of viewing the world;¹³⁹ through it, the *xinbao* itself acquired an authoritative voice.¹⁴⁰ The obvious appeal of this powerful code, the official language¹⁴¹ and the official iconography of the *jingbao*, is evident in that not just the newspapermen but many advertisers, too, borrowed the figure of an official holding a placard with the name of the *baofang* who appeared in some *jingbao* editions. In the Republican era, a gentleman wearing Western dress and a boater but with the same posture was substituted for the authoritative icon (Fig. 3.2).

The reprinting of the *jingbao* thus became yet another means of claiming authority on things Chinese and otherwise on the part of the

137. Bourdieu, *Was heißt sprechen?* 159: "It is essential to understand that authority affirms itself by affirmation: It is one of the possible strategies for the usurpation of symbolic power to simply assume regular attributes of authority."

138. The edition for Chinese New Year's was also printed in red ink, in accordance with Chinese customs (Imbault-Huart, "Le Journal et le journalisme en Chine," 60).

139. Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination*, 333: "A particular language in a novel ('ideologue') is always a particular way of viewing the world, one that strives for social significance."

140. Bourdieu, *Was heißt sprechen?* 57. Not even Liang Qichao dismissed the attraction of official authority. In 1898 the *Shiwubao* was supposed to become an official paper (Vittinghoff, "Am Rande des Ruhms," chap. 9). The attraction had not worn off even in the early years of the Republic, as an unidentified newspaper article of 1912–13, quoted in Mateer, *New Terms*, 64, shows. It is entitled "辦報之難易" (The difficulties of managing a paper) and argues (ll. 13–14) that "in managing a big paper, there is really only one possibility: setting it up as an official organ."

141. The language of the *jingbao* was used in an advertisement as late as 1907 (*SB* 25.8.1907); the headline reads: "It is decreed that those who [wish] to stop smoking [opium ought to] pay attention," and the remainder of the text, too, is couched in the language habitually used in official decrees.



Fig. 3.2 The official in various guises: (top left) on the cover page of a *baofang jingbao* edition; (bottom) in two advertisements in the official code of the Qing (SB 14.10.1882); (top right) in an advertisement in the official code of the Republic (SB 1.9.1912)

publishers of the *xinbao*. It was certainly the most radical tool in their comprehensive attempt to transfer symbolic power to themselves.¹⁴² The implied reader of the *Shenbao* must have been aware and in awe of the fact that the *xinbao*, despite its alien background, thus affirmed itself by adapting and reprinting traditional representations of power.

142. Qin, *Shanghai jindai baokan shilun*, 23, 24.

But what effect, if any, did the inclusion of the *jingbao*, particularly the manner in which it was incorporated in a modern newspaper, have on the *xinbao*? And did the reprinting of the *jingbao* in this new medium affect the meaning of that text as well?

FROM XINBAO TO JINGBAO:

CHALLENGING THE BAOFANG?

The court gazette was either reset within the pages of the newspaper or, after 1882, included as a supplement. Until 1905, and despite continued attempts to rationalize the delivery and even the production process, the *jingbao* reprint generally appeared two to three weeks later than the original in the capital. After 1905, the delay becomes even more drastic, and the *jingbao* reprint often lagged more than two months behind.¹⁴³ On the other hand, beginning in the late 1870s, the *Shenbao* had a section called “Gonglu yuzhi” (Recently recorded edicts) usually directly after the editorial.¹⁴⁴ This section published edicts that had been issued more recently than those appearing in the reprint of the *jingbao* in the same paper, and sometimes it contained additional edicts not to be found in the reprinted *jingbao* editions (see Table 3.2).¹⁴⁵

The establishment of this new section was the first indication that *jingbao* material would occupy more and more space in the *Shenbao*. At around the same time, editorials began to discuss edicts or other documents from the *jingbao*, often citing them in full.¹⁴⁶ With the

143. In comparison, the *jingbao* was reprinted in the *Xinwenbao* around three weeks later in 1893, but by 1898 the delay was three months.

144. See, e.g., SB 1.8.1877 and 29.6.1882 (with an edict directed to Zhang Zhi-dong).

145. See, e.g., SB 12.8.1878, which reprints the *jingbao* of the thirtieth day of the sixth month and the *yuzhi* of the second day of the seventh month. Sometimes the *yuzhi* was substituted for the *jingbao* reprint; sometimes they were doubled up. The *yuzhi* in SB 5.8.1878, for example, reprints a document of the twenty-fifth day of the sixth month; there appears not to have been an edition of *jingbao* of that date in the *Shenbao*. On the other hand, the edicts appearing in the *yuzhi* in SB 12.8.1878 were not printed in the *jingbao* of the corresponding date, when it appeared on 13.8.1878. These discrepancies may point to the *Shenbao*'s use of more than one *baofang* edition, as discussed below.

146. See, e.g., SB 24.8.1877, 25.12.1878, 24.8.1887, 22.8.1888, 2.8.1892, 16.6.1898, 7.5.1902, 3.8.1902, 6.8.1902, and 31.8.1902 (the last is concerned not with a specific edict but with the transmission of edicts and the like). It is not always possible to trace the edicts that are discussed to a specific reprint of the *jingbao*, however. In

opening of the telegraph line between Shanghai and Tianjin in 1881, the *Shenbao* started receiving and reprinting the telegraphed texts of edicts.¹⁴⁷ It is significant that the *Shenbao* decided to pay the high cost for telegraphed edicts and that indeed in the beginning all it received as telegraphed news were imperial edicts. The early 1880s saw yet more additions of official news within *xinbao* space: at the end of the news section, the paper printed extracts from local official papers, the *guanbao*,¹⁴⁸ as well as from *yuanmenchao* (the provincial equivalent of the national *gongmenchao*).¹⁴⁹

From the 1880s on, editorials not only continued to deal with (and to reprint at least in part) edicts or memorials, but some official documents even served as editorials.¹⁵⁰ Increasing amounts of space were thus taken up by official texts. Eventually, the *Shenbao* had to introduce a number of policies to make space for other news. It reprinted the local *guanbao* in very small type¹⁵¹ and at times—for

the editorial that appeared on 25.12.1878, for example, the editorialist mentioned having read the edict in a newspaper from Hong Kong. Some of these editorials concerned memorials that had appeared several months earlier (the editorial of *SB* 3.8.1902 dealt with an edict of almost three months earlier; that of *SB* 6.8.1902 with one that had appeared more than a month earlier). This further supports the argument that the newspaper was not discarded immediately and that back copies were kept as a reference for a rather long time (see the editorial on making a book out of *Shenbao* editorials in *SB* 28.3.1877).

147. The first such edict appears on 16.1.1882. The section in which these edicts appear is entitled “本館自己接到電音” (Telegraphs received by our company). *SB* 3.8.1882 illustrates that this new arrangement meant that official news consumed an increasing amount of space. On this day the *gonglu yuzhi* section appeared next to the section of telegraphed news, which exclusively reports rescripted memorials, sent by the *Shenbao* correspondent (or 友人 “friend”) in the capital.

148. See the “袁江官報” (Official paper of Yuanjiang [Jiangxi and Zhejiang]), in *SB* 23.8 and 28.8.1883. This practice was also used in the *Xinwenbao*: e.g., “廣東官報” (Official paper of Guangdong), 7.5.1893; and “白門官報” (Official paper of Baimen), 22.8.1893. Unfortunately we know little about the nature of these *guanbao*: were they early predecessors of the modern *guanbao* for which the *Beiyang guanbao* founded by Yuan Shikai in 1901 is claimed to be the paradigm (Lin Yuanqi, *Dibao zazhi yanjiu*, 195; for a different view, see Li Siyi, “Qingmo 10 nian guanbao huodong gairong,” 128–29)?

149. E.g., “蘇省撫轅抄” (Provincial news from Jiangsu), *SB* 11.8.1873; “浙省撫轅抄” (Provincial news from Zhejiang), *SB* 7.3.1882; “浙江撫轅抄” (Provincial news from Zhejiang), *SB* 10.8.1882. See also *XWB* 2.8.1908.

150. E.g., *SB* 27.8.1887, 7.10.1887, 12.10.1887, 5.5.1902, 3.6.1902, 9–10.8.1903.

151. E.g., *SB* 10.8.1877, 7.3.1882, 13.8.1882.

Table 3.2
Changes in Reprinting of the *Jingbao* in the *Shenbao*, 1872-1912

Date	Treatment of <i>jingbao</i>
1872-82	<i>jingbao</i> reprinted within the pages of the <i>Shenbao</i>
1872	<i>jingbao</i> appears 2-3 weeks later than in capital
1873	<i>jingbao</i> appears 3 weeks later than in capital
1874-78	<i>jingbao</i> appears 2 weeks later than in capital
1877	additional <i>gonglu yuzhi</i> 恭錄諭旨 on the first page (but after the editorial), also called <i>yuzhi gonglu</i>
1881	<i>jingbao</i> appears 2-3 weeks later than in capital
8.3.1882-1902	<i>jingbao</i> printed as additional sheet, <i>fuzhang</i> 附張, to the <i>Shenbao</i> ; called <i>jingbao</i> , numbered consecutively throughout the year
1882	additional telegraphed <i>yuzhi</i> beginning in January ^a small-print <i>yuanmenchao</i> 轅門抄 small print <i>guanbao</i> 官報 <i>jingbao</i> appears 3 weeks later than in capital
1887-93	<i>jingbao</i> appears ca. 10 days later than in capital
1897	<i>jingbao</i> appears 2 weeks later than in capital
1902	<i>jingbao</i> appears 2 weeks later than in capital new section, <i>dianchuan gongmenchao</i> 電傳宮門抄 (telegraphed), after the editorial new section, <i>gongmenchao</i> 宮門抄 (ca. 10 days later than in capital), added inside the paper as a regular news item
1903-4	<i>jingbao fuzhang</i> receives a new layout, called " <i>jingbao quanlu</i> " 京報全錄, numbered by month
1903	<i>jingbao</i> appears 2-3 weeks later than in capital
1904 August-?	<i>jingbao fuzhang</i> receives a new layout, now called " <i>jingbao huilu</i> " 京報彙錄, numbered by month
7.2.1905	new layout for <i>Shenbao</i> , no influence on <i>jingbao</i> ; <i>dianchuan gongmenchao</i> now before the editorial (but after first-page advertisements)
1905	<i>jingbao</i> appears more than 8 weeks later than in capital
29.3.1907	<i>Shenbao</i> is given a new "flowery" layout, no influence on the <i>jingbao</i> use of different size characters in <i>gongmenchao</i> and <i>yuzhi</i> sections
1907	<i>jingbao</i> appears 8 weeks later than in capital introduction of sections such as <i>yaozhe</i> 要摺, <i>zoudu</i> 奏牘, reprinted documents
1911 ^b	discontinuation of the <i>jingbao fuzhang</i>
1912	<i>da zongtong mingling</i> 大總統命令 or just <i>mingling</i> , appear instead of the <i>jingbao</i> , placed directly after editorial <i>lunshuo</i> 論說

^aMy findings support the date of 16.1.1882 in Qin, *Shanghai jindai baokan shilun*, 26, but contradict the date of February in Xu and Xu, *Qingmo sishinian "Shenbao" shiliao*, 62, as well as Britton's (*The Chinese Periodical Press*, 68) contention that the *Shenbao* began receiving parts of the *jingbao* by telegraph in 1884. On the use of the telegraph to transmit news, see Vittinghoff, "Am Rande des Ruhms."

example, when it had to reprint two different editions of the *jingbao* or a very long edition—it printed some parts in small print.¹⁵² In March 1882 (with the beginning of the new Chinese year), the *Shenbao* began printing the *jingbao* as a supplement.¹⁵³

At the same time, the occupation of space by *jingbao* elements continued. Around the turn of the twentieth century, a separate *gongmenchao* section appeared in the news section; in addition, “telegraphed *gongmenchao*” 電傳宮門抄¹⁵⁴ and rescripted draft-memorials found their way into the news section.¹⁵⁵ A few years later, “telegraphed edicts” (*dianchuan yuzhi* 電傳諭旨)¹⁵⁶ and a number of new sections entitled “important state documents” (*yaozhe* 要摺) and “memorials and documents” (*zoudu* 奏牘) were introduced.¹⁵⁷ During this time, the full edition of the *jingbao* continued to be printed as a supplement. In content, the *xinbao* thus became more and more like a *jingbao*.

During the early years, the *Shenbao* apparently made use of the commercial *jingbao* editions. In June 1872, they appointed a “friend” 友人 to pick up the *jingbao* at a Beijing *baofang* every day and send the paper express to Shanghai in order to avoid the long delays of the regular postal system. The following notice, a “Respectful Explanation

152. E.g., *SB* 10.8.1877, 23.8.1877, 14.8.1878. The explanation for some of the extremely long versions of the *jingbao* reprinted in the *Shenbao* may be that the paper used editions by different *baofang* and supplemented what was missing in one by reprinting it from another. If so, the *Shenbao* may indeed have provided the most thorough coverage of *jingbao* contents possible.

153. See the notice to readers appearing in *SB* 8.3.1882 and discussed below on p. 217. On 7.3.1882, the *jingbao* appeared for the last time within the newspaper itself. The *Xinwenbao* was later to follow suit; see the notice in *XWB* 1.8.1897.

154. This practice can be found in the *Xinwenbao* in 1902, too (e.g., 2.8.1902). I am not sure which of the two papers first started it. In addition the *Xinwenbao* also has a section entitled “邸抄專電恭紀” (Reverential records of the court gazette specially telegraphed) (e.g., 3.8.1902). In 1903, a telegraphed *gongmenchao* was added directly after the editorial.

155. See, e.g., *SB* 25.12.1902, where a governor’s supplementary memorial (*pian* 片) is reprinted in the news section.

156. They first appear in *SB* 7.2.1905.

157. For examples of *yaozhe*, see *SB* 27.8.1907 and 1.8.1908; for *zoudu*, *SB* 6.8 and 10.8.1907. Such sections were also prevalent in the *Shibao* of 1909 (e.g., 13.12 and 15.12.1909). I have not found further evidence, however, that this paper reprinted the *jingbao* or provided it as a supplement.

by Our Company" ("Ben guan jin qi" 本館謹啓), appeared on the title page of the *Shenbao* for a number of days in June 1872:

An explanation: Our company now has a friend in the capital who is in charge of sending the *dibao* to Shanghai. This is faster than buying [the paper] at a shop in Shanghai. Yesterday we published the *jingbao* of the 8th day; today is already the 28th day, a gap of 20 days. Unavoidably it is already extremely late when one first gets to see the paper. So this Tuesday to Saturday we will, on alternating days, print two gazettes per day so that we do not get to a state of extreme delay.¹⁵⁸ Temporarily, we will print the list of market prices only once every other day in order not to usurp the space of the news. If any market prices are changed, we will then report this, not allowing for omissions.¹⁵⁹

In this notice, the *Shenbao* announced that it would privilege publication of a more complete and more timely record of the *jingbao* over the business news that its inaugural editorial had emphasized would be its most important offering. The new-style newspaper changes, explicitly, in favor of the court gazette and thus acknowledges, implicitly, the importance of the official gazette to its readers. By the same token, the modern newspaper applied modern criteria in publishing the *jingbao* and thus changed the nature of the *jingbao* in turn: by becoming a regular feature, the gazette had to be transmitted to the public as fast as possible, even if that meant employing a "friend" at the capital. Fittingly, the announcement of the new policy was followed, the day after its first appearance, by an editorial advocating the establishment of a unified national postal system, heaving heavy sighs over the tardiness of conventional communications, and praising the convenience and speed of foreign inventions such as the telegraph.¹⁶⁰

A few months later, the *Shenbao* took steps to ensure even quicker delivery of the *jingbao*. Whereas in the first few months it apparently relied on a single Beijing *baofang*, it now began receiving the editions

158. On 6.6.1872, the *jingbao* of lunar calendar of 4.12 and 4.13 was reprinted; on 7.6.1872, the *jingbao* of 4.14; on 8.6.1872, the *jingbao* of 4.15 and 4.16; and on 10.6 the *jingbao* of 4.17.

159. E.g., *SB* 6.6, 7.6, 8.6, and 10.6.1872.

160. "信局論" (On the postal system), *SB* 7.6.1872. A historian of postal communications in China observed that although the *xinju* did render an excellent service, they were essentially private for-profit commercial firms rather than a public service and thus "tended to operate only in large towns where they could expect a profitable business" (Cheng, *Postal Communication in China*, 49).

of several, again for reasons of efficiency and speed. The following untitled notice appeared on the front page for several days in August 1872.¹⁶¹ "Our company respectfully prints day by day the entire volume of the *jingbao* with edicts, court news, memorials, and lists. Moreover, it has the fastest gazette sent express from our capital. If our honorable readers please pay heed to this when they read and compare, that would be good."

Similarly, a year later, an advertising prose-poem praising the *Shenbao* publishing house claimed that the *Shenbao* provided the official paper, the *dichao*, much faster than other papers.¹⁶² A few years later there were signs that the *Shenbao* had created a need for speedy delivery of the *jingbao* among its readers. The establishment of the "Gonglu yuzhi" in the late 1870s, providing edicts earlier than in the reprint, catered to this need. Furthermore, the *Shenbao* evidently felt obliged to explain delays in publication of the *jingbao*. In March 1879 the following notice was published on the first page of the *Shenbao*:

To explain: Now that the ice has broken in the northern rivers, the steamships are moving at a fast speed. Two steamships, of the China Merchants' Steamship Company and of Ewo [Yihe, that is Jardine, Matheson & Co.], arrived on Saturday in Shanghai. They brought with them a great number of *dichao*. Our company will first respectfully report the edicts from before the seventh day. On the eighth day there were no edicts or proclamations.¹⁶³ It will be permitted that the edicts of after the ninth may wait. They will be reported tomorrow.¹⁶⁴

Although the *Shenbao* begged pardon for giving the *jingbao* more space, it was able to do so. Two days later, however, the paper announced ("本館告白" [Announcement by our company], *SB* 12.3.1879):

161. The first such notice I found appeared on 24.8.1872.

162. See "申報館賦" (A prose-poem on the *Shenbao* Publishing House), *SB* 15.2.1873, l. 12.

163. What I translate as "proclamations" 發抄 are memorials to which an imperial rescript has been issued in response. Such memorials were in fact considered as having the same authority as edicts. See Britton, *The Chinese Periodical Press*, 11-12; and Chien, *Das alte chinesische Nachrichtenwesen*, 60.

164. "本館告白" (Announcement by our company), *SB* 10.3.1879. I thank Andrea Janku for pointing me to this and the next article I discuss. For a similar notice in the *North China Herald*, see that paper's issue of 28.5.1902: in the "Imperial Decrees" section, we find the remark "by telegraph from Peking, specially translated for the 'North China daily news,' delayed in transmission."

Recently, because the northern rivers were frozen over, the steamships stopped sailing. Because the *jingbao* [had] to come overland to Shanghai, slight delays were unavoidable. Lately, the winter months have passed, spring is returning, and the steamships can sail as quickly to Tianjin as before. Yesterday, they brought more than a dozen numbers of the *jingbao*, just up to the middle of this month. We are of course prepared to print all the edicts therein to assist our readers, but we first considered [the matter] with our mind set on efficiency.

Faced with the dilemma of either retarding the process of reprinting by printing only one *jingbao* a day or of devoting too much of the paper to the *jingbao* if they were to print two a day, the editors decide to add a free supplement (*fuzhang* 附張) for several days. Indeed, special additional sheets for the *jingbao*, for whatever reason, were always added free of charge. In 1882, when the *Shenbao* decided to print the *jingbao* as a regular supplement, this policy remained in place. In an unmarked notice to readers (*SB* 8.3.1882), the *Shenbao* explained this new policy with a flattering sweetness that immediately betrays itself as advertising prose:

Lately the advertisements in the back of this paper have become comparatively great in number and have usurped the place for the news. . . . Therefore from today on, we will print the *jingbao* on a separate sheet and include it with the paper every day for complimentary reading. Indeed, we will charge the same price for the paper as before and not add even a penny. Even though this means more work [for us], we always hope to aid our venerated readers, and such lofty sentiments do not know regret.

The inclusion of the *jingbao* assured the *Shenbao* a regular readership. And by securing faster and cheaper *jingbao* coverage, the *Shenbao* aimed at making *jingbao* readers dependent on the *Shenbao*.¹⁶⁵ By modernizing the *jingbao* according to *xinbao* standards, the newspaper publishers thus began to compete directly with the traditional *baofang* and their regional outlets.

165. Hirth ("Chinesische Presse," 210) observes in the late 1880s that several foreign-style papers such as *Shenbao* and the Shanghai circuit intendant's organ *Xinbao* 新報 reprinted the *jingbao* "which is part of the secret to their success, considering their cheapness and the frugality of the Chinese. In this way the Chinese reader can save the cost for a subscription to the court gazette and even receives additional news."

Indeed, one could argue that the *Shenbao* itself began to function as a *baofang*, and in this respect it was imitated by many other foreign-style newspapers. This is evident from a proclamation published in the *Xinwenbao* in May 1893:¹⁶⁶ “The *jingbao* that our company prints is based on what a friend in the capital, who goes to all the boards and yamens, copies and collects day by day. Compared to all other companies [家, presumably both the *baofang* and other newspapers] it [i.e., our *jingbao*] is more extensive and, what’s more, faster.” The announcement continues that the *Xinwenbao*’s reprint-supplement could easily be removed from the paper and bound in handy “sleeve editions” 袖珍版 (or, as we would say, pocketbooks) and that back-up editions of earlier months could be found at the newspaper’s outlets.

This advertisement is a commercial declaration of war addressed not only to the other *xinbao* but to the traditional *baofang* themselves. In a “declaration of victory” a few years later, the *Xinwenbao* proclaimed that its pocketbook-size edition of the *jingbao* has “attracted general enjoyment.”¹⁶⁷ Not only had the *xinbao* gained the privilege once reserved to the *baofang* of sending someone to the Six Boards to copy down the announcements posted there, but they were also providing a more comprehensive and more practical version of the *jingbao* more quickly and free of charge. Thus, the *xinbao* had become a, perhaps even the, most important supplier of news about the court. They had become modern *baofang*, which had important consequences and caused crucial changes in the nature of the *jingbao*.

This is obvious in an editorial of 1882, in which the *Shenbao* contrasted its own edition of the *jingbao* with those of the superintendent of the post, the *titang*, which was often up to three or four months delayed, and with the so-called *Liangxiang News* 良鄉報, a private publication of the *jingbao*, which was much more expensive.¹⁶⁸ The *Shenbao* justified its own practice of having its deputy in the capital send the

166. “新印京報附贈告白” (Announcement on the new printing of the *jingbao* supplement), in *XWB* 7.5.1893 and the following days.

167. “京報附張啓” (Explanations to the *jingbao* supplement), *XWB* 1.8.1897.

168. “論京報貴速不貴遲” (On the value of fast and undelayed delivery of the *jingbao*), *SB* 4.3.1882. For a lower figure of “forty or fifty and sometimes even sixty, days in reaching Canton,” see “Peking Gazette,” 506. See Yin Yungang, “Lun Mingdai dibao,” 117, for time figures for different areas throughout China during the Ming. For the *Liangxiang bao* which was already famous in the 1840s, see also note 38 to this chapter.

memorials from the daily *jingbao* by telegraph, arguing that this was not done simply to imitate foreign practice—indeed both the *titang* and the *Liangxiang* publishers had taken to using (foreign) steamships for a speedier transmission of the *jingbao*—and that there was no need to worry that the telegraph would garble the Chinese characters. Moreover, it was simply unfair that those living in the capital should be allowed to receive edicts as soon as they are proclaimed, while those living far away from the capital had to wait. With a memorable sentence “As for the words of the sages, they are public and not private, and the concerns of a nation are also public and not private” 夫聖人之言公而無私。國家之事公而無私, the editorialist claims that the *xinbao* alone have accomplished what the sages had always expected of the court gazette since time immemorial. This evocation, on the pages of the foreign-style newspaper, of a traditional philosophical presumption that, during the secretive Qing,¹⁶⁹ had little actual backing, had consequences: on the pages of the *xinbao*, the state went public. No longer was the official press primarily a “loudspeaker of the state”,¹⁷⁰ with the modern-style papers, it became a loudspeaker to the state as well.

FROM JINGBAO TO XINBAO:

CHALLENGING THE COURT?

By this act of modernization, the court lost some of its power over its most authoritative voice. The emphasis on speed, for example, threatened some dusty court regulations: in the early eighteenth century, the Qianlong emperor had decreed “a ten-day hiatus” between the transmission of confidential documents to the boards and their publi-

169. The *Shenbao* editorialist also mentioned the disadvantages of court letters 廷寄, which were sometimes used instead of edicts: they were transmitted orally to an official, who would write them down, and they were never printed in the *jingbao* since they operated within the palace memorial system rather than the routine memorial system (cf. Bartlett, *Monarchs and Ministers*, 103-4). On secrecy in the Qing, see further Silas Wu, “Memorial Systems”; Fincher, “Sinology, Pekingology”; and the short discussion on the closure of the *yanlu* 言路, the “road of speech,” in the Introduction, which draws on the elaborate work in Janku, “Nur leere Reden.” For a contemporary view, see E. H. P. Parker, “The ‘Peking Gazette,’” 73.

170. For this expression, see Engwall, *Newspapers as Organizations*, 79.

cation in the gazette.¹⁷¹ Once more, at the end of the Qing, an edict of 1908 explicitly forbade “premature publication of edicts and proclamations.”¹⁷² It is unclear whether the Chinese court was here calling the *baofang* to order and reacting to their increasing use of the telegraph in transmitting news, thus imitating *xinbao* usage. The *baofang* practice of telegraphing edicts had caused a stir in the government when a secret document was leaked in 1902,¹⁷³ but even after this event, there are references to telegraphed memorials 電奏 in some of the *jingbao* editions (e.g., the reprint in *SB* 28.8.1904). The commercial papers who had been using telegraphed edicts since the 1880s, had been aware of the audacity of their act—witness the defensive editorial that appeared in the *Shenbao* in response to an attack by the Shanghai circuit intendant’s paper *Xinbao* 新報, only a few weeks after the introduction of the first telegraphed edicts (*SB* 4.3.1882).¹⁷⁴ The editorialist explained in detail that no one need worry about mistaken transmissions, that the system was quite sophisticated, and that the paper would only transmit those edicts and memorials released for publication (not secret court letters). But it is quite obvious that for the new-style paper, efficiency counted for more than any court rule.

This is not to say that the commercial papers risked offending the government by their treatment of the *jingbao* reprint. In November 1873, the court had issued an edict containing the following set of rules:

1. All edicts are to be published (especially edicts on the remission of taxes and the like).
2. Every issue of the *jingbao* has to have at least ten pages; shorter editions are a sign that matters are being kept from the public and that is not to be allowed. Each issue has to mention how many documents

171. For the ten-day hiatus, see Ocko, “The British Museum’s *Peking Gazette*,” 44; and Memorandum 14.4.1874 in FO 233/58, 18. The original rule, proclaimed under Qianlong’s predecessor, the Yongzheng emperor, had specified only five days (Bartlett, *Monarchs and Ministers*, 44).

172. The edict of March 1908 is cited in “Chinese Journalism and the Government,” *NCH* 25.9.1909.

173. See the editorial in *SB* 31.8.1902. Quite obviously, the *jingbao* was reacting to the needs of the time: a *jingbao* memorial by Li Hongzhang already discusses the importance of the telegraph (*SB* 1.5.1892).

174. For a discussion, see the concluding paragraphs in Virtinghoff, “Am Rande des Ruhms,” chap. 4.

are not being published. Only very long documents can be summarized and then continued the next day.

3. There is to be a complete list of *gongmenchao*.

4. Memorials and reports have to be printed in their entirety, not split into several parts and printed over several days.¹⁷⁵

There is no evidence that this edict was reacting to the *Shenbao* reprints of the *jingbao* or to traditional *baofang* practices, but the *Shenbao* did commit (and often later corrected) some of the faults criticized here. Edicts, for example, were not often printed, especially not in the early years.¹⁷⁶ However, the creation of a special section devoted to edicts and the telegraphed edicts published in later years, in addition to the edicts contained in the *jingbao* reprint, appear to satisfy the court's demands rather well.¹⁷⁷ As Table 3.3 shows, in terms of size, the *Shenbao* reprint corresponded with some of the *baofang* editions in the early years. Accordingly, if the court was complaining about the *baofang* and their restricted scope of reporting, the *Shenbao* was guilty of this offense too. Nevertheless—and in accordance with the rules established by the government—the *jingbao* reprint in the *Shenbao* may have superseded *baofang* editions in later years (probably because the *Shenbao* was publishing the news drawn from several *baofang*).

On the other hand, the practice of not presenting whole documents in one issue but of splitting them between consecutive issues can be

175. For the Chinese text and a translation of the edict, see Memorandum 14.4.1874 in FO 233/58, 18. See also Chien, *Das alte chinesische Nachrichtenwesen*, 59–60.

176. For example, the *Shenbao* in May–July 1872 reprinted one edict on 22.6.1872, one on 1.7.1872, four on 22.7.1872, one on 16.8.1872, and two on 28.8.1872. It may be that the early 1870s were a time of few edicts; but by the mid-1870s the number of recorded edicts grew considerably (in *SB* 12.8.1878, for example, the *jingbao* consists almost entirely of edicts). The court's guidelines indicate that the *baofang* (and thus also the *Shenbao*) may have stinted on publishing edicts in the early 1870s. A comparison I undertook of the *jingchao* manuscript editions of 1823–24 in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris (Chinois 2217ff) showed that the number of edicts selected for publication in the *jingchao* was much greater.

177. It appears that cuts may also have been made in the *gongmenchao* section, which is rather short at times in comparison with other editions of the *jingbao* studied for comparison. However, as shown above, the *Shenbao* made up for this fault somewhat in later years by devoting several different sections to the *gongmenchao*.

Table 3.3
Number of Characters in Different *Jingbao* Editions and Reprints

Edition	Columns	Characters × pages	Number of characters in an issue
Ms edition in British Library, 1872	6	14 × 30	2,520
<i>Juxing</i> , 1872-82	8-11	20-25 × 10-12	1,600-3,000
<i>Jubeng</i> , 1872-82	6-7	20-25 × 10	1,400-1,750
<i>Shenbao</i> reprint, 1872	36	40 × 1	1,440
<i>Shenbao</i> reprint, 1882	52	56 × 1	2,912
<i>Shenbao</i> reprint, supplement 1892	30	52 × 2-4	3,120
<i>Shenbao</i> reprint, supplement 1902	50	56	2,800
<i>Shenbao</i> reprint, supplement 1905-7	48	51	2,448
<i>Xinwenbao</i> reprint, supplement 1893	36	30 × 3	3,150
<i>Xinwenbao</i> reprint, supplement 1898	30	32 × 2-3	1,920-2,880
<i>Xinwenbao</i> reprint, supplement 1903	48	55	2,640

found in several of the early *Shenbao* reprints. The truncation of a document would be signaled with a stock phrase such as “this text is not yet finished” 此本未完¹⁷⁸; the resumption of the text the next day would then be marked with “continuation of the *jingbao*” 京報接錄, a practice that did not stop after the court rules were promulgated.¹⁷⁹ Or if the *jingbao* was split into two, a *fulu* 補錄, a complimentary edition, might be provided the next day.¹⁸⁰ Whenever this happened, the reprint was called simply the *jingbao* 京報 and not the *jingbao quanlu* 京報全錄 (complete record) as usual, and this distinc-

178. Another such stock phrase that appears in the *Shenbao* in later years is “this draft is incomplete” 此稿未完. The document is then resumed in mid-sentence the next day (see, e.g., *SB* 7-8.5.1892).

179. E.g., *SB* 13-14.8.1878.

180. E.g., *SB* 15-16.8.1872 or 18-19.8.1878.

tion was meticulously observed.¹⁸¹ As far as I could ascertain, the *Shenbao* did not give a record of the documents it left unpublished, however.

Thus, although the *xinbao* was applying new standards to the re-printing of the *jingbao*, it was obviously also willing to compromise and observe the rules prescribed by the court. And yet, the very act of inclusion changed the authoritative message. The fact that an edict or another official document ending with the imperial approval *qin ci* ("this has been respectfully received [from His Majesty]") could be substituted for an editorial, speaks for itself. The *xinbao*, in its most deliberative section, usurped the official voice. Editorials that considered matters habitually discussed in the *jingbao* might begin "If things were done according to my ideas" (SB 27.10.1877) or "How can we get the high provincial authorities to change their minds?" (SB 26.10.1877). They thus assumed the posture and voice of authority,¹⁸² talking back, without being asked, to the government on questions that had previously been monopolized by the court.¹⁸³ Even if editorials agreed with the court—which they often did—by what right did they do so?¹⁸⁴

On the pages of the *xinbao* the *jingbao* message became one among many other messages. This served both to empower those other messages and to trivialize the venerable *jingbao*. It was now possible to start controversies with imperial edicts. The text of an edict might not

181. Between 1882 and 1902, the supplement was simply called *jingbao* and not *quanlu*. It remains unclear whether the reversion, in 1904, to *jingbao quanlu* implies that the paper was following court orders.

182. For a similar phenomenon in early nineteenth-century British journalism, see Irwin, *Propaganda and the News*, 29, who reports that the efforts of John Walter II and Thomas Barnes managed to "make a leader in the [London] *Times* comparable with an address from the throne."

183. Cf. Janku, "Der Leitartikel der *Shenbao*," 49: "These texts become disengaged from their individual authors, they appear as genuine praise, criticisms and suggestions directed to 'those responsible.' They are an unofficial form of the official memorial."

184. That this kind of behavior was neither expected nor deemed acceptable by the court can be illustrated by its response in 1903 to the request of students that the education authorities "convey to the Throne their opposition to the Seven Demands. Their request was turned down, with the reminder that discussing national policy was not within the competence of the student community" (Harrell, *Sowing the Seeds of Change*, 137).

電傳宮門抄

十三日 召見軍機大臣及禮王
同日奉 上諭朕欽奉 慈禧端佑康頤昭豫莊誠壽恭欽獻崇熙皇
太后懿旨 大理院少卿劉若曾等奏 奏二麥歉收夏秋之際又復山水
齊一摺本年春間天氣亢旱近畿一帶區皆成巨浸小民蕩析離
暴漲河決口通州香河十數州縣卑下之區皆成巨浸小民蕩析離
居朝廷實深慘念着賞給帑銀四萬兩由度支部給發交直隸總督
天府尹遴選員紳分給散放務使實惠及民毋任一夫失所各省解
年留存備用經費銀兩著度支部撥支存儲生息遵照成案專備賑
到此項銀兩著由度支部撥支存儲生息遵照成案專備賑
准任意挪用該衙門知道欽此

同日奉 上諭朕欽奉 慈禧端佑康頤昭豫莊誠壽恭欽獻崇熙皇
太后懿旨農工商部奏 南洋華僑商會成立請派員
考查獎勵 一摺南洋各埠華僑居多類以商業自謀生聚現在
商會漸次成立朝廷時深注意甚為嘉許 著派楊士琦前往
各該埠考查情形剴切宣布德意優加撫慰如有 慨集巨資
回國振興大宗商務者除從優予以爵賞外定
飭地方官妥為保護以重實業而惠僑民欽此

宮門抄

七月初五日經內閣奏 派王大臣驗看初六日覆奉 旨一品廕平世德著以文職用三
品廕生陳頌瑛著內用協理遠瀛濱漢監察御史員缺著石鏡漢補授理藩部唐古忒學軍

Fig. 3.3 Boldprint emphasis in the *jingbao* reprint
(*Xinwenbao* 22.8.1907)

be cited verbatim;¹⁸⁵ it might contain printing errors;¹⁸⁶ its message could be manipulated by emphasizing certain characters with bold type (see Fig. 3.3);¹⁸⁷ it could be reprinted in a supplement right next to an advertisement;¹⁸⁸ or it could be reduced to just another news item,

185. This happens in the editorial in *SB* 12.9.1898, discussed in Janku, "Der Leitartikel der *Shenbao*," 179.

186. This was attacked in an article of the Shanghai circuit intendant, *Yibao*: "論申報改上諭悖謬" (On *Shenbao*'s heresy in changing edicts), *Yibao* 20.11.1875.

187. I have found evidence for this practice (which also occurs in the *Xinwenbao*) in the *Shenbao* only in 1907. It remains to be investigated which newspaper started the practice and when precisely it originated.

188. Similar juxtapositions can be observed in the reprint of *SB* 8.7.1872 and in an original copy of the *Shenbao* of November/December 1885 in Paris (Biblio-

and, by being positioned at the back of the paper, ranked lower in value than news about Shanghai positioned ahead of it.¹⁸⁹

It remains to be investigated if these acts of trivialization and commercialization had a tangible democratizing effect. As noted above, the *jingbao* itself frequently printed stories about judicial cases, as well as about scandals and remonstrances, that were often critical of high officials including the emperor and his entourage. Moreover, the practice of printing edicts before the memorials they deal with—apart from introducing anticipation as a narrative technique to the official newspaper (the result is introduced before even allowing the story to unravel)—sometimes gave the memorialist the crucial final word, which is often remembered best. This practice—intended to boost imperial authority—could turn out to be detrimental to it. In an 1872 edict, for example, the empresses dowager voiced their “utter amazement” at the memorialist’s remonstrance (*NCH* 6.7.1872). In their view, they had always consciously fulfilled their duty, even when terribly ill. The harshly critical memorial that caused this response appeared a week later, and at the end, the stock phrase “the imperial pleasure regarding the above has already been recorded” is used (*NCH* 13.7.1872). This remark must appear ironic to the reader in view of the vigorous critique in the memorial and the angry response by the empresses recorded earlier. Even worse, what would the reader who, by chance, had not seen the edict, think about the empresses? The court organ itself, by its use of authoritative language and spatial prescriptions, at times defeated its own authority and created a critical space without intending it.¹⁹⁰ Since such critical polyphony was already prevalent in the *jingbao*, the *Shenbao*’s “virtual memorializing”¹⁹¹ may not have been all that innovative.

thèque Nationale, Chin. 9128), which includes some of these supplements often lost in other editions.

189. See the discussion of “主客問答” (Dialogue between host and guest), *SB* 28.1.1875 below.

190. Another orthodox political endeavor that actually made possible exchanges of “public opinion” were the meetings of candidates for the triennial examinations, who arrived in the capital for preparation months before the examinations (Durand, *Lettrés et pouvoirs*, 104).

191. Janku (“Der Leitartikel der *Shenbao*,” 50) calls editorials on edicts “virtual memorials” (virtuelle Throneingabe).

Moreover, editorial criticism of documents in the *jingbao* was rather tame. In a study of editorials from the 100 Days Reform, Andrea Janku has shown that during this period editorials on edicts and other official pronouncements became increasingly common.¹⁹² But there are many earlier examples of such editorials. Many of the earlier texts confirm Janku's findings for the 1898 editorials: they tend to duplicate the authoritative language and ritual obeisances to the emperor so peculiar to documentary writing.¹⁹³ Either they stress the importance and eulogize the clairvoyance of an official pronouncement and blame officials for not acting in accordance with it, or they praise the points of critique made in an official pronouncement, taking those criticisms slightly further.¹⁹⁴

This is true for editorials on edicts after 1898, as well. One example, from 1902,¹⁹⁵ does not take the edict to task directly but criticizes it in a roundabout way. It praises the court for sending a military force to those areas in the north to which Boxerism has returned (ll. 12–13) but points out that this is not a real solution—the problem has to be dealt with at its roots not just at the tips, which are momentarily afire

192. Janku, "Der Leitartikel der *Shenbao*," 76. Janku is right in conjecturing that the number of editorials on edicts may have increased in the reform months in 1898, but such editorials appear quite frequently throughout the period surveyed here. Examples include *SB* 24.8.1877, 10.9.1877, 27.9.1877, 12.9.1882, 30.9.1882, 29.10.1887, and 28.10.1892 (whose title omits the spaces of respect before 上諭 *shangyu* (edict)).

193. Janku, "Der Leitartikel der *Shenbao*," 75.

194. See, e.g., "論山西勸辦賑" (Shanxi calling upon the people to manage relief measures), *SB* 24.8.1877, dealing with famine relief. The editorial emphasizes that the edict—which had been announced the day before in the *gongmenchao*—stressed the importance of treating China's people properly, but that the ministers often tended to subvert this message in their pursuit of personal profit. "讀派剿李逆 上諭恭誌" (Reverently recorded upon reading the edict on the prosecution of rebel Li), *SB* 25.12.1878, reacts to an edict published in a Hong Kong newspaper, which shows once more that the *Shenbao* did not provide news and discussions only within a closed system. Instead, it operated within an open system full of different newspapers and *baofang*. The editorial recognizes that the edict has grasped the critical situation but charges that the officials are too slow in their reactions, thus risking that more and more rebels will threaten the country. For similar editorials on edicts in the *Xinwenbao*, see, e.g., *XWB* 4.8.1898.

195. "讀三月二十七日上諭謹書於後" (Respectfully written after reading the edict of [lunar] third month, twenty-seventh day), *SB* 7.5.1902. See also *SB* 11.9.1902, 16.9.1902, 8.10.1902, 22.10.1902, 12.8.1907, and 6.8.1908.

(ll. 13-14). Thus, the author managed to compliment and criticize at the same time, to applaud the edict as a sign that a cure was known and yet to blame the reckless officials who were not using this method to save the country. The author juxtaposed the present situation with that of the golden age in the past, when people lived, in the hackneyed phrase, happily and peacefully (*xixi ran baobao ran* 熙熙然皞皞然).¹⁹⁶

A similar case is an editorial of a few weeks later. Its title indicates that its purpose is to “comment on” rather than criticize an edict.¹⁹⁷ The editorialist acknowledged that the examinations were a good system for selecting officials but bewailed that the world of officialdom had deteriorated, and name and reality (*ming shi* 名實) no longer coincided. If nothing changes, he warned, the country will soon be weakened and the people suffer. Once more, criticism is couched in polite, even congratulatory terms.

Most other *jingbao* editorials of 1902 do not digress from this general pattern. Some of them might appear daring because they discuss edicts published on the same page but, significantly, right *after* the editorial, thus radically altering the prescribed ritual order: the edict is upstaged by its response. The reader of the editorial may read the edict through the editorialist’s eyes.¹⁹⁸ This bias can work both ways, however: it can serve to shed critical light on the edict or it may reinforce it.

One example of reinforcement is an editorial discussing an edict issued by the Empress Dowager Cixi 慈禧太后 (1835-1908), the powerful woman who had de facto ruled China since the early 1860s. The edict granted a large sum of money to provide medical services for the poor in Beijing.¹⁹⁹ It was a response to a reprimand from a censor decrying the health situation in the capital. In the *jingbao*, the censor’s

196. For the origins of this expression, see the discussion of “共和國大總統履任祝詞” (Congratulatory wishes on the president of the Republic’s assumption of office), *SB* 1.1.1912, in Chapter 2, pp. 118-23, esp. p. 119.

197. “謹註四月五日 上諭後” (Respectful comments after the edict of the [lunar] fourth month, fifth day), *SB* 24.5.1902.

198. The situation was again reversed later. See, e.g., *SB* 29.8.1908: due to the change in layout in February 1907, the edict was now regularly printed right before its discussion.

199. “讀本月十九日 上諭謹書於後” (Respectfully written after reading the edict of [lunar] this month, nineteenth day), *SB* 26.6.1902. For a reference to the censor’s memorial, see *NCH* 2.7.1902.

attack was reported long after the edict, and thus the imperial benevolence appeared to result from the throne's own concern for the people's welfare. The editorialist in the *Shenbao* could have anticipated some of the censor's arguments but he does not do so, to the contrary. Quoting the *Rites of Zhou*, he stated that the ancients understood the relationship between the health of the individual citizen and the health of a country and insinuated that this knowledge has been long lost (ll. 12-13). He argued that according to ancient wisdom, every government must pay particular attention to the health of the citizenry and cited the healthcare system in Europe: everybody there, rich or poor, can enter a hospital when sick. The editorialist drew an analogy between the successful government of the Zhou and the enlightened methods of Europe ("On the one hand, one can reign in the manner of the Golden Age of the Zhou; on the other, one can imitate the good methods of Europe" 上以治周代之休風, 下以仿歐洲之良法, ll. 14-15). Finally he praised Cixi's generosity as a first step on the way to this perfection and called for a more comprehensive and national application of her laudable efforts, finally equating her to one of those ideal rulers who "consider all men and things their brothers, equal to themselves" 民胞物與, a reference to Zhang Zai's "Western Inscription" (l. 22).²⁰⁰ The message of the edict is embedded in a broader culturally sedimented context that creates a sympathetic atmosphere. Here, the reversed reading order supports a positive interpretation of the edict.

A week or so later, another editorial precedes an edict proclaiming a number of tax reductions.²⁰¹ The editorial emphasizes that this is a sign of the court's sympathy for the people and praises the action. Nevertheless, taxes are still too high, and the place to start saving money is the court itself. Indeed court and people must be of one heart and mind 上下一心, 君民一體 (l. 17), and accordingly, cutting back on the splendor at court would be the best way to reduce the people's tax load permanently. This introduction to the edict relativizes the "generosity" of the court in offering tax reductions and throws a critical light on the usefulness of such a measure while sug-

200. For this expression, see "共和國大總統履任祝詞," *SB* 1.1.1912, discussed in Chapter 2, pp. 118-23, esp. p. 122.

201. "讀五月二十五日 上諭謹書於後" (Respectfully written after reading the edict of [lunar] fifth month, twenty-fifth day), *SB* 2.7.1902.

gesting further action in a way no memorial, published days or weeks later as it would be in the *jingbao*, ever could. Even though the editorial is again only mildly critical, the authority of the imperial decree is changed as the editorial evaluates it. The placement of the editorial before the edict ensured that it had first place in the reader's mind.

Although the alternative interpretations of official matters offered in the editorials were not particularly more outspoken or radical than the type of critical interpretations found on the pages of the *jingbao*, the *Shenbao* was more than just another, tame *jingbao*. This had less to do with its contents than with readers' perception of it, however. Even though few editorials openly attacked and indeed many supported government policy,²⁰² there is evidence that the mere inclusion of the *jingbao* within the *xinbao* changed the gazette's status in the eyes of a number of players in the Chinese public sphere. Some reactions to the reprinting of the *jingbao* show that the gazette's symbolic language of power, however uncritically it was being treated, did acquire a new meaning within the pages of the foreign-style newspaper. In Janku's apt formulation, when "the public usurps the once elitist tool of the memorial, it is by the same act changed. The transplantation of the form is equivalent to a modification of its content."²⁰³ By reprinting the court gazette, the new medium was *perceived* to have acquired the language of power once reserved to the government. An editorial of 1875 provides evidence for this view.²⁰⁴

A visitor asked me: "Your newspaper, since its establishment three years ago, has always recorded the *jingbao*. You always carried it among all the other news items. Now the burial ceremonies for the [Tongzhi, r. 1862–75] Emperor are arranged to appear on the first page of the paper. Moreover, you switched to the use of blue-colored printing [used for all official documents concerned with the death of an emperor]. What for? If you were to say that it is your intention to respect the ruler, [then], in order to sufficiently show your honorable company's esteem [for the court], the *jingbao* ought to be on the first page of the newspaper. I heard that on several occasions people brought up this matter with your honorable

202. Janku, "Der Leitartikel der *Shenbao*," 79. For an exceptionally critical editorial on an edict, which calls for action in the constitutional debate, see *XWB* 29.8.1908.

203. Janku, "Der Leitartikel der *Shenbao*," 109.

204. "主客問答," *SB* 28.1.1875.

company, but your honorable company was not willing to change. Now if you are careless like this, there should definitely be some reason behind it, and I would like you to illuminate me by telling me about it.”

In the form of the inquiring interlocutor, the editorialist introduces a critical observer of *xinbao* practice who is sensitive not only to the trivialization of the *jingbao*, since it is treated as just another news item, but to its possible debasement, since it is never printed on the front page. Inadvertently, the foreign-style newspaper is, through the arguments voiced by the interlocutor, integrated into a Chinese print culture in which it is natural to use blue ink for mourning and in which the “seat of honor” is the first page. The editorialist responds:

I said: “The reason for this is very simple and obvious. Even though this company was established by foreigners, all its writers are Chinese. Thus, this paper is produced by Chinese and foreigners together. How would we not know that in order to be respectful to our ruler we ought to put the *jingbao* first? However, our newspaper is called the *Shen[bao]*, i.e., the newspaper of Shanghai. Obviously, what it ought to emphasize are the news of Shanghai. Therefore, when this paper was newly established and we discussed the arrangements of the sheets, some said that the *jingbao* should be situated further back, for if we instead placed the *jingbao* on the first page, what would this paper be, the *jingbao* or the *Shenbao*? . . . This situation is not too comparable to that of the *Xunbuan ribao* 循環日報 [Universal circulating herald], which could in fact put the *jingbao* in the first place, for its name is just *Xunbuan* [circulating]. It is not named after a place.²⁰⁵

“Now as far as the burial of the Emperor was concerned, certainly, this was the most important matter in China [at that moment], and in fact it was the most important piece of news in Shanghai. Therefore, we would not dare not to put it at the front of the newspaper. If we printed in blue ink for three days, this was again to honor the old Chinese system. . . . We [also] followed [the practice of] Western countries by lowering the flags for reasons of mourning. The matter was thus carried out in accordance with Chinese and foreign ritual.

205. The *Xunbuan ribao* usually printed the *jingbao* on its front page, but not necessarily as the first news item. It appears to have printed some full versions of the *jingbao*; however, most of the extracts were short selections entitled “選錄京報” (Selected records from the *jingbao*) (see *XHRB* 2.3.1876, Bibliothèque Nationale, Chin. 9126; see also the *Xianggang Zhongwai xinbao*, 11.4.1876, Bibliothèque Nationale, Chin. 9129).

“Moreover, ever since our company started this undertaking, we have always intended to be reverential toward China and to safeguard China. Even though at times there may have been discussions on areas in which China is not as good as the foreign countries, yet we only dared talk about it when China had long known that it was insufficient and was already hoping to use foreign methods. Our mind is set only on the intention to strengthen China by using foreign methods.” (ll. 1-11)

Despite a rather practical and rational reason for not printing the *jingbao* on the first page, the editorialist was plainly on the defensive, for what follows is an extremely long list of arguments elaborating several situations in which the “foreign” *Shenbao* showed exemplary and patriotic “Chinese” behavior (ll. 11-19). Quite clearly, the foreign-style and Western-managed newspaper was reacting to outsiders’ perceptions of it and wished to portray itself in the best possible light, an assumption corroborated by the fact that a few weeks later, the paper printed a reader’s letter in its defense, which explicitly stated that it was correct to print the editorial first, then the news, and finally the *jingbao*.²⁰⁶ The ending of the article, too, is further evidence for its defensive mood:

When it comes to publishing a newspaper, there are those who consider it good . . . and those who think it bad. . . . Confucius said: “Those who want to know me can do so through the *Spring and Autumn Annals* alone; those who want to wrong me can do so through the *Spring and Autumn Annals* alone.”²⁰⁷ As for Confucius, he was an accomplished sage and the *Spring and Autumn Annals* is a holy book. And yet these words. . . , do they not apply even more to this unimportant new-style paper, *xinbao* 區區新報? (ll. 21-23)

This editorial makes use of some of the typical tools for co-opting symbolic power. The quotation from the Confucian Classics, the use of a Chinese interlocutor, the detailed knowledge and application of ritual practices such as printing in blue in case of important deaths, the application of deprecatory language to the self, the “unimportant newspaper,” are elements of Chinese authoritative or, as Janku puts it, ritual language. The editorial builds in a huge crescendo to the climax,

206. “與申報館論申報紙格式鄙見” (My unworthy views in talking with the *Shenbao* company on the formal arrangements of the *Shenbao*), *SB* 13.3.1875.

207. This statement is attributed to Confucius in *Mencius* 3B9, trans. D. C. Lau, 114-18. I thank Joachim Gentz for a good hint in the right direction.

the equation of the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, Confucius' "holy book" (*shenjing* 聖經), with the foreign-style newspaper. It is a daring equation and implies that the teachings of this foreign medium not only are as important as the teachings of Confucius (a point raised in the preceding chapter) but are in similar fashion neglected in times of bad government.

And yet, the article is far from a self-confident statement of authority: this is evident in implicit attacks on other newspapers such as the *Xunhuan ribao*, in the unending examples of the *Shenbao*'s virtue in safeguarding China, and in the emotional references, not cited *in extenso* here, to grieving employees, the editorialist's hope that the topic need not be addressed again, the angry condemnation of all those who consider the paper a running dog of imperialism and who are thus prejudiced (l. 21), and finally the concluding assertion, typically phrased as a rhetorical question, that this "unimportant new-style paper" appeared, in many ways, comparable to Confucian holy writ.

By the end of the article, the reader understands that this last sentence is a statement of fact. The article presents its case with all the available weapons of rhetoric—the appeal to logic in the elaborate explanation of why the name of the paper makes it impossible to place the *jingbao* on the first page; the use of dialogue to create a personal relationship between the author and the implied reader; and finally the use of emotional outbreaks to gain the reader's sympathy. The deployment of this elaborate array of rhetorical devices betrays the newspaper's perception that it must counter the view that the inclusion of the *jingbao* changed its nature significantly. Although the *xinbao* is not willing to surrender all its autonomy when it comes to the *jingbao*—what is in the *jingbao* is not ipso facto more important than news on Shanghai—it also emphasizes that certain news about or from the emperor may indeed be important for Shanghai. The editorialist belabors this point in an attempt to prove his loyalty to China and the Chinese court. The overblown reaction of the editorial and recurring references to the question in later articles suggest that criticism of the *Shenbao* and its treatment of the *jingbao* existed.

This statement is based, of course, on the assumption that the court was not entirely oblivious to the new-style papers flourishing in Shanghai and elsewhere, and indeed it was not. Nevertheless, as late as 1902, a news report in the *Xinwenbao* announced that they "have been informed that the Empress Dowager in recent days has read a little in

all different kinds of newspapers,"²⁰⁸ a piece of information astonishing enough to merit publication on the second page of the paper. In 1909, the *North China Herald* insinuated that "the Court knew practically nothing about" newspapers in the Treaty Ports.²⁰⁹ The evidence provided in studies by Rudolf G. Wagner, Natascha Vittinghoff, Andrea Janku, and Madeleine Yue Dong shows convincingly that local officials and the court not only knew something about the newspapers but took them so seriously that they even subscribed to them.²¹⁰ Even if, as in the Yang Naiwu 楊乃武 (1844–90) case of 1876, for example—the alleged abduction of a "naive" merchant's daughter by a famous opera singer—officials would not openly admit "in their official documents that they were influenced by the newspaper,"²¹¹ it is quite evident that the Zhejiang provincial government must have read the *Shenbao*, for it was clearly reacting to what it considered the pressure created by the lively discussion of the case in that paper, especially through readers' letters.²¹² Indeed, the provincial government even attempted to interfere with its publication and thus created the first and one of the most serious crises in *Shenbao's* publication history.²¹³ Significantly, however, China's "newspapers in the port cities encountered some difficulties with the foreign concession authorities and with local Chinese officials, but for long they had no difficulties with the imperial court. On the contrary, they received some passive encouragement."²¹⁴

208. *XWB* 20.8.1902.

209. "Chinese Journalism and the Government," *NCH* 25.9.1909.

210. On this point, see the Introduction, pp. 33–36. See also *Shenbao shi bianxiezhu*, "Chuangban chuqi di *Shenbao*," 140; and E. H. P. Parker, "The 'Peking Gazette,'" 74.

211. Dong, "Communities and Communication," 108. For an elaborate discussion of the case and its significance for the *Shenbao*, see Vittinghoff, "Am Rande des Ruhms," chap. 7.

212. The *Shenbao* complained ("書初九日本報錄楊乃武案諸件後" [Written after the publication in our paper of the ninth day, lunar, of documents concerning the Yang Naiwu case], *SB* 5.2.1876) that whenever it interfered even a little with official business, the Zhejiang government was sure to give them trouble. They concluded that this was proof that the officials must read the paper. See also Dong, "Communities and Communication," 98.

213. The next crisis in the late 1870s is discussed in Wagner, "The *Shenbao* in Crisis." Another crisis occurred in 1882, when the circuit intendant threatened to close the *Shenbao* for touching on political questions (Elvin, "The Mixed Court," 144).

214. Britton, *The Chinese Periodical Press*, 102.

The court and local rulers treated both foreign and foreign-style newspapers as authoritative sources and important channels of information.²¹⁵ Indeed, in 1879, the *North China Herald* argued that when the *Shenbao* was first founded, “many officials, from the fact of its articles presuming to discuss questions of administration, affected to despise the organ and refused to subscribe.” However, “gradually, they found their acts argued by men, their equals in culture and intelligence, and in such a way as rendered it at least advisable to read.”²¹⁶ The court and officials were apparently willing—if grumblingly—to profit from the fruits of modernization and accept the subversion of their own official proclamations. By the late 1870s, the *jingbao* would occasionally print documents that cited statements in the *Shenbao* as evidence or that took up on subject matter formerly discussed in the *Shenbao*.²¹⁷ Moreover, some officials themselves published on the pages of newspapers such as the *Shenbao*.²¹⁸ Thus they conceded that the voice of these papers was powerful enough to conduct a dialogue with the highest authorities.

It is clear that officials and the court were reacting to the newspaper as a powerful institution, and that in their perception the new

215. Although memorials and court letters in the *Chouban yiwu shimo* documents on handling barbarian affairs sometimes attach quotations or translations from foreign or foreign-style newspapers (e.g., 上海洋館新聞紙 “newspapers from the Shanghai foreign companies”; 英法兩國新聞紙 “newspapers from England and France”), they do not problematize the existence of such newspapers (see *Chouban Yiwu shimo*, 5: 1720, 1721–22, 1841, 1843, 1847; 6: 1910). Similarly, other official documents dealing with foreign newspapers decry the negative image China receives in their reporting but do not question the existence of newspapers per se (e.g., *Huangchao xu'ai*, 8: 5923–24, 5966–69, 6011–13, 6015–17).

216. Indeed, from time to time, according to this article, “Perusal of the *Shen-pao* gave satisfaction in Peking”; see “Steamers and Newspapers in China,” *NCH* 31.1.1879. Evidence for this fact can be found in a document reprinted in *Huangchao xu'ai wenpian*, 8: 5926–28, which gives an accurate account of the development of foreign-style newspapers in China and advises the court to pay heed to their development.

217. Unfortunately, I have not been able to locate specific references in the *jingbao* I studied that would support this statement. According to “Steamers and Newspapers in China,” *NCH* 31.1.1879, however, the *jingbao* of the fourth day of the eleventh month stated that the governor of Zhejiang memorialized that certain robberies he had not mentioned to the court had indeed been reported by the *Shenbao*. I thank Andrea Janku for drawing my attention to this article.

218. See Vittinghoff, “Am Rande des Ruhms,” 307.

所發之函。當送經理處。請君轉寄。或路程遙遠。或先期出外。函不能達。而本人對聯社會者。務須另備委託書。所并將本人之入會憑單。附入交接到會之他股東代表。意見統於總會。二。勝至此大開會。暫行簡章。已附入各股東函內。不再贅陳。

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電傳 宮門抄 ○二月初十日 召見軍機 劉元弼

論某給諫請定一夫一婦制度(心)

或曰。信如斯言。則納妾之事。必無為求嗣計者矣。是又不然。前之所論。就其俗之發生。期言之耳。迨其滋長期。則求嗣與慾望二者。蓋兼而有之。中國重男統而嚴族制。故「無後為大」之說。深中於人心。男子中年無嗣者。或喪子者。輒且納妾為嗣續計。俗例以三十無子為納妾期。是其証也。雖然。此種為求嗣而納妾者。實仍占其小部分。且此小部分中。其為慾望而託於求嗣者。蓋猶占其大半。何以言之。中國古制。男子三十而始娶。今文明國之結婚期。亦大率如此。誠以年齡在三十以前。身體與神經兩未發達。無相當於為人父之

Fig. 3.4 A telegraphed gongmenchao in a claustrophic position (SB 24.3.1907)

medium did not just borrow from but indeed usurped and to an extent also subverted the very language of power once reserved to the government. It has, however, proved more difficult to trace evidence of the court's response to the inclusion of the *jingbao* within the *xinbao*.²¹⁹ The article discussed above, explaining the placement of the

219. Fairbank and Teng, *Ch'ing Administration*, 97, cites a memorial of August 1842 (see note 38 to this chapter), which deals with the privatization of the publishing of the *jingbao* and with the possibility of its falling into the hands of the foreigners. It is to be imagined that similar memorials, dealing with the private publishing of the *jingbao* by foreigners and in foreign-style newspapers, should appear some decades later. This point needs to be investigated further.

jingbao in the *Shenbao*, provides indirect evidence of official reactions. Some of the press regulations issued between 1872 and 1912 provide further indirect testimony.²²⁰ The fact that the *jingbao* reprint was at times resituated within the newspaper proper provides another clue for speculation: the section containing telegraphed edicts, for example, was put on the first page, to “honor the monarch,” as one editorial of 1898 explained it.²²¹ After February 1905, when the *Shenbao* changed hands and its layout was completely redone, this section was even moved to a spot before the editorial (sometimes, however, in an almost claustrophobic arrangement; see Fig. 3.4). The same was true for the telegraphed *gongmenchao* and edicts and the *yuzhi gonglu*). Such changes can be interpreted as formal gestures of respect to the government, but they need not necessarily have been instigated by government enmity to the practices of the foreign-style newspapers.²²²

Yet another factor may be taken as indirect proof of the court’s reaction to the intrusion by foreign-style newspapers on territory once taken up by the *jingbao*. The official newspapers founded by the Shanghai circuit intendant in the 1870s²²³ and the transformation of *Shiwubao* into a *guanbao* are cases in point.²²⁴ The hidden model for these modern-style official papers was the *jingbao*,²²⁵ but modernized according to the standards set by the *xinbao*. The Guangxu emperor (r. 1875–1908) is lauded for supporting this transformation in a Philadelphia paper in 1898:

220. For a thorough discussion of press laws since 1866, see Vittinghoff, “Am Rande des Ruhms,” chap. 7.

221. “整頓報紙芻言” (A few modest words on the reform of newspapers), *SB* 15.8.1898.

222. Indeed, the *Xinwenbao* from the beginning printed telegraphed edicts before the editorial. The *gongmenchao*, on the other hand, appeared at the head of the second part (第二張) of the paper (see, e.g., *XWB* 2.8.1902).

223. See Vittinghoff, “Useful Knowledge and Appropriate Communication”; and idem, “Am Rande des Ruhms,” chap. 3. Roger Thompson’s (“New-Style Gazettes”) comments on the government gazettes in the wake of Yuan Shikai’s *Beiyang guanbao* can be applied to these early, semiofficial endeavors, some of which, such as Feng Junguang’s 馮浚光 (1830–77) *Xinbao* (or *Shanghai guanbao*), were indeed called *guanbao* (if in jest) (*Shanghai yanjiu ziliao*, 322; Leung, *Shanghai taotai*, 99–100).

224. For memorials dealing with the transformation of the *Shiwubao* into a *guanbao*, see *Wuxu bianfa ziliao*; and Lin Yuanqi, *Dibao zhi yanjiu*, 166. On the failure of the attempt, see Janku, “Nur leere Reden,” chap. 3.

225. See also M. C. Liu, “Liang Ch’i-ch’ao,” 41.

The Emperor of China has taken a long stride in advance in civilization by encouraging the newspapers of his empire to publish a truthful and full account of the daily events, and to be both bold and fearless in the discussion of current affairs. He has by proclamation made the Chinese Daily Progress [*Shiwunbao*] an official organ, and has declared that articles which appear in Chinese newspapers, though apparently displeasing to him, shall not on that account be suppressed.²²⁶

The official papers that originated in the late nineteenth century thus functioned according to alien standards.²²⁷ The best-known modern official paper was the *Beiyang guanbao* 北洋官報, founded by Yuan Shikai in 1901. In his inaugural statements he was much concerned that the paper include materials not ordinarily found in the *jingbao*, such as foreign news, and new genres such as editorials 論說 (sometimes 論述) or illustrations 圖表. He wanted to see fewer memorials and edicts (and only if the texts were telegraphed).²²⁸ In the wake of the *xinbao*, the *guanbao*, too, grew concerned with transmitting news and knowledge not just from local officials but from abroad as well²²⁹—and thus openly answered one of the more persistent foreign complaints made against the *jingbao*.²³⁰ As the modern “tongue of

226. A. P. Parker, “Native Press,” 588.

227. For some of the new-style gazettes, see Thompson, “New-Style Gazettes”; and for a thorough study of the *guanbao* predating Yuan’s attempts, Li Siyi, “Qingmo 10 nian guanbao huodong gairong,” esp. 128–29.

228. For a translation of his statements, see Nathan, “The Late Ch’ing Press,” 1291. For the contents of the *guanbao* after 1896, see Li Siyi, “Qingmo 10 nian guanbao huodong gairong,” 128, and esp. 137–42; on the *Beiyang guanbao* in particular, see 131–32.

229. Lin Yuanqi, *Dibao zhi yanjiu*, 185. Thompson (“New-Style Gazettes,” 80) makes a similar point.

230. One of the myths contributing to the bad reputation of the *jingbao*, perpetuated in foreign circles, was its lack of reports dealing with foreign affairs (see “The Peking Gazettes,” 10: “One noticeable feature in connection with the Gazettes is, that all allusion to foreigners and foreign appliances is carefully eschewed, nor is a word ever said about the Franco-Chinese Arsenal at Foochow”). This had been a matter of debate since at least the 1870s but slowly changed from the beginning of the 1880s. After the turn of the twentieth century, the *jingbao* contained frequent references to foreign affairs; for example, the 1905 boycott was discussed in the manuscript edition at the British Library, 上諭奏報八月二日; missionaries appear in *NCH* 2.7.1902 (concerning the rebels in Sichuan: “Orders must be issued to the officials wherever missions are located to exert extra care and watchfulness over the safety of missionaries and converts”), and in *NCH*

the government” 政府之喉舌, as one article put it, these papers took on the challenge of the *xinbao*.²³¹ By 1905, the *Shenbao* reports, Yuan Shikai deliberated opening up his paper even more.²³²

A few years ago [1901] Yuan Shikai started the *Beiyang guanbao* with the idea of opening up the atmosphere between the officials and the people. But in the format of a *guanbao*, one cannot broadly talk about present matters, and therefore he is planning to publish a semiofficial newspaper 半官報. . . .

[I] have also heard that that paper will use Beijing and Tianjin as central points in political matters, it will use Shanghai and Xiamen as central points in commercial matters, and it will use Hankou and Chongqing as central points in industrial matters. Moreover, reporters will be sent to all the provinces in order to broadly collect the world's important news and public discussions so that they may be the alarm bells awakening China.

The semiofficial paper envisaged here discards one of the most fundamental characteristics of the *jingbao*: no longer is it a centralized organ in the sense that its news (except for the cryptic messages contained in the *yuanshenchao*) is restricted to what has been received and

9.7.1902 (memorial from Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to make Timothy Richard head of a committee dealing with peaceful coexistence of Christians and non-Christians in China), and we can find reference to the Boxer Indemnity in *NCH* 2.7.1902. But even much earlier, foreign matters played a role in the *jingbao*. Ocko (“The British Museum’s *Peking Gazette*,” 41, 42) shows that in his sample of the *jingbao* (1864–70) there were entries on “military and foreign affairs.” The memorials translated in the *Guide to Memorials* also contain an abundance of references to foreign affairs, and the discussion on the use of ritual spaces in front of “England” as reflected in FO 230/89 and FO 230/90 indicates that the *jingbao* was, already in the early 1870s, referring to England. See also the early discussions of the Margary Affair in 1875, and the court’s “offensive” response that the *jingbao* “as a rule” would not deal with foreign affairs (Vittinghoff, “Am Rande des Ruhms,” chaps. 2 and 7).

231. See “說官報” (On the official papers), 南洋官報 *Nanyang guanbao* 24.5.1904, cited in Li Siyi, “Qingmo 10 nian guanbao huodong gairong,” 139. Thompson (“New-Style Gazettes,” 84) argues that these new papers were expected to rectify the failings of the new commercial newspapers: “The private press is said to mislead the people and government gazettes needed to inform the people of new developments in government and education.”

232. “制督擬開辦半官報” (The governor intends to start a semiofficial newspaper), *SB* 6.9.1905.

rectified by the center in Beijing.²³³ Rather, the responsibilities are shared with different localities. Reporters are sent to many different kinds of government or nongovernment institutions to collect the news. The official newspaper is thus to become not simply a commercial institution²³⁴—that had happened centuries before—but a rather independent institution, more and more detached from the official source of news. Control over the contents in government papers, such as there was, thus significantly loosened.

This is what happened with the *Zhengzhi guanbao* 政治官報, which was founded in October 1907 (as *Neige guanbao* 內閣官報 from 1911). It was centrally managed, and it was obligatory reading for all officials.²³⁵ But it followed the foreign, solar calendar. Apart from *gongmenchao* and lists, it printed edicts and memorials (some of them telegraphed), Reuters telegrams 路透電, translations of international news 外事類, and—most innovatively—advertisements. The regulations for the *Neige guanbao* stipulated that all writings from the provinces and the center had to be reprinted; a document that could not be printed in the official paper was to be immediately given to the commercial papers 商辦報張 so that it could be published without delay.²³⁶ By 1911, then, the *xinbao* had obviously been accepted into the club as equals. Thus, Britton rightly argues that “the new [foreign-style] Chinese[language] press was a collateral development which leaned heavily upon the old press, and gradually absorbed and

233. The early *guanbao* were likewise restricted. According to Li Siyi (“Qingmo 10 nian *guanbao* huodong gairong” 135), they were dominated by local news since they did not have professional correspondents and reporters elsewhere.

234. For the small circulation of the *guanbao*, see *ibid.*, 135–37. The commercial newspapers were twice as likely as the *guanbao* to be included in the readings in newspaper-reading rooms (Li Siyi, “Qingmo 10 nian yue bao jiang bao,” 109). The fact that they were a commercial failure (Li Siyi, “Qingmo 10 nian *guanbao* huodong gairong,” 144) does not diminish the importance of the *guanbao* as a phenomenon testifying to the interest of the court in modernizing the court gazette, however.

235. Lin Yuanqi, *Dibao zhi yanjiu*, 174, 178; Li Siyi, “Qingmo 10 nian *guanbao* huodong gairong,” 129. The *Zhengzhi guanbao* became the immediate predecessor and model for the *Zhengfu gongbao* 政府公報 in 1912, with slight changes in terminology: edicts are now named *mingling* 命令 (mandates), and memorials are called *chengpi* 呈批 (petitions and endorsements).

236. Items 11 and 4 of the regulations; reprinted in Lin Yuanqi, *Dibao zhi yanjiu*, 184 and 181, respectively.

replaced it."²³⁷ However, the same process occurred in the old-style Chinese press as well: the voice of official China redressed and itself became a new medium, too.²³⁸ This, I would argue, is the qualitative difference the foreign-style newspaper was able to make in China.

Conclusion

In times of change, today's tasks are solved by using the conceptions of yesterday.

—Marshall McLuhan²³⁹

This chapter has attempted to trace the reasons for the appropriation of a state medium by the modern newspaper and its significance. The court gazette, *jingbao*, was a widely read publication, appreciated by officials and nonofficials alike. The foreign publishers of the new Chinese-language papers, *xinbao*, accepted its value as news and confronted it as a rival. The *jingbao* was included in the *xinbao* in acknowledgment of a common readership and as a means of attracting those readers. And indeed, according to at least one early Chinese journalist, the publication of the *jingbao* on the pages of the *Shenbao* guaranteed its success.²⁴⁰

In order to enhance sales, foreign-style newspapers were forced to accommodate the market. The market dictated the code in which the *xinbao* were written and what they had to say.²⁴¹ The *xinbao* were willing to change in order to become a message, by adapting to the imperial tone, by observing ritual kneelings and spaces, by appropriating the court language, by printing in the right color, and by praising rather than attacking imperial emanations. These adaptations created a situation epitomized by Marshall McLuhan: "We are looking at the present in the back mirror. Thus we move backward into the future."²⁴²

Moving backward into the future, the commercial papers not only usurped an audience but a language of power, too. The *jingbao*, with its

237. Britton, *The Chinese Periodical Press*, 15.

238. For a similar view, see Li Siyi, "Qingmo 10 nian guanbao huodong gairong," 130.

239. McLuhan and Fiore, *The Medium Is the Massage*.

240. "申報置疑" (Doubts in regard to the *Shenbao*), *Yongbao* 甬報 (Ningbo report), Guangxu 7.3 (1881). The *Yongbao* was a short-lived monthly published by the American Presbyterian Mission Press in Ningbo. The editors were Chinese. The article is written as a response to criticisms of the *Shenbao*. It is discussed in Janku, "Nur leere Reden," 20–21.

241. Bourdieu, *Was heißt sprechen?* 57.

242. McLuhan and Fiore, *The Medium Is the Massage*.

rescripted memorials and edicts, was the mouthpiece of the highest authority.²⁴³ By reprinting and copying *jingbao* language, the foreign-style newspaper itself came to be viewed as an authoritative voice.²⁴⁴ This is evident from the vehemence with which local officials and—less frequently—the court itself reacted to the *xinbao* (and its use of their gazette). When several players in the Chinese public sphere accepted the *xinbao* as an authority by reacting to its articles *as if* they were serious memorials, they made its authoritative discourse powerful. To them and through them, the medium became a triumphant message.

To an extent, the *xinbao* thus became just another *jingbao*. Although neither the layout nor the content of the original *jingbao* changed markedly for many years, its insertion into a new environment in which it was treated like just another news item that had to conform to certain rational standards of efficiency and practicality served to alter the status and content of the *jingbao* message. Moving backward into the future, the new-style paper changed the medium of the past. Yet by internalizing the *jingbao* as a symbol of power, the *xinbao* did not lose its own voice. Rather, it gained one. The inclusion of the *jingbao* had a carnivalistic effect—the *jingbao* thus acquired new, at times antagonistic, meanings. Like the carnival, this act of inclusion served to promulgate a “second Truth” about the once well-defined world of the *jingbao*. Once a court message could be squeezed between an announcement and an editorial (see Fig. 3.4), once an edict could be preceded by an editorial discussing it, the *jingbao* message was recontextualized. The mere inclusion of the *jingbao* text within the context of an alien medium was eye-opening—it liberated the reader from the orthodox interpretation of the court gazette and enabled him to see the world (and read the text) in a different manner.²⁴⁵

The change in context began to generate its own meanings. The message of the *jingbao*, the embodiment of state authority, was no

243. In the words of Roswell Britton (*The Chinese Periodical Press*, 8), “The appearance of a document in the Peking Gazettes was evidence of official authenticity. . . . Since the contents derived from the throne and not from ministers or secretaries of state, the Peking Gazettes had a[n even] higher prestige than the state gazettes of Europe.”

244. Bourdieu, *Was heißt sprechen?* 73.

245. See Bakhtin, *Rabelais und seine Welt*, 14, 316; Bakhtin, *Probleme der Poetik Dostoevskijs*, 188; and Bourdieu, *Was heißt sprechen?* 15: “There are no innocent words. Every word, every expression, may acquire antagonistic meanings depending on how they are being received.”

longer determined by the court alone. It was to be shared with and possibly tainted by the foreign-style newspaper: the code of authoritative speech was modernized. Rather than reacting negatively, however, to the usurpation of authoritative language by the *Shenbao* and other papers, the court and officialdom began to take advantage of the innovations offered by the *xinbao*. Not the least of these was the speed with which the new medium relayed important information. The new medium also served as a model for the diversification of news in new-style official papers, the *guanbao*. By using the lessons drawn from the *jingbao* reprint for their own purposes, these media turned a potential threat into an asset. And thus the inclusion of the *jingbao* within foreign-style newspapers led to a qualitative change. The public voice of traditional China became a public voice for modern China. The court gazette changed without changing, by the simple fact of being included within the pages of the foreign-style newspaper.

This study of the manner in which the *jingbao* was treated within the new medium throws new light on old contentions: the *jingbao* was not transformed from a univocal and primarily internal communication device—it had never been one—but in the hands of the foreign-style newspapers it became more and more of a tool beyond the court's reach. The *jingbao* was a particular medium making one particular type of communication possible. Its inclusion on the pages of the *xinbao*, another medium making another type of communication possible, led to a dramatic shift in the public roles both of the court gazette and of the foreign-style newspaper. But the existence of the *xinbao* changed the nature of the *jingbao* as much as the nature of the *jingbao* changed the existence of the *xinbao*. Classical allusions, ritual language, and the structure of the examination essay found their way into the alien medium, and the criteria of speed, commercial appeal, practicality, and universality infiltrated the official publications. Such carnivalistic changes—authoritative language usurped by an unauthoritative medium, which in turn became the model for a newly disguised, revamped, authoritative medium—ensured that political communication was no longer a one-way street. Thus, the inclusion of the *jingbao* on the pages of the *Shenbao* fundamentally altered the character of both medium and message.

PART II

Reading the Medium

CHAPTER 4

Fair-Sexing It

Constructing the Female Reader

Women's condition is socially constructed, that is, historically shaped by human social usage rather than simply predestined by God or nature.

—Nancy Cott

A study of the press must take into account, at one end of the spectrum, the institutional, technical, and textual organization of the newspaper; at the other end, it must deal with those who buy and read the product.¹ Accordingly, the second part of this book turns away from the technical aspects of putting a newspaper together and instead emphasizes the act of reading. In examining the press as a medium for the creation of a Chinese identity, previous chapters have focused on the question of *what* the newspaper expected to achieve and how it changed for that purpose; beginning with this chapter, we turn to the question of *whom* the newspaper was talking to and *how*. This and the following chapters trace the construction of a reading public in the text of the news media in late nineteenth-century Shanghai by paying particular attention to tactics of "gatekeeping,"² to

TITLE: The expression "fair-sexing" derives from Jonathan Swift; see Shevelov, *Women and Print Culture*, esp. chap. 1. EPIGRAPH: Cott, *Grounding of Modern Feminism*, 4.

1. A. C. Smith et al., *Paper Voices*, 17.

2. For the history of this term, see note 43 in Chapter 3. This chapter deals primarily with the normative function of gatekeeping. Cf. Donsbach, "Gesellschaftliche Aufgaben der Massenmedien," 71: "Gatekeeping is dependent on

uncover the social framework that shaped the content of these media, and to show how this construction functioned as a normative force and how it thus informed the collective perception of late Qing realities.³

This chapter examines an audience that has in recent years attracted growing scholarly attention but that is still—and justifiably so—not taken seriously as a reading public in research on China during the nineteenth century: women.⁴ Evelyn Rawski, in her well-known work on literacy and education in the Qing, estimates the female reading public in the mid- to late nineteenth century at only 2–10 percent of the population.⁵ Her study suggests neither a great potential readership for newspapers among women nor substantial growth in that group until the turn of the twentieth century. Yet people learn to read when reading becomes important, that is, when texts have something to say to them. The fact that newspapers were writing about women and women's concerns may have instigated them to become a public for the newspaper.⁶ It may have made them read (or at least be read to).⁷ This is all the more probable since the newspaper, as an alien medium in China, had the potential to create a new audience of newspaper readers.⁸ There was no traditional audience for the new news media: they offered inclusive reading patterns that differed from exclusive Chinese reading traditions.⁹ Did women thus become a reading public of the flourishing news media in late Qing Shanghai?

In an attempt to answer this question, we will again turn to the text of the newspaper itself. Reader-response criticism assumes that every author engenders, in his text, an image of himself and another of his

expectations of the reader, but at the same time it takes on a normative position toward this reader.”

3. A. C. Smith et al., *Paper Voices*, 16.

4. See, e.g., Ebrey, *Inner Quarters*; Ko, *Teachers of the Inner Chambers*; Mann, *Precious Records*; *Writing Women*; Hershatler, *Dangerous Pleasures*; Henriot, *Belles de Shanghai*; Wang Zheng, *Women in the Chinese Enlightenment*.

5. Rawski, *Education and Popular Literacy*, 145.

6. See Schudson, *Discovering the News*, 36.

7. For the institutionalization of the practice of reading newspapers aloud and discussing their contents with women, see Li Siyi, “Qingmo 10 nian yue bao jiang bao,” esp. 105.

8. Shevelov, *Women and Print Culture*, 15, makes a similar argument for the periodical in eighteenth-century England.

9. Widmer, “Ming Loyalism”; Ko, “The Written Word and the Bound Foot.”

reader.¹⁰ Accordingly, “texts invariably contain clues as to how they are to be interpreted: audiences are evoked, or, often enough, represented in the text.”¹¹ Previous chapters have demonstrated that, in order to survive, the foreign-style Chinese-language newspaper constructed and wrote for a particular implied audience by discussing their concerns and promoting their values. In reprinting the *jingbao*, in quoting the sages, in presenting the news as stories of the strange, and in editorializing in the style of the deliberative political essay, newspapers were constructing a distinct implied readership of scholars, officials, and merchants whom they were out to please. As we shall see, another public created in the newspaper was gendered female. Shanghai’s news media promoted the cause of women and catered to their interests. There is, however, an important difference between the actual and the implied reader of a text: even the most forceful effort to reach a certain public is not necessarily successful, nor does the actual reader perforce abide by the rules set for the implied reader.¹² In the course of this chapter, we will observe a number of marked differences between the implied female reader of the late Qing press and the actual reader.¹³ Thus, even though we can say that the text of the Chinese newspaper was gendered, we cannot generalize about the literacy rate among women or even less make claims about their everyday lives in late Qing Shanghai.¹⁴ It is evident, however, that Chinese newspapers intended to speak to a public that included women. For all we know, they were hoping to make them read.

10. Booth (*Rhetoric of Fiction*, 138) argues that the author “makes his reader, as he makes his second self.”

11. *The Reader in the Text* (“Preface” by Susan Suleiman), vii.

12. See Hannelore Link, *Rezeptionsforschung*, 28. May Fourth “proletarian literature,” which was read only by the educated, illustrates that the implied reader does not correspond with the actual reader of a certain text.

13. For discrepancies between normative prescriptions and realities earlier in Chinese (women’s) history, see Ko, *Teachers of the Inner Chambers*, 3. For a similar argument, which links moralistic strains in the late Qing on a normative level with the fact that this was a period when desires were being stimulated and satisfied by the growth in commerce, literacy, and luxury, see Carlitz, “Desire, Danger, and the Body,” 123.

14. The newspaper as a text, so historians of journalism tell us, “is a social resource whose construction limits an analytic understanding of contemporary life” (Tuchman, *Making News*, 215).

This chapter demonstrates that the introduction of women as a topic of public discourse and as implied readers of news began on the pages of daily newspapers, vernacular papers, and pictorials in the mid-nineteenth century. It did not start with the publication of the first women's magazines catering explicitly to a female audience, around the turn of the twentieth century. This reading of the Shanghai news media suggests therefore that far from being "revolutionary," the introduction of Chinese women's magazines was a natural development.¹⁵ In tracing evidence within the late Qing newspaper text of women as implied readers,¹⁶ this chapter will also show that—as the text selects its audience and as the audience implied in the text provides a normalizing code for the real audience—the inclusion of women as implied readers served certain ideological purposes. The newspapers did not innocently describe, but they prescribed particular types of women as their envisaged readers. In this process, the male readers (and writers) of newspapers were re-evaluated, too: to read and talk about women was to be fashionable and modern. Even women involved in the process of writing women's newspapers and magazines and thus creating images of women as implied readers observed these male standards. Apart from spreading radically new ideas, early Shanghai newspapers and pictorials as well as later women's magazines also adapted familiar stereotypes and tropes about women. The introduction of women as a topic of public discourse and as implied readers of various news media was, once again in the history of womankind in China, a revolution within clear-cut boundaries.¹⁷

15. To this day, Charlotte Beahan's early statement that "the new women's press was a unique aspect of the new style journalism, for any Chinese periodical intended for women was, by its very existence, revolutionary" (Beahan, "Women's Movement and Nationalism," 201) remains unchallenged. See Nivard, "L'évolution de la presse féminine chinoise"; Liu Jūcai, "Zhongguo lishishang diyi fen nübao"; idem, "Zhongguo jindai funü baokan xiaoshi"; and, most recently, Vittinghoff, "Diskurs und Geschichte."

16. I am aware that by this very method of selection, I make use of one of the pitfalls of women's history (see Bock, "Historische Frauenforschung," 25–26): women were easily recognized for my purposes exactly because of their historical consideration as a special case, a visible deviation from mankind.

17. Ko, *Teachers of the Inner Chambers*; Bray, *Technology and Gender*; Mann, *Precious Records*; and Ebrey, *Inner Quarters*, show that at a number of different times in Chinese history, certain—sometimes rather astonishing—freedoms were opened up to certain groups of mostly elite women, but that these freedoms could

The following discussion approaches the construction of the implied female reader in the Shanghai news media from two directions. First, by looking at explicit statements about envisaged readerships and by comparing newspapers such as the *Shenbao* with vernacular journals, pictorials, and women's magazines, we will discover what audiences Shanghai's news media said they wanted to reach and how they wanted to do that—How did they define their readers? Second, we will survey how such explicit statements relate to the images of female readers in advertisements, editorials, and news reports on the pages of the *Shenbao*—How did they describe women readers?

Defining the Reader

“But you never read novels, I dare say?”—“Why not?”—“Because they are not clever enough for you; Gentlemen read better books.”

—Catherine Morland to Henry Tilney in Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey*¹⁸

In its inaugural editorial, the *Shenbao* stated that it intended to provide information not just to scholars and officials but also to peasants, workers, and merchants 上而學士大夫, 下及農工商賈 (l. 9). The editorial admonished the newspaper staff “not to use extravagant and pompous vocabulary” so that all these readers could understand the newspaper without difficulty (l. 10). It also emphasized that the style of writing used in the newspaper would differ from that found in traditional prose, which the editorialist scorned for its obscurity and impracticality (l. 6). The *Shenbao* thus proclaimed that it would not cater exclusively to the literati; rather, it favored a newspaper that “both elegant and common may enjoy” 必為雅俗所共賞 (l. 6).¹⁹ As is obvious from the previous chapters, the goal of reaching this universal readership may have been too idealistic: the *Shenbao* text was not distinctly different from traditional prose genres and accordingly, it was anything but a common read for everyone, high and low. Clearly committed to his original idea, Ernest Major soon decided to start anew with another publication.²⁰

be attained only in negotiation with the ultimately more powerful forces of male circumscription.

18. Austen, *Northanger Abbey*, 94–95.

19. “本館告白” (Announcement by our company), *SB* 30.4.1872.

20. The original intent of catering to the lower classes as well was perhaps borrowed from missionary ideas. Its failure on the pages of the *Shenbao* is discussed in

Not much is known about this "People's Paper," the *Minbao* 民報, which was launched on 5 March 1876, and was probably one of the earliest vernacular newspapers in China.²¹ In an advertisement in the *Shenbao*,²² the *Minbao*'s aims were stated in familiar terms: it intended to serve not "literate and sophisticated scholars" 此原非爲文人雅士起 but readers from lower levels of society. Its envisaged audience included in this order, "women, children, servants, and artisans," readers known to be rather "uneducated" 顛蒙, and only "crudely acquainted with high prose" 紙爲婦孺傭工, 粗涉文理者設也. The paper would make every effort to be easily understandable and even provide explanations of difficult expressions. By regular perusal of the paper, the advertisement promised, its readers would eventually master "words that they had hitherto not understood." The advertisement concluded with an appeal to "all heads of households" to buy the paper regularly, so "cheap" and yet of "merits manifold." The implied reader of this advertisement is the head of a household who buys the new product for his wife and children or tells his servants about it.

In embracing a lucid and simple style, the common aim of both the *Shenbao* and the *Minbao* was to educate the reader. In both papers, the use of plain language and didactic clarity was explained by invoking the lower-class reader. In the case of the *Minbao*, this included the female reader. Even though the *Shenbao* did not mention women as readers explicitly, the similarities between its inaugural statement and the advertisement for the *Minbao* suggest that initially the *Shenbao*

"與申報館論申報格式鄙見" (My unworthy views in talking with the *Shenbao* company on the formal arrangements of the *Shenbao*), *SB* 13.3.1875.

21. On the early vernacular papers, see Li Hsiao-t'i, *Qingmo xiaceng shehui qimeng yundong*; and Kaske, "Der alte Staat und die Schriftreform." Some missionary papers for women and members of the lower classes from the early 1870s (e.g., *Fuyin xinbao* and *Xiaohai yuebao*; see Ma Guangren, *Shanghai xinwen shi*, 51-54) even predate the foundation of the *Minbao*. The *Minbao* appeared every Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday. For some information, see *Shenbao tongxun* 1947, no. 1/5: 20, which reprints excerpts from the inaugural statement. Xu and Xu, *Qingmo sishinian "Shenbao" shiliao*, 318-19, give a date of 30 March for the inaugural issue of the *Minbao*. Unfortunately, I have not been able to check the accuracy of either date, since I have not been able to find this newspaper. Indeed, oddly enough, none of the scholars of newspaper history in China seems to have seen a copy of this paper.

22. "勸看民報" (Advice to read the *Minbao*), *SB* 19.5.1876.

may have considered women among its implied readers as well. The fact that the purported authors of a number of poems in the *Shenbao* are women—the authors may or may not have been female in reality—seems to support this view: evidently the *Shenbao* did not find it unnatural to have female readers.²³ In adopting a more readable style, these newspapers began the revolutionary process of remaking the traditional audience for serious written prose.

In order to reach this new audience of merchants, workers, and—last but not least—women, the news media had to retool. They had to set themselves off from earlier writing traditions and did so by using simpler language and illustrations, for example.²⁴ In the late 1870s, the *Shenbao* publishing house came out with several pictorial magazines, the most successful and long-lived being the *Dianshizhai huabao* 點石齋畫報, founded in April 1884.²⁵ An editorial on the educational value of pictorials, published in *Shenbao* in August 1895, lists who ought to read pictorials:²⁶ not only gentlemen but merchants, not only peasants but women, too!²⁷ These early self-definitions indicate that even be-

23. See, e.g., *SB* 25.12.1872. For more examples, see Vittinghoff, "Diskurs und Geschichte."

24. Although illustrations did play a role in some of the periodicals clearly beamed toward the literati, such as Liang Qichao's *Shiwubao* or the *Qingyibao*, specialized pictorial magazines would cater explicitly to a lower-class and female audience. The situation is thus slightly different from that in nineteenth-century England. Brake (*Subjugated Knowledges*, 129) mentions that there "illustrations were rare in the intellectual monthlies aimed at male readers only, visual material was more likely to play an important part in family and women's magazines." See also Altick, *English Common Reader*, 366.

25. For the history of *Shenbao* pictorials, see *Shenbao tongxun* 1947, no. 1/5: 20. The *Shenbao* publications were predated by a number of missionary publications for the lower classes, including women and children (Ma Guangren, *Shanghai xinwen shi*, 51–54). For three important recent studies of the *Dianshizhai huabao*, see the essays by Rudolf G. Wagner ("Joining the Global Imaginaire") and Nany Kim ("New Wine in Old Bottles?") in *Joining the Global Public*; and Henningsmeier, "The Foreign Sources of *Dianshizhai huabao*."

26. "論畫報可以啓蒙" (Illustrated journals can enlighten), *SB* 29.8.1895.

27. Pictorials, then, easy to understand and meant to educate, were clearly directed to the lower strata of society, including women. This becomes ever more evident in their titles: they are called, for example, *Tuhua yanshuo bao* (圖畫演說報, Pictures and lectures; Shanghai, 1901), *Qimeng huabao* (啓蒙畫報, Enlightenment pictorial; Beijing, 1902), *Minhu huabao* (民呼畫報, Pictorial call to the people; Shanghai, 1907), *Baihua tuhua ribao* (白話圖畫報, Vernacular pictorial; Beijing,

fore the end of the nineteenth century women had become an accepted part of the implied readership for the new media. Numerous pictures also show women as readers of these media. By 1909 what once had been a vision had become pictorial reality: the *Pictorial Daily* (*Tubua ribao* 圖畫日報; Shanghai, 1909) illustrates "The Present" in a picture entitled "Changing Customs in the World of Women" by showing two ladies on a bench reading a newspaper together (see Fig. 4.1). In the 1910s and 1920s, reading women become a regular feature of magazine covers.²⁸

These depictions of reading women were not new in China—they can be found in many collections of "One Hundred Beauties"²⁹—but the Shanghai news media were obviously out to portray a different type of female: they were not talking to or about gentrywomen, *guixiu* 閩秀, alone. Even though a substantial number of gentrywomen, but few of the lower classes, had become literate and educated throughout Chinese history,³⁰ some media rhetoric as well as the illustrations of working women discussed below shows that it was precisely this uneducated group of lower-class women that was to be addressed. The figure of the woman reader in pictorials, vernacular journals, newspapers, and women's magazines functioned as a metonym for the newly constituted lower-class reader. Multiple invocations of the woman reader became the key to the media's attempt "to acknowledge and to formulate, to organize and to influence, a new readership that cut across class lines."³¹ In addressing themselves to this particular

1908), *Tongsu huabao* (通俗畫報, Popular pictorial; Chengdu, 1909), and *Pingmin huabao* (平民畫報, Pictorial for the common people; Guangzhou, 1911).

28. For the prominence of women on the covers of Republican pictorials, see Leo Lee, *Shanghai Modern*. For coverage of women in present-day magazines and newspapers, see Johnson and Christ, "Women Through Time: Who Gets Covered?"

29. For two examples, see Ko, *Teachers of the Inner Chambers*, 126; and Wu Hung, "Beyond Stereotypes," 344. Both the early and the modern images of women readers were highly eroticized (and thus potentially immoral), a point discussed by Ko, *Teachers of the Inner Chambers*, 59; and Lee, *Shanghai Modern*.

30. Ko, *Teachers of the Inner Chambers*; Mann, *Precious Records*; and the essays in *Writing Women*.

31. The situation is thus reminiscent of that in eighteenth-century England; see Shovelow, *Women and Print Culture*, 23. For a similar phenomenon in early Japanese journalism, see Altman, "Shimbunshi," 65.



Fig. 4.1 Changing customs (*Tuhua ribao* 12, no. 9 [1909])

female reader, these news media were thus doing something quite innovative. Although it is doubtful they actually reached many of these women,³² hoping to teach a few gentlewomen and aspiring to teach all of China's womankind were quite different matters.

32. There was most probably an important discrepancy between this ideal of the implied reader and her later realization: the discussion of advertisements addressed to female readers below illustrates this most clearly. Only well-to-do women would have enough money to acquire the advertised products and to live with them in the leisure necessary to fulfill all that is prescribed in these advertisements. Implicitly—and probably realistically—they addressed women from the higher classes in particular, rather than their economically weaker sisters, even if they often described those to titillate their readers' palates. The revolutionary hope to reach, in these media, all of womankind, was obviously not fulfilled. In spite of their own rhetoric and claims, the news media continued to

Many of the early Chinese women's magazines following in the wake of the *Nüxuebao* 女學報 (Female instruction journal), founded in 1898, make this revolutionary approach to female readership explicit in their inaugural statements.³³ All of them stress the importance of educating lower-class female readers. In the inaugural statement of female revolutionary Qiu Jin's 秋瑾 (1875?-1907) short-lived *China Women's Journal* (*Zhongguo nübao* 中國女報) of 1907, she complained that whereas China's 200 million men were "slowly entering the new world of enlightenment," because they were reading books and newspapers, China's 200 million women were still drowning in ignorance, a situation that would lead to the demise of the country. Qiu Jin promised to use simple language and simple style in her publication³⁴ because 80-90 percent of "all my sisters" were unable to read learned Chinese.³⁵ In the same idiom—easy classical Chinese (*wenyan*

address only the "woman of means." The same discrepancy can be observed in women's magazines: only a reader of certain financial standing was in need of advice on how to pick the right nanny 保姆, for example (cf. the Shanghai journal *Nüzi shijie* 女子世界 [The world of women] 1904, no. 6: "爲母的心得" [Requirements for mothers]). Similar things must be said for readers of *Zhongguo xin nüjie* 中國新女界 (The new world of women), launched in Tokyo in 1907; with a circulation of 7,000 a month, it was one of the most successful women's magazines (Beahan, "Women's Movement and Nationalism," 238). Its envisaged readers were, however, certainly not just from the lowest social ranks since they were advised, for example, "to aid recent disaster victims . . . lest they be led to menace property" (*ibid.*, 294).

33. A useful overview of the early women's magazines, next to Liu Jucai's "Zhongguo jindai funü baokan xiaoshi," including women's magazines of the late Qing and Republican period, is Nivard, "L'évolution de la presse féminine chinoise." Mittler, "Cooking, Cleaning, Caring," discusses several early magazines, among them *Nüxuebao* (女學報, Female instruction journal; 1898), *Nübao* (女報, Women's journal; 1899), *Nüzi shijie* (女子世界, Women's world; 1904), *Zhongguo nübao* (中國女報, China women's journal; 1907), *Shenzhou nübao* (神州女報, Holy land women's journal; 1907), *Funü shibao* (婦女時報, Women's times; 1911), and *Funü zazhi* (婦女雜誌, Women's magazine; 1915). For the purposes of this chapter, I am condensing the information gathered for that article to a bare minimum.

34. This argument echoed that made a decade before in the *Nüxuebao* (Liu Jucai, "Zhongguo lishishang diyi fen nübao," 216, 224).

35. Rankin ("Emergence of Women," 56) argues that the magazine was generally written in such a style that it could be read only by educated women. I have not been able to see the journal in its entirety and can only judge on the basis of Qiu Jin's inaugural address, which is in very easy *wenyan*.

文言)—*Women's World* (*Nüzi shijie* 女子世界) argued in 1904 that to renew, to strengthen, and to enlighten (*wenming* 文明) China, one needed to enlighten the women of China first. Why? Because the female citizen (*nü guomin* 女國民) was the mother of China's future citizens (*guomin zhi mu* 國民之母), an idea reminiscent of French and American ideals of republican motherhood.³⁶

But what to teach the “mother of citizens”? A closer look at these women's magazines betrays that “fair-sexing,” the retooling of prose for female readerships, included not only reducing the difficulty of the language but changing the subject matter. Early women's magazines published rather outspoken articles on the equality of the sexes and featured biographies of foreign women journalists and Red Cross workers or Chinese female heroines such as the legendary warrior Hua Mulan 花木蘭, who had taken her father's place as a soldier, but almost always they also had sections entitled “family” (*jiating* 家庭), “popular/ everyday science” (*tongsu* or *riyong kexue* 通俗/ 日用科學), and “questions on hygiene” (*weisheng guwen* 衛生顧問). Science for women might identify nasty insects; the section on the family gave instructions on infant care and “household management” (*jiazheng* 家政). The ideal woman on the pages of these magazines, especially in the earliest issues, is a man's equal, independent, strong, and self-confident, and able to solve China's problems and to save the country from destruction. It is astonishing how militantly in these publications Chinese women, who had been barred from state service for centuries and millennia, express their patriotism. However, in later issues of the same journals, this outspoken woman warrior is replaced by a rather different type of woman, less a female citizen and more an accomplished mother for China's future *male* citizens. In all the explicitly feminist journals from the late Qing that I examined, early editorials demanded acceptance of the new values of equality and female liberation, but over time the journals grew more and more concerned with the three C's of the traditional female role: cooking, cleaning, caring.³⁷

36. “女子世界發刊詞” (*The Women's World's* inaugural statement), *Nüzi shijie* (*NZSJ*) 1904, no. 1. For a thorough discussion of the *guomin zhi mu* concept in China, see Judge, “Citizens or Mothers of Citizens?”; and Luo, *Nüxing yu jindai Zhongguo shehui*, 121, 145–55. For foreign concepts of Republican motherhood, see Landes, *Women and the Public Sphere*, 129–38; and Kerber, “Republican Mother.”

37. Much of what has recently been described as characteristic of women's magazines in the early Republican period by Constance Orliski (“The Bourgeois

An exception was a publication that did not come from Shanghai: the short-lived *Beijing Women's Paper* (*Beijing nübao* 北京女報, 1905-7), which was allegedly founded at the instigation of Empress Dowager Cixi.³⁸ At the time, it may have been the only women's daily in the world published and edited entirely by women, and it adhered to clear feminist goals. Its aims were educational: for example, one issue might contain difficult arithmetic problems, with answers in the next issue. It also published news and transcripts from the court gazettes, not to be found in any other publication for women. Generally, publications for women tended to eschew political matters and often printed news on current affairs only if they touched on women's issues:³⁹ clearly, women were not expected to be interested in politics.⁴⁰

Housewife"), or Wang Zheng (*Women in the Chinese Enlightenment*) seems to point to a general continuity of this trend. It remains to be studied in detail whether the rather aggressive misandry of a 1930s illustrated women's magazine such as *Linglong* 玲瓏 (*Elegance*) is the exception or the rule (see Mittler, "In Spite of Gentility"). A look at the contents of English women's magazines tells a similar story. John Dunton's *Lady's Mercury* was launched in 1693. He promised to answer "all the most nice and curious questions concerning Love, Marriage, Behaviour, Dress and Humour of the Female Sex, whether Virgins, Wives, or Widows." A similar definition is to be found for the *Records of Live, or Weekly Amusements for the Fair Sex* published in 1710. In Charlotte Lennox's *Lady's Museum* (founded 1760), young ladies were told to "avoid all abstract learning, all thorny researches which may blunt the finer edge of their wit and change the delicacy in which they excel into pedantic coarseness." This was apparently "the formula that magazine editors were to follow for nearly two centuries: a little instruction, a little fashion, beauty, health, cookery, some free offers such as the embroidery patterns and music sheets of songs, a good serial story, some shorter romantic tales, some charming romantic pictures, a little sentimental verse" (Adburgham, *Women in Print*, 26, 67, 117, 150-51).

38. For this magazine, which, unfortunately, I have not been able to consult, see Britton, *Chinese Periodical Press*, 116; and Beahan, "Women's Movement and Nationalism," 239.

39. More often than not, sections entitled "news" 新聞 are made up entirely of "women's news." Less often, these contents are made explicit in sections entitled "女子要聞" (Important women's news) or "女界要事" (Important events in the women's world). See, e.g., *Shenzhou nübao* 神州女報 (Holy land women's journal) of 1912 (different from the first *Shenzhou nübao* published in memory of Qiu Jin's death in 1907 and mentioned in n33 above).

40. This is, of course, a truism applicable to the West as well a century earlier, when women's magazines were first introduced there; the *Lady's Magazine* (founded in 1733) "projected in imitation of Edward Cave's *Gentlemen's Magazine*, intended to copy faithfully all his features, omitting only the reports of parlia-

Accordingly, the proclaimed aims of the *Women's Daily* (*Funü ribao* 婦女日報), advocated in an advertisement in the *Shenbao* in May 1911, were to “increase the general knowledge of women” 增進婦女普通之知識, but only in certain areas. The *Funü ribao* “intends to spread the moral values inherent to women,” and it will make known “the necessity of caring for one’s health and bringing up a family as the basis for the formation of patriotism.” “A perfect society,” it confidently proclaims, will ensue “from perfect organization of households.” The women it will teach will be the “basis for the establishment and consolidation of the nation and the most kind and rightful mothers for our citizens.”⁴¹

These early publications for women assigned women an active role in the project of national consolidation—they were now responsible for what the *Great Learning* teaches is a necessity for good government: the ordering of the family 家齊而后國治. This was, however, where their duty as women ended. Already in the late Qing we find evidence for what Frank Dikötter describes as typical rhetoric of the Republican period—that “man was the brain, the worker in the public domain, and woman was the womb, the wife and mother of the private sphere.”⁴² The implied reader of early women’s magazines such as the *Funü ribao* was expected to endorse the moral values traditionally assumed to be innate in women. By strengthening her natural love and care for the family, she could serve the ultimate patriotic purpose of perfecting Chinese society. This definition of the implied reader can further be substantiated from the content of these magazines: the implied reader has a primary interest in family, household, and motherhood. “Being a mother of future citizens” is about the extent of her interest in politics and worldly affairs. There is an ambiguity of purpose in these allegedly feminist magazines, which invite new readers only to circumscribe them.⁴³ This ambiguity is reflected in the use of easy *wenyan*, a language especially (and one could argue condescendingly) created for women

mentary debates. Ladies were not expected to be interested in politics” (Adburgham, *Women in Print*, 86).

41. “創辦婦女日報意見書” (Suggestions upon the publication of the *Funü ribao*), cited in Xu and Xu, *Qingmo sisibinian “Shenbao” shiliao*, 273–74.

42. Dikötter, *Sex, Culture and Modernity*, 29, 38–39.

43. For a similar observation concerning the situation in seventeenth-century Europe, where women were emancipated as readers but as readers only, see Engelsing, *Bürger als Leser*, 322.

and the lower classes, and in changes in subject matter. Both in turn become definitions for what fair-sexed gatekeeping entailed; they were the codes for female reading and readership.⁴⁴

The remainder of this chapter attempts to demonstrate that these codes increasingly appeared on the pages not just of vernacular journals, pictorials, and women's magazines but of daily newspapers such as the *Shenbao* as well. With the growing success of the news media, women and with them the lower strata of society achieved a new quantitatively and qualitatively different presence as implied reading subjects, but this remained a presence of ambiguities. The inclusion of women as implied readers of periodicals, newspapers, and women's magazines served an ultimate purpose: fair-sexed contents "implicitly registered a determination of what material was suitable for women readers."⁴⁵ By uncovering the *prescribed* image of women in advertisements, editorials, and news reports, we can understand further the nature of ideological gatekeeping in the construction of the female audience in China's news media around the turn of the twentieth century.

44. See Hulteng and Nelson, *Fourth Estate*, 177-78.

45. Shevelov, *Women and Print Culture*, 177. As the lack of general news in women's magazines shows, the subject matter considered interesting to women was never quite as "serious" as that addressed to men. Accordingly, the entertainment journal *Libailiu* 禮拜六 (Saturday) suggested that it was supposed to be read by the man of the house side by side with the "real" addressee of the journal, his wife (see *Libailiu* 1914, vol. 1, no. 1; discussed in Yeh, "Deciphering the Entertainment Press," 4). It is also no coincidence that the entertainment section in the *Shenbao* entitled "Free talk" (*ziyoutan* 自由談), introduced in August 1911, contained a section on hygiene and was thus clearly fair-sexed (e.g., "衛生談" [Talking about hygiene], *SB* 6.3 and 8.3.1912, etc.). Although I am not sure who decided where to place the advertisements and whether the advertiser had any influence on this decision, it is striking that a cluster of women's ads appears in the *ziyoutan* section (although not exclusively there); see, e.g., *SB* 25.9.1912, which features advertisements for a sewing machine with the picture of a woman and for milk with a picture of a milkmaid. This fact alone may indicate deliberate placing. It is also probably no coincidence that the first serialized novel that appeared in the *Shenbao*, in 1907, is a novel about a woman warrior (Xu and Xu, *Qingmo sishinian* "Shenbao" *shiliao*, 109, 367), and that many of the novels printed in the *ziyoutan* section of the *Shenbao* deal with women; see, e.g., "自由女之新婚談" (On the new marriages of the "free girls"), *SB* 19.9.1912.

Describing the Reader

The tolls of liberation are not in themselves liberating. Print culture can provide the bricks and mortar for constructing a prison—or the dynamite for shattering its walls.

—Kathryn Shevelow⁴⁶

ADVERTISING WOMEN: BEAUTY,
SEX, AND PROCREATION

By the first decades of the twentieth century, most advertisements in American news media were “beamed toward women.” In fact, “advertising and marketing people habitually referred to the consumer as *she*.”⁴⁷ An advertisement from the *American Magazine* (October 1932) may serve as an example to demonstrate female gendering in advertisements.⁴⁸ The picture shows a pretty woman wearing a stylish dress. The headline “When lovely women vote” emphasizes both her beauty and her independence of thought (she votes). These attributes are further elaborated as she is portrayed, in the first few lines, as “charming, educated, well-to-do and prominent in the social and civic life of her city.” The woman combines a certain traditional femininity (she is beautiful and an entertainer) with strength and emancipation (she is educated, well-to-do, and an active citizen). The implied reader as here presented, both visually and linguistically, is ambiguous.

This ambiguity becomes ever more pronounced in the next paragraphs of the text. Initially the text speaks of elections and polling. A “representative number” of women are asked a “crucial question,” and the “majority” reply with the same answer. It turns out that the modern woman “votes” for “Listerine Tooth Paste.” Why? Because Listerine “swiftly . . . erases blemishes and discolorations”; moreover, it leaves the teeth “gleaming white” and “sweetens the breath.” Those who want to be beautiful have a clear choice. This, the implied reader, is also addressed directly: “Won’t you try Listerine Tooth Paste?” This psychological trick invites the actual reader to feel that she could be a mirror-image of the implied reader (and the woman in the picture),

46. *Ibid.*, 198.

47. Cott, *Grounding of Modern Feminism*, 172.

48. The advertisement is reprinted in *ibid.*

that she could be as chic and independent, her only deficit being her lack of a tube of Listerine Tooth Paste.

The intent of this advertisement is to advocate a woman who, however economically independent and modern she may be, is not oblivious to the demands of beauty and cleanliness. The advertisement is a typical example of how advertising prescribes "models for fulfillment of womanhood."⁴⁹ A similar type of ideological prescription takes place in advertisements in early Chinese newspapers addressed to the female consumer. In late Qing Shanghai, however, because of the particular ideological gatekeeping practiced by advertisers, the consumer does not become exclusively a *she*. As the following survey of advertising between 1872 and 1912 shows,⁵⁰ the female consumer is evoked and openly addressed as a reader, but not until the turn of the century. Moreover, rather than becoming the general consumer, she is depicted as one interested only in particular products.

Thus, contrary to what one might expect, early advertisements for medications explicitly for women are not directed toward a female audience. In "A first-class women's medicine" ("Fuke diyi" 婦科第一, *SB* 30.4.1877), a husband tells the story of "my wife" 余婦. After more than ten years of trying, she has not become pregnant (l. 2). Finally, after a certain Dr. Shen treats her with the advertised medication, she bears a son. The different phases of her illness and treatment and her several consultations with the doctor are all vividly described. Her questions are not heard, but the doctor always answers 云 in direct speech (ll. 4, 6).

This text is a male-dominated monologue. The reader hears the woman's voice through her husband's story and through the answers of the doctor. Female discourse is domesticated in male words, not surprising perhaps in a culture that has a long tradition of the "missing female narrator," especially in medical handbooks.⁵¹ Moreover, the situation mirrors upper-class realities: it was not considered proper for a doctor to take a sick woman's pulse or look her directly in the face—

49. *Ibid.*, 174.

50. For a thorough study of the technical and financial side of *Shenbao* advertising, see Vittinghoff, "Am Rande des Ruhms," chap. 4, pt. 2.

51. For the "missing female narrator," see Widmer, "Ming Loyalism," 395–96; for medical handbooks, see Furth, "Rethinking Van Gulik." On "speaking women" in Chinese fiction and news writing, see notes 157 and 159 below.

such actions indeed needed a husband's mediation.⁵² But this construction also conveys how this text would probably be received: a woman "reading" the information through her husband.

An advertisement of May 1882 for a pill against white flow (a yeast infection), "Godlike result pill against white flow" ("Shenxiao baidai wan" 神效白帶丸, SB 26.5.1882), is couched in a similar rhetoric. It begins with an elaborate explanation of the significance of the different days in the menstrual cycle (ll. 1-3). It then explains that women with irregular menstruation or white flow are unable to produce children. The presentation of these facts and the patient explanations suggests that the implied reader is one with no personal experience with the bodily functions of a woman. The introductory remark that all these factors make a woman's ability to procreate "different from that of man" also points to the implied reader—a husband who is being told how to recognize certain symptoms of an incapacitating disease in his wife and what to do in case such symptoms appear. Here again, the discourse is male dominated; the advertisement appeals to the female patient through the mediation of her husband or other male members of her family.

This type of presentation is typical of early advertisements. Only through the implied, male reader do these advertisements address a female public.⁵³ At the same time, they reproduce a familiar image that reduces a woman to her reproductive function.⁵⁴ This characteristic dominates medical ads during the late Qing and into the early

52. Bray, *Technology and Gender*, 312, 323.

53. See, e.g., the advertisement "樂善堂婦科四寶" (Four treasures in women's medicine), SB 31.5.1882, in which it is argued: "Medicine for women is different from that for men; their illnesses are not the same." "婦人調經丸" (A pill to regulate women's menses), SB 31.5.1882, mentions: "We have already said that the illnesses of women are not the same as those of men" (l. 1). *Yinyang* theories to back up this claim appear in "調經種子坤順丸" (A pill to regulate menses, ensure offspring, and to make yield the female *kun*), SB 31.5.1882. See also "參茸坤順丸" (A pill to make yield the female *kun*), SB 12.5.1892, which again quotes the phrase 乾健坤順 (strong male *qian* and yielding female *kun*) from the *Book of Changes*; and "廣東接元堂應驗八集" (Eight items from the Guangdong pharmacy one ought to try), SB 4.5.1887.

54. For the proliferation of this image in medical literature, see Furth, "Re-thinking Van Gulik."

1910s.⁵⁵ Around the turn of the century, however, some advertisements undergo a qualitative change. One, appearing in 1902, entitled “The best women’s medicine of all times” (“Gujin diyi fuke” 古今第一婦科, *SB* 23.5.1902), talks to “all the women who want to have children” 凡婦人望子者 (l. 6). Women are here approached directly. More and more texts mention or directly address “(all) you women” (凡)婦女. Women appear to have been accepted as possible readers.⁵⁶ Similarly, the advertisement “A pill for every month” 每月丸 of 1907 talks of and thus to “someone who has such and such (= XXX) a disease or discomfort” (XXX 之人, ll. 4–5) and advises that person to take the pill (*SB* 30.5.1907). Since the discomforts described are specific to women—menstrual pain, blood-clotting, irregular menses, and the like⁵⁷—it is clear that the “someone” in question is not male. This presentation no longer objectifies female ailments and explains them to the reader; rather, it personifies them by attributing them to the reader. Direct address and personification of the implied reader are frequently used topoi in advertisements for women’s medicines after the turn of the century.⁵⁸ It may also be significant that quite a num-

55. The argument also appears, e.g., in “包治經期腹痛丸” (A pill to relieve menstrual pains), *SB* 2.5.1887; “種子最速人參必孕丹” (A ginseng pill that makes everyone who takes it pregnant and that ensures offspring fast), *SB* 8.5.1897; “婦女白帶聖藥” (A sage’s medication against female white flow), *SB* 23.5.1902; “保赤靈丹” (A pill that preserves red blood particles), *SB* 17.5.1907; and “婦女之責任” (A woman’s responsibility), *SB* 16.5.1912.

56. An advertisement for a Japanese medicinal tea, Chūjōtō (“中將湯” [Chūjōtō, a Japanese medicinal tea], *SB* 28.5.1907), argues that “if you women use this medicine in case of all these illnesses, then . . .” 婦女諸症若用此藥 . . . (l. 16), and it implies that then the “you” will be as fine and healthy as the three women used to illustrate the advertisement, shown blissfully pouring out the medical tea.

57. The quasi-scientific presentation of the female sexual processes contained in these ads predates developments in the Republican period that Dikötter discusses in *Sex, Culture and Modernity*. For a thorough study of medical advertisements during the Qing and early Republic, see Hess, “Anzeigen”; for the Republican era, see Huang Kewu, “Cong *Shenbao* yiyao guanggao kan minchu Shanghai de yiliao wenhua.”

58. See, e.g., *SB* 30.5.1907: among the new medicines advertised by the Sino-British Pharmacy 中英大藥房 is a “women’s tonic” 婦女調經藥 and “all women who have contracted XXX disease” 凡婦女 XXX 者 are advised to take it. An advertisement for a pill against women’s white flow (“婦女白帶藥球” [A pill against women’s white flow], *SB* 24.7.1919) also talks directly to the implied reader (this advertisement was brought to my attention by Patrick Hess, who also provided a

ber of advertisements clearly beamed toward women are punctuated, at a time when few advertisement were.⁵⁹ Punctuation was one way of making advertisements easy to read, not unlike the simple language that publications aimed at women used. Here it conveys the message that women were the implied readers of these texts.

Gradually the female gendering of the implied reader grew more explicit. The female world 女界—often visually supported—became an established category in the early years of the twentieth century, on a par with the merchant world 商界 and the academic world 學界.⁶⁰ One such implied reader is depicted in an advertisement for a Japanese medicinal tea, Chūjōtō 中將湯 (SB 10.5.1912). A woman with small feet is shown approaching a milestone inscribed with the characters for “Health” 康健 (see Fig. 4.2). The reader is directly addressed as “all you sick women” 有病之婦人 (l. 3). There is, of course, only one road to health: drinking the advertised tea (ll. 1, 7). A week later (SB 16.5.1912), the same product is advertised under the title “A Woman’s Responsibility” 婦女之責任. Not only does it visually identify the implied readers, but again it addresses them directly, “all those women

German translation). Here, it is argued that “the power of the medication moves directly to the location of the illness, and one does not need the intervention of a doctor” (ll. 7–10). It is said that “of the women of our country who contract this illness, nine out of ten are ashamed to tell it to a doctor because it is an illness of the lower parts of the body” (ll. 14–18). Then, the text admonishes: “Those of you who are suffering from this illness, try it quickly, (for) if you do not look into it, you (may) hurt yourself” (ll. 27–30). The advertisement thus acknowledges the traditional fears of women that seeing a doctor might endanger their chastity. On the other hand, it appeals to women to be active and make their own decisions, to get the medicine and *independently*, as a modern woman, cure themselves (自己, in l. 11).

59. E.g., “每月丸,” SB 30.5.1907, and some of the advertisements for the Japanese medicinal tea, Chūjōtō (e.g., “中將湯,” SB 23.5.1907). Of course, not all of the few advertisements that are punctuated were intended for a female readership, as advertisements such as “勸中國青年” (Advice to China’s youth), SB 30.5.1907, or “健腦丸” (A pill to strengthen the brain), SB 25.5.1907, show. By 1912 punctuation had become so common in advertisements that it is no longer significant as a marker of the audience.

60. See, e.g., SB 31.5.1907. See also “婦女衛生書” (Hygiene books for women), SB 1.5.1912; and “女界寶” (A treasure for the female world), SB 7.5.1912. The frequent use of the term 女界 after 1907 may have something to do with the official introduction of female education in March 1907 and the growing awareness of the female presence in public.

Advertisement for 'Wang's Pills' (余妻王氏) featuring a woman in traditional attire holding an umbrella. The text includes:

凡有病勿迷亦勿聽
均是一條路
有病之婦人無論何人
無不得開胃得健康者
一無得開胃得健康者
其路者即是中將湯也
早飲飲中將湯者退一步
晚飲飲中將湯者退一步
一日不離連服者
進無限制
即能可達健康
脾標之品也
康健
余妻王氏
主治功能

- 中將湯治子宮各病
- 中將湯治月經各病
- 月經不調行期不準
- 經來腹痛腰痛諸症
- 產後血暈行經不調
- 月經不調行期不準
- 經來腹痛腰痛諸症
- 產後血暈行經不調
- 經來腹痛腰痛諸症
- 產後血暈行經不調
- 經來腹痛腰痛諸症
- 產後血暈行經不調
- 經來腹痛腰痛諸症
- 產後血暈行經不調

Fig. 4.2 The road to health (SB 10.5.1912)

who desire health” 欲期康健之婦女, admonishing them to drink the tea, since only healthy women can perform their household duties and rear their children properly (ll. 11–12): this is the “woman’s responsibility.”

This shift to addressing women in advertisements became more pronounced in the early 1910s.⁶¹ But did this lead to a change in implied values? The focus of these advertisements is an old demand: the production of offspring.⁶² The switch in implied reader changed only the interlocutor and not the normative content of the ads. They remind women of their reproductive function and reduce their responsibilities to the preservation of this very function. They equate a

61. This is not to say that all advertisements for women’s medicine were directly addressed to women. The advertisement for “Pink Pills for Pale People” (“余妻王氏” [My wife, Ms. Wang], SB 31.5.1912) reminds one immediately of the first advertisement introduced in this section, in which a female is mediated through the voice of her husband. Again, the sufferings of a woman, depicted in an illustration, are related by her husband.

62. For the traditional preoccupation with regulating menses to ensure reproduction, see Bray, *Technology and Gender*; Mann, *Precious Records*, 62; and most prominently Furth, *A Flourishing Yin*.

woman's health and her "duty" toward her family.⁶³ This ideology is presented both through verbal and through visual means: time and again, women appear with children (see Fig. 4.3).⁶⁴ Thus, the purpose of these advertisements is ambiguous: readerships are retooled over time but not values. Advertisements for female medications prescribe a very specific female reader. On the advertising pages of the Shanghai news media, female emancipation is confined to the domains of reproduction and domesticity.⁶⁵

In view of these findings, it is not surprising that in other areas traditionally identified as female terrain—child care, household management, beauty—the female reader also begins to play an increasingly prominent role over time. An 1882 advertisement for shampoo claims to contain "the most precious substances to be used on a woman's hair."⁶⁶ No mention is made of men's hair. Although not directly addressing the female reader, the advertisement thus suggests that beautiful hair is demanded of women alone. Many advertisements for cosmetics convey this gendered message through illustrations: they inevitably show a woman's picture.⁶⁷ Nevertheless, the ultimate identity of the implied reader remains ambivalent. As late as 1912, an advertisement for a "beautifying water" illustrated by a hand holding a mirror in which we can see a girl's face does not explicitly address women. Its call to "all those interested in preserving their beauty"

63. Later advertisements in the *Funü zazhi*, too, perpetuate this demand. The advertisement in vol. 1 (1915) for "Pink Pills for Pale People" (婦女疾病 [Women's maladies]), for instance, reminds the implied reader that "the health of the [female] body is the happiness of the family, but more and more [of you] women don't know this."

64. *XWB* 11.8.1897 shows women and children; "保赤靈丹," *SB* 17.5.1907, shows a woman with child; "Scott's Emulsion," ("產婦" [The lying-in woman], *SB* 3.5.1912), shows a nursing woman; the ad for the Japanese medicinal tea Chūjōtō in *Funü zazhi*, vol. 2 (1915) again shows a woman with child. Even an advertisement in *SB* 23.8.1912 for anti-pest fumigating sticks shows a woman nursing her child.

65. Dikötter (*Sex, Culture and Modernity*, 43) makes the same observation for the Republican period. See also Mann, "The Cult of Domesticity."

66. "老德記傳髮水" (Lao Deji's [Llewellyn's] special hair water), *SB* 28.5.1882.

67. See the advertisements for face powders, *SB* 2.5.1887, and other cosmetic objects, *SB* 4.5.1887. The latter advertisement contains no real text, just announcements of certain products. The pictures of a woman in these ads deliver a clear message; likewise, the advertisements for a perfume (*SB* 21.1.1897) and for toothpaste (*SB* 22.8.1887).



Fig. 4.3 Advertising to mothers (SB 17.5.1907)

openly includes both men and women (l. 15; see also l. 23, which talks to “men and women” 男女). At certain points, the text appears to be beamed toward female readers, since it is mentioned, for example, that the product helps guard against the poisonous substances in makeup (l. 18) and can be useful to treat facial sores in children (ll. 22–23). The illustration supports this gendered view, but ultimately the message remains equivocal.⁶⁸

68. There are advertisements that address both sexes and yet really talk to one, such as the early ads on female medicine, that really spoke only to men, or

Thus, even though women did gain in importance as implied readers of advertisements in early twentieth-century China, even though the expression “all you gentlemen” 諸君 by implication increasingly addresses “all you gentlewomen,” the male implied reader by no means disappeared.⁶⁹ The female consumer did not “edge out”⁷⁰ her male counterpart in later Qing Shanghai. To the contrary, women gain importance as implied readers only in certain kinds of advertisements. A comparative look at male gendering in advertisements illustrates that women did not appear as implied readers for a large range of products. An interest in the technical and scientific side of things is attributed only to men, for example: an ad for a water pump is illustrated with a picture of a man (*SB* 20.5.1882), as is a printing machine (*SB* 4.5.1887).⁷¹ Men are the primary implied readers in advertisements for books (*SB* 7.5.1902) and newspapers (*SB* 15.5.1907). An ad for an English encyclopedia on foreign affairs published by the *London Times* (*SB* 30.5.1907) is illustrated by a male reader seated in an elegant foreign-style study.⁷² Only books on special subjects are advertised for

the ad on beautifying water that really talked only to women. This ambiguity can be observed in ads for household products, foodstuffs, and childcare. Some advertisements for flour (e.g., *SB* 20.5.1892), for Nestle’s Swiss Milk (*SB* 21.5.1892), meat extracts (*SB* 3.5.1897), tailoring products (*SB* 18.5.1897), “Milkmaid brand milk” (*SB* 31.5.1907), and even Instant Milk (*SB* 2.5.1912), despite the accompanying picture of a milkmaid, are not exclusively beamed at a female audience.

69. The implicit female gendering of ads appears to increase over time. An advertisement for “Allenbury’s Foods” (*SB* 1.5.1912, l. 13) begins with an elaboration on the use of Allenbury’s foods for mothers who are not able to nurse their children. Similarly, the ad for Allenbury’s Diet a week later (*SB* 7.5.1912) appeals to “諸君,” but then explains that this product is best suited for babies (l. 8), children (l. 2), the sick (l. 1), and the elderly (l. 6), all of whom, just like the baby that had to be nursed in the first ad, are people a filial daughter-in-law and a good mother is expected to care for.

70. The expression is used in analogy to Tuchman and Fortin, *Edging Women Out*. The process of edging men out may eventually have taken place during the Republican period, though: Leo Lee (*Shanghai Modern*, chaps. 2–3) observes an increasing orientation toward female consumers in advertisements during the Republic.

71. Sewing machines are the only machines I have seen advertised with pictures of women: see, e.g., *SB* 12.8 and 25.9.1912. In these advertisements the title line “China has awakened” links female work to the national cause.

72. For further examples depicting men in advertisements, see ads for men’s clothes (*SB* 23.11.1912) and patent medicines (*SB* 22.3.1907, 29.3.1907, 10.3.1912, 22.11.1912).

and to women: songbooks, books on women's and children's education, and books on family livelihood 家計.⁷³

In China in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, advertising is thus compartmentalized more and more clearly by gender. The evidence of illustrations, language, or direct appeals to the implied interlocutor are signs that newspaper editors felt a need to acknowledge the female reader and to incorporate women into consumership. At the same time, the advertisements addressed to women prescribe a particular model for the fulfillment of womanhood. Perhaps the stated emphasis on beauty, sex, and procreation in advertisements beamed toward women had something to do with the fact that many potential readers—educated or working women—rather than become “mothers of citizens,” did remain single (as many silk workers advocating marriage resistance would), quit their marriage (Qiu Jin being the most prominent example), or abandoned their children (the writer Xiao Hong 蕭紅, 1911–42, was not the first to do this), and had to be convinced to do otherwise.⁷⁴ For these reasons women may not have become exclusive targets, in the sense of *the only* interlocutors, of advertising in the Shanghai news media, but they were *special* interlocutors. At the very moment that the female reader was hesitatingly established in advertising, she was already being ideologically formed into a particular image. Thus, the power over this construction remained with the beholder. The advertiser supervised the nature of female liberation. By emphasizing the primary importance of creating “mothers of citizens,” newspaper advertisements served as encapsulated textbooks, repositories of instructional information.⁷⁵ The advertised view of female life in late Qing China was not so much a reflection of Shanghai realities as a reaction to them.

73. See, e.g., an advertisement for the study of the Chinese language (*SB* 4.9.1907) and an advertisement for a book on female hygiene (*SB* 1.5.1912).

74. For a historical study of women's work in Shanghai and its consequences for childbearing and childrearing, see Luo, *Nüxing yu jindai Zhongguo shehui*, esp. 86–103. She also describes the fates of several early girl students who, when forced to leave school by their families, became estranged from them (*ibid.*, 142–45). One example of such a woman, taken from the *Shenbao*, is the single and allegedly “lonely” director of a girls' school, Ms. Zhou, who has left her home and family in order to pursue her profession (“論女堂館周小大結案事” [On closing the case of Zhou Xiaoda, director of a girls' school], *SB* 12.2.1873).

75. Shevelow, *Women and Print Culture*, 177.

DISCUSSING WOMEN:

GLORY FOR THE NATION

The gendered quality of advertising received an important boost during the anti-American boycott in 1905.⁷⁶ Women were thought to use more American products such as jewelry and toiletries than men, and they were the ones purchasing household goods sold by American firms. Accordingly, an advertising appeal to them was considered an effective means of strengthening the boycott.⁷⁷ The question of preserving China's integrity was considered to matter to women as well as men. Quite obviously, the increasing inclusion of women as objects of and subjects in advertising discourse had an ulterior aim. It was the vehicle for the implicit discourse of saving the Chinese nation. For the glory of the nation, women were envisaged as readers, and this social framework shaped the content of newspaper advertising in the late Qing and early Republic. Thus it was nationalism that—even literally—opened up new avenues for women and justified new and public roles for them.⁷⁸ By changing their purchasing patterns, women could participate actively from *within the home* in national undertakings such as the anti-American boycott.⁷⁹

The ambiguity formulated here is deliberate: whether women would be active inside or outside the home was indeed a question of great moment in the Shanghai media. The idea that women were “inside beings” *neiren* 内人, formulated in the *Rites of Zhou*, reconfirmed

76. For details of the boycott, see Chapter 6.

77. These are observations made by Rankin, “Elite Reformism,” 31; and Beahan, “Women’s Movement and Nationalism,” 276. A detailed study of the growth in gendered advertising during this period has not been undertaken, but my own findings show a sharp increase of advertising directed toward women by 1907.

78. For a thorough discussion of the liberating and at the same time subjugating influence of nationalism in the development of public female subjectivities, see Judge, “Talent, Virtue and the Nation.” For further developments in the Republican period and a strong, if slightly overstated, argument on the disadvantages of subordinating feminist demands to nationalist demands in the Chinese women’s movement, see Wang Zheng, *Women in the Chinese Enlightenment*; and my review of her book in *American Historical Review*. The peculiar version of nationalism described here predates some of the nationalisms related to particular political events discussed in Chapter 6 by several decades.

79. Beahan, “Women’s Movement and Nationalism,” 277–78, 364; see also Rankin, “Elite Reformism,” 30–31.

in Neo-Confucian writings, and prominent in didactic literature for women throughout the ages—an idea that was in fact most prominently a marker of class, since only gentry families could and did make their *distinction* visible by rendering their women invisible—this idea is frequently invoked in media deliberations of women's role in China's national project.⁸⁰ The following survey of editorials and commentaries in the *Shenbao* will illustrate how concern for the nation affected and determined the discourse on the inclusion of women of all classes in public life and among the readers of Shanghai's newspapers.

A number of editorials from the early years of the *Shenbao* deliberate the advantages and disadvantages of allowing a female presence in public. Shanghai, and the foreign influence felt there, becomes the focal point in these discussions. In a never-ending series of deliberations, Shanghai's streets, fields, temples, teahouses, factories, and opium dens all become locations of suspicion: at first reading, it may appear that no respectable woman frequented any of these places. These editorials are filled with scenarios of moral decrepitude. And yet, the greater number of them are sympathetic to women's cause. The women's question, from its very beginning, was one that involved close comparisons between Chinese and foreign customs, and it was these comparisons that ultimately worked in favor of China's women.

In an article of January 1873, the editorialist complained bitterly about an unseemly practice that had started to become fashionable in and outside Shanghai: social gatherings with both men and women present. He began with a quotation from "the ancients" to the effect that contact between man and woman ought not to be close and reminded the reader of the strict rituals and rules regulating such contacts established by the sages.⁸¹ The author complained that, contrary to this ancient knowledge, men and women in Shanghai spent entire nights together, sitting so close that one could not distinguish that one was a man and the other a woman. He sighed at the state the world had come to and concluded that these new developments—as demon-

80. For the *neiren* concept, see Ebrey, *Inner Quarters*, 25; and Bray, *Technology and Gender*.

81. For the rigorous distinctions between female and male, which became especially carefully observed after the Song among members of the upper classes, see Ko, *Teachers of the Inner Chambers*; and Bray, *Technology and Gender*.

strated by a recent case of adultery—made life for women ever more dangerous and difficult.⁸² In June 1884, an editorial entitled “On Banning Women from Opium Dens and Teahouses” warned of an increasing and accelerating loss of morals (l. 1), the worst of which was the decline in female modesty and restraint (l. 2). It was foreign jurisdiction in cities like Shanghai that created this precarious situation (ll. 3, 5). Unlike foreign men and women, Chinese had never learned to interact in public. Therefore, for a Chinese woman simply to stroll along the streets as foreign women did inevitably led to trouble (ll. 7–8). But that was not really the women’s fault. The editorialist ended with a sigh: soon the restrictions on women appearing in public would be lifted (l. 29).⁸³

Many if not all these editorials, which were often discussed, refuted, and even mocked in readers’ letters and bamboo rhymes,⁸⁴ refer to a traditional set of values internalized by both male and female readers: women are morally suspect and should therefore be sequestered as much as possible, their roles are private, and the public realm is reserved exclusively for men.⁸⁵ The editorialists often admit that the Chinese habit of circumscribing women may not be internationally acceptable.⁸⁶ Indeed, quite a few editorials deal explicitly with foreign contempt for the Chinese because they consider women lesser beings

82. “嚴責碰頭風俗論” (On serious punishments for the habit of social intercourse), *SB* 21.1.1873. A number of articles discussing the same problem of social intercourse between men and women appear in the second half of 1878. They deal with Guo Songtao’s daring act (later interpreted as a *faux pas*) in meeting with guests at a tea party in London together with his wife. See the discussion in Wagner, “*Shenbao* in Crisis,” 120–21.

83. “煙館茶樓宜禁婦女說,” *SB* 23.6.1884. “論女堂倌周小大結案事,” *SB* 12.2.1873 again calls the influence of concession morals on women “polluting” (l. 7), although it ends on a sympathetic note toward women such as Zhou.

84. For some of the early controversies, see Vittinghoff, “Diskurs und Geschichte.”

85. See, e.g., “論禮別男女” (On the fact that the rites distinguish between men and women), *SB* 9.8.1878; “書禁婦女揀茶示後” (Written after the directive to strictly forbid women from picking tea), *SB* 30.12.1882; “禁淫戲議” (Discussing the prohibition of lewd plays), *SB* 21.2.1887; and “婦女不宜輕出閨門” (Women should not leave their boudoir frivolously), *SB* 21.8.1893.

86. E.g., “煙館茶樓宜禁婦女說,” *SB* 23.6.1884, l. 9, mentions that Westerners might think badly of Chinese restrictions against women.

than men.⁸⁷ Many criticize Chinese restrictions and argue that the morally improper behavior observable in some Chinese women who have overstepped the boundaries between the inner and the outer realms must be blamed on the old restrictions: how can these women learn to deal with men properly if they are never allowed to meet them?⁸⁸ Yet, even the most outspokenly sympathetic editorials (either directly or *ex negativo*) testify to traditional fears of a catastrophe caused by women “let loose” (a phenomenon traditionally called *nǚhuo* 女禍).⁸⁹ These fears were enhanced by the fact that in Shanghai women of all classes were apparently breaking free of the old order and adopting foreign models of behavior. It is no coincidence that restrictions such as the ban on women visiting theaters, for example, were in fact established only to be broken and reiterated.⁹⁰ Significantly, it is entertainers, prison matrons, factory workers, maids, and prostitutes—all representatives of the lower classes—who appear most

87. See, e.g., “述西人論中國貴男賤女之俗” (Westerners discussing the Chinese custom of considering men more worthy than women), *SB* 17.4.1882. This editorial acknowledges and explains Chinese attitudes toward women, considers the ravings against immoral interchanges between men and women in the foreign concessions, and concludes that long-established Chinese traditions will not be easy to change, although it strongly advises readers to do so, since China has already become a laughingstock among foreigners.

88. See, e.g., “書禁婦女揀茶示後,” *SB* 30.12.1882, which vehemently criticizes the directive and argues (quoting Confucius) that lewdness does not necessarily ensue from contact between men and women: not all women are beautiful enough. “論中國婦女佞佛陋俗” (On vulgar habits in female Buddhist worship), *SB* 24.3.1897, makes a similar argument. It criticizes loose behavior observable at China’s Buddhist temples but explains it, again, by the fact that China’s women are kept sequestered all the time and never have contact with men: no wonder that they do not know how to behave properly when allowed to visit temples.

89. See “述西人論中國貴男賤女之俗,” *SB* 17.4.1882, l. 5; another illuminating article in this regard is “論老男勿觀少女” (On the fact that old men should not get intimate with young women), *SB* 31.5.1877, which deals with the dangers to old and haggard men of young beautiful women. On *nǚhuo* in the late Qing, see Beahan, “Women’s Movement and Nationalism,” 72–73; Lin Yutang, “Feminist Thought”; and Witke, “Transformation of Attitudes,” 227. Witke cites it as the “legacy of doubt about the moral stability of females.” For a convincing treatment of the making of this trope, see Edwards, “Representations of Women,” esp. 36–37; and Ahern, “Power and Pollution of Chinese Women.”

90. See Vittinghoff, “Readers, Publishers and Officials,” who discusses an 1874 decree by the Shanghai circuit intendant banning women from theaters and tea-houses.

prominently as women in public in these *Shenbao* editorials.⁹¹ The fact that these women were discussed within a framework conceived exclusively by and for the upper classes shows that their example had become relevant even across class boundaries. The nervousness with which many of these editorials are argued and the harsh and drawn-out controversies they provoked are evidence that the restrictive discourse rehearsed here is again—as was the case in advertising—a response to, rather than a mirror of, the realities of life in Shanghai.⁹²

Shenbao editorialists did not argue against the presence of women in public per se, but they were careful to include the opinions of those who did. The illustrations in the *Dianshizhai huabao* may be considered a subtle counterpoint to some of the more conservative arguments presented in contemporary *Shenbao* editorials. Throughout the 1880s, the *Dianshizhai huabao* showed Chinese and foreign women in public places, dancing, playing, performing public functions, even voting,⁹³ a trend that becomes increasingly mainstream in other pictorial magazines after the turn of the century. In the *Tubua ribao* women are depicted in restaurants, in teahouses with entertainment, at horse races, at school, or at public convocations.⁹⁴ They are the most typical riders on rickshas and pushcarts (see *Tubua ribao*, 56/7, 20/7, 118/7, 20/8) and even bicycles (see Fig. 4.4).⁹⁵ By 1909, and in the interpretation of the *Tubua ribao*, at least, women from all classes were no longer simply “inside beings,” *neiren*. A number of pictures suggest different types of jobs outside the house appropriate for women: sell-

91. See, e.g., the editorials in *SB* 31.5.1877, 13.2.1881, 17.4.1882, 20.5.1882, 6.6.1887, 2.1.1897, and 27.10.1899. The subject of prostitution is discussed in more detail in the next section and in Chapter 5.

92. Again, the discussion in Luo, *Nüxing yu jindai Zhongguo shehui*, esp. 86–103, is instructive, since it illustrates the marked difference between what was expected of women, according to newspaper discussions, and what was actually done by them, according to other historical sources.

93. Women in the *Dianshizhai huabao*, are to be found as audiences at theatrical, circus, or *shuochang* 說唱 (storytelling with musical accompaniment) performances. Oftentimes, they sit apart from the men, in a balcony, for example, but sometimes they can be spotted mixed in with a primarily male audience. On women in the *Dianshizhai huabao*, see Jungmann, “Traditionelle Muster.”

94. See *Tubua ribao* 41/7, 63/7, 19/7, 79/7, 64/2, and 6/7.

95. For the bicycle fad among women in early twentieth-century China, see Zamperini, “But I Never Learned to Waltz.”



Fig. 4.4 A new sport for women: bicycling (*Tubui ribao* 204, no. 7)

ing flowers, brooms, or Chinese sweets.⁹⁶ In these illustrations, too, the question of class is relevant. Depictions of reading women (discussed above)—while appealing to the lower-class female reading public, too—had alluded to earlier portrayals of upper-class women readers. With the representation of working women in pictorials (as in editorials), women from good families were in turn given the example of their lower-class sisters to consider and emulate. The complete revolution in views on the female presence in public that resulted from this radical breakdown in class boundaries is manifest in one picture from the *Tubua ribao*: it shows three (upper-class) women: the woman of the past, a *neiren* inside a house behind lowered curtains bashfully peeping out; the woman of the present taking a ride in a

96. *Tubua ribao* 6/8, 43/8, 1/8.

ricksha (as once only a courtesan would have done); and the woman of the future strolling on the streets (as only women workers would), unashamedly talking to the man at her side (see Fig. 4.5). This type of image talks to its implied reader. It presents the picture of an evolution, and evolution by the early 1910s inevitably meant improvement. The picture teaches the female reader of the *Tubua ribao* what to aspire to. It constructs, even pushes a new, public role and function for women. By depicting women in space and territory once considered exclusively male—at least in the eyes and orthopraxis of the gentry—these pictorial magazines supplied new role models for their readers. Their depictions suggest that the view of the proper place of “respectable” women slowly changed from that of wives and mothers within the family to that of informed and active contributors to a wider society, a significant trend that, suggested pictorially since the 1880s, apparently accelerated around the turn of the century. In contrast to advertising discourse, the implied reader of the editorial discussions and the viewer of illustrations of women’s presence in public may be less immediately interpreted as a woman. Yet by voicing and deliberating the most blatant contradictions between tradition and the new possibilities offered by the increasing opening of the outside world to women, they draw the picture of an implied reader deliberating and agonizing over these many possibilities and the right path to take. This reader could be either male or female.⁹⁷

One important element that contributed to the opening of the outside world to women of all classes was the introduction of schooling.⁹⁸ Missionaries opened the first public schools for female students in the middle of the nineteenth century⁹⁹ with the explicit goals of preparing students “to be good wives and mothers and to make

97. The example of female author Ding Ling’s torn figure *Sophia* is a fictional illustration of this agony. See Mittler, “Verführung Emanzipation: Befreite Frauen und die chinesische 4. Mai-Bewegung.” See also Beahan, “Women’s Movement and Nationalism,” 1.

98. Women’s education had been restricted largely to members of the elite. For female education in the Song, see Ebrey, *Inner Quarters*; for the Ming and Qing, see Ko, *Teachers of the Inner Chambers*; and Mann, *Precious Records*; for the late Qing, see Bailey, “Active Citizen or Efficient Housewife?”; and McElroy, “Forging a New Role for Women.”

99. Luo, *Nüxing yu jindai Zhongguo shehui*, 113–67; Ross and Telkamp, “Introduction.” One of the first missionary girls’ schools opened in 1844 in Ningbo; many more followed (Witke, “Transformation of Attitudes,” 219).

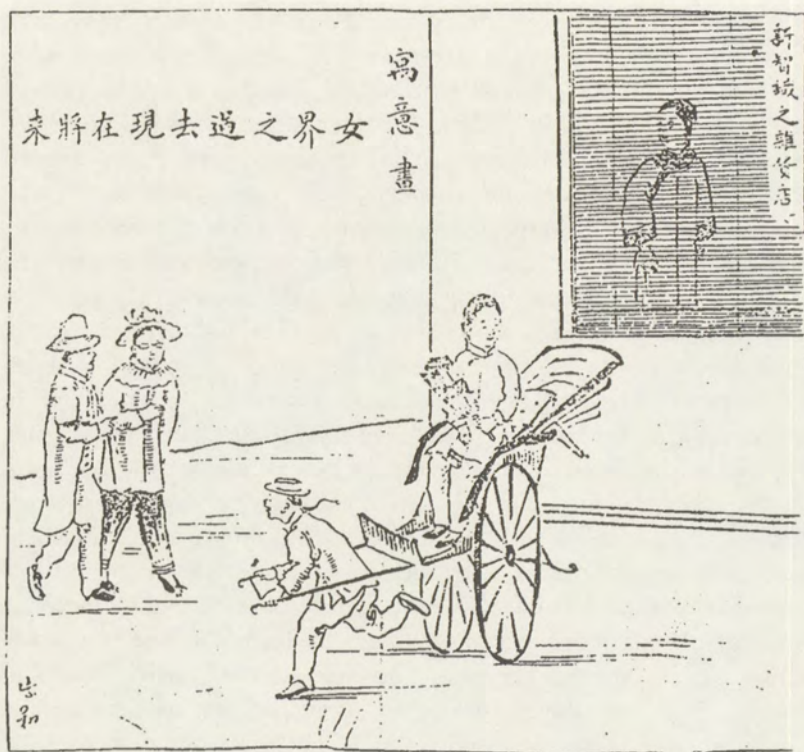


Fig. 4.5 "Past, Present, and Future of the Female World"

(*Tuhua ribao* 10, no. 9)

happy homes."¹⁰⁰ Although this schooling did not differ markedly from concepts of Chinese female education in vogue since Ban Zhao 班昭 (ca. 49–ca. 120) in the Han dynasty,¹⁰¹ the opening of the missionary schoolhouse to women turned out to be a highly effective means of liberating girls both psychologically and physically from confinement at home.¹⁰² The first Chinese school for women, the

100. Beahan, "Women's Movement and Nationalism," 43.

101. For Ban Zhao's ideas on education, see Swann, *Pan Chao*; and, more recently, Chen Yu-shih, "Pan Chao's *Nü Chieh*"; and Lily Lee, *Virtue of Yin*. For later uses of Ban's (albeit elitist) concept of education, see Mann, *Precious Records*; and Ko, *Teachers of the Inner Chambers*.

102. See Witke, "Transformation of Attitudes," 218. On missionary schools for women, see *Christianity in China* and, most recently, *Education, Culture, and Identity*. Bastid (*Educational Reform*, 49) warns that one should not overestimate

Chinese Girls' Academy 中國女學堂, was founded in Shanghai in 1897 by the wife of revolutionary martyr Tan Sitong 譚嗣同 (1865-98).¹⁰³ In a monthly assembly at this school, students had to debate a pre-assigned subject. Teaching the art of public speaking was a radical innovation in the training of young women, who were traditionally seldom seen, let alone *heard*, outside the confines of the home.¹⁰⁴ The ideal graduate of this school, however, was prepared to become a public figure. Two more such schools opened in 1898 and 1899 but had to close in 1900 by imperial decree.¹⁰⁵ In 1902 the Shanghai Patriotic Girls' School 愛國女學校 was started by the Chinese Education Association.¹⁰⁶ By July 1907, the *North China Herald* could report some 100 girls' schools in Shanghai alone.¹⁰⁷ With the official endorsement of girls' schools in 1907, the number of students rose exponentially, to reach several hundred thousand by the May Fourth movement, when even universities began to admit women.¹⁰⁸ This development of female education, crucial to the formation of women's public sense of self, was reflected in newspaper commentaries. Beginning with its earliest editorials, the *Shenbao* employed by now familiar techniques of packaging, such as classical analogies and citations, to soothe the minds of its readers about this radical change. Typically, again, it is only in the late 1890s that editorialists begin to advocate the foreign model for this type of education in its own right. The entire discussion of women's education, which tends to be surprisingly open toward change in view of the conservative elements otherwise observed in discussions on women in public, is carried by one idea, however: education for women is perceived as a

the importance of missionaries in the changes in the educational system. Yet their schools obviously played a key role in changing the *public* role of women. Cf. Rankin, "Emergence of Women," 45: "The women who taught in schools or managed associations achieved a new status from their public activities, a status that had eluded the talented women poets who stayed at home."

103. Rankin, "Emergence of Women," 54.

104. Beahan, "Women's Movement and Nationalism," 151; see also Rankin, "Elite Reformism," 32.

105. Beahan, "Women's Movement and Nationalism," 327.

106. See the advertisement in *Su Bao* 1.7.1903.

107. *NCH* 18.7.1907.

108. Relevant statistics are given in Luo, *Nüxing yu jindai Zhongguo shehui*, 131-32, 137, 156.

panacea for saving China. Once more, it is nationalism that drives the discussion about women.

One early *Shenbao* editorial on the subject inspired a lengthy debate. "On Girls' Schools" ("Lun nüxue" 論女學, *SB* 30.3.1876) employs telling rhetorical devices in its presentation of the topic.¹⁰⁹ The editorialist began with the statement that girls' schools had been widespread in ancient China (l. 6). Typically, he then compared "ancient Chinese practice" with the contemporary English, American, and German interest in girls' schools and provided impressive figures for the number of girl students in these countries (ll. 7–8). In an attempt to prove the benefits of women's education, he argued that women and men are intellectual equals 婦女之靈性與男子同 (l. 10) and that failing to tap the female intellect was tantamount to discarding five out of ten people in the country (l. 12). His argument was carefully derived from the theory of *yin* 陰 and *yang* 陽, which were presented as a complementary pair. The editorialist condemned the common insistence on the supremacy of the male element *yang* ("Could a man be procreated if there were no woman?" ll. 14–15) and even gave examples of how women's ability to concentrate—since they are confined to the home and need not go out to "distracting" work—made them, at least potentially, the better astronomers, mathematicians, and geographers. He also criticized the oft-quoted proverb "For a woman to have no talents is a virtue" 女子無才便是德 (l. 32)¹¹⁰ but concluded on the familiar note that the establishment of girls' schools should not be undertaken in order to emulate foreign practices but to resurrect an old Chinese belief, the complementary nature of *yin* and *yang* (l. 34).

This revolutionary editorial, which takes the equality of women and men for granted, is couched in compromising terms. The implied reader is apparently well versed in the Classics and thus equally well

109. This editorial is also analyzed in Vittinghoff, "Diskurs und Geschichte." Vittinghoff refers to readers' responses to this editorial appearing in *SB* 7.4 and 11.4.1876. To illustrate the enormous number of editorials dealing with women's education throughout the years, a few more examples not discussed here can be mentioned: *SB* 24.3.1897, 7.4.1897, 10.9.1902, 15.9.1907, 8.8.1908, 3.9.1912; and *XWB* 23.8.1907, 27.12.1909.

110. For the prevalence of this proverb since the Ming, see Borthwick, "Changing Concepts," 66–67; and Lin Yutang, "Feminist Thought," 129. For a thorough discussion of its development over time, see Kang-i Sun Chang, "Ming-Qing Women Poets."

versed in common (orthodox) prejudices. He has to be warned about the falseness of the proverb "For a woman to have no talents is a virtue." But at the same time, he is being lured into accepting the editorialist's argument by being fed familiar concepts. The writer does not offend the reader's reverence for the Chinese past or suspiciousness of all that is foreign, but he does appeal to the reader's sense of crisis. This cautious manipulation implies a reader who need not be male but who is rather conservative, certainly not a radical advocate of girls' schools.

An editorial of some seventeen years later was couched in a more activist vein. "On Supporting Girls' Schools" ("Lun zhenxing nüxue" 論振興女學; *SB* 20.1.1893) acknowledges the common assumption that there is a difference between girls and boys (ll. 16-17).¹¹¹ One can almost hear an imaginary interlocutor supplying one detail after another in support of this conviction. The editorialist patiently dissected these arguments, explaining that the difference was in fact culturally produced. How could boys not be active and girls passive if girls were kept confined to the innermost of rooms, for example (ll. 20-22)? At the beginning, the editorialist had reminded readers that male and female, *yang* and *yin*, *qian* 乾 and *kun* 坤, cannot exist without each other (ll. 1-2) as a means of introducing readers to the idea of (co)education in foreign countries. He ended with a final appeal to all those "aware of their times" (l. 27): in order to save China, they must open the doors of the inner chambers and create public schools for girls.

Again, this editorial invokes a sense of crisis. Again, it lures the reader into thinking that by practicing coeducation (a practice that would continue to be contested in China for a few more decades),¹¹²

111. This traditional argument is already proffered in Ban Zhao's *Nü jie* 女誡 (Instructions for women), (Swann, *Pan Chao*, 85).

112. The Qing government was opposed to coeducation (Bastid, *Educational Reform*, 64). Its critical attitude is reflected in an extremely conservative article that appeared as late as 1906: "男女分教合教平議" (Discussion on separate-sex and coeducation), *SB* 22.6.1906. It argues that, first, man and woman are simply not the same kinds of beings. Women are weaker, and thus their achievements cannot come up to those of men. If they are educated together with men, they will feel under pressure. Second, men have to know the world, whereas women have to know the household. There is thus a discrepancy in the types of knowledge that need to be conveyed to them, and therefore it is difficult to teach them together. Third, men and women have different destinations. Men are the key to society, women to the family. Thus, it would be impossible to teach them together. All these reasons are considered of universal truth. There is, however, according to

the foreigners are following Chinese standards: by allowing girls and boys to be educated together, they are applying the "essence" of *yin-yang* theory. However, in this editorial, the irony conveyed through the use of rhetorical questions mocks the imaginary conservative interlocutor, a foil of the implied reader. The implied reader, who could well be a woman, secretly laughs at this interlocutor's stubbornness and failure to understand the pressing situation at hand.

Women's schools increasingly became a matter of heated debate as the *Shenbao* continued to print both conservative and more radical voices.¹¹³ An 1897 editorial "China Ought to Broaden Its Efforts to Es-

the author another China-specific reason for not favoring coeducation: in his view, it would kill off the sprouts of women's education immediately and thus destroy the effort to teach women at all. Xu and Xu, *Qingmo sishinian "Shenbao" shiliao*, 293-94, also mention this article.

113. An outspoken editorial with a long title betraying its mission appeared in 1897: "論中國欲人人識字必先以婦女識字為始,并推言婦女不讀書之害" (Discussing the fact that if one hopes for general literacy in China one must first make women literate and elaborating on the harm of not educating women), *SB* 17.1.1897. It argues that since education in China is still mostly private and takes place at home, mothers play an important role. Because their knowledge is restricted, however, there is a need to teach mothers. It is not acceptable to say that one first has to solve the problem of men's education and only then to turn to women's education. The editorialist predicts that if one imitated the foreigners and set up girls' schools in cities and the countryside and made everyone send their daughters to school, in about twenty years China's women would be able to read and in another twenty years, all the men in China would be able to read and write, too, having been taught by their mothers (and that in spite of the fact that the Chinese language is so much more difficult than foreign languages, as elaborated in great detail in the first half of the article).

In response, another editorial, a few days later, takes an even more radical stance, as is immediately apparent in its title: "申論中國婦女宜皆讀書識字之益,并議中國宜設女學校開女科第頒女法律" (Extending the discussion on the fact that women ought all to be educated and literate and further suggesting that China ought to establish girls' schools, have women's state examinations, and promulgate laws for women), *SB* 23.1.1897. However, throughout the article the editorialist hides his radical thoughts behind moderate statements. He suggests that better-educated women will also be better at meeting traditional moral standards, and that they will be better at managing the household, since they cannot so easily be cheated. He also asked if, when the husband is away, for example, it would not be useful if the woman could write to him herself. His suggestions beyond the advocacy of schooling are presented as music for the future: wait for ten years to see if women's education has any beneficial results; if it does, that is the time to start introducing further measures.

establish Girls' Schools" ("Lun Zhongguo yi guang she nüxueshu" 論中國宜廣設女學塾, 30.4.1897) argues that education is fundamental to everything. Therefore, in foreign countries, everyone, no matter what his or her class, is educated, with the result that "those who produce are many and those who consume are few" (quoting a familiar phrase from the *Great Learning* [10/19], l. 4). China, the editorialist sighed, has recently lost one (trade) war after another against foreign countries (most recently the humiliating defeat by Japan in 1894-95) because of the general lack of education (l. 5). The failure to educate women amounts to wasting half the population, and the other half contains too many indolent, self-indulgent loafers. Accordingly, China is a country in which many consume and few produce (ll. 5-10). Women cannot hold certain jobs because they are not educated or because their education lacks rigor: girls from rich families may have gone to school for five years, but since their teachers and elders consider them second-class students, they are too quick to call them "talented girls," *cainü* 才女 (ll. 15-17). All this, the editorialist concluded, illustrates the strength of the widespread belief that "for a woman to have no talents is a virtue" (ll. 18-19). The editorial ends with some practical suggestions about staffing (it would be improper to have male teachers) and funding for girls' schools (investing in a girl's education was traditionally considered a waste, since she would be married out of the family).

Although this editorialist did not resort to concocting a Chinese pedigree for women's education (it is no coincidence that the text was written after 1895 when finding Chinese origins for the Western practices was no longer in vogue, as is discussed in Chapter 2), he allowed for a conservative readership by drawing on the authority of the *Great Learning* and by anticipating and answering the rebuttals of an imaginary interlocutor. The editorialist's response to potential criticisms, including his thoughtful attention even to details such as staffing and finances, allows us to construct an implied reader who would, in the end, agree with the conclusion that girls' schools would benefit the country.

This train of thought and the same argumentative tactic are continued in a 1903 editorial "On the Establishment of Girls' Schools" ("Xing nüxue shuo 興女學說," 12.10.1903). (Note the progression from the abstract concept of a girls' school in "On Girls' Schools" to advocacy of such schools in "On Supporting Girls' Schools" to the exten-

sion in scope in "China Ought to Broaden Its Efforts to Establish Girls' Schools" to the establishment of such schools in this editorial.) Here the editorial voice is much more radical and emotional: "I sigh and say it is just impossible not to support girls' schools" (l. 5). The author acknowledged traditional explanations with skepticism, often bordering on bitter irony: those who believe that "for a woman to have no talents is a virtue" (l. 5) are heartless. Beating the "traditionalists" at their own game, he cites the *Biographies of Exemplary Women* (*Lienüzhuan* 列女傳, conventionally ascribed to Han scholar Liu Xiang, 劉向, ca. 79–8 BCE) and Chinese fiction to illustrate how loyal, filial, dutiful, and powerful educated women can be (ll. 8–10). The editorialist ended this section with a rhetorical question: "So they [the conservatives] say that girls need not study, but really do girls not need to study?" (l. 14). On the other hand, he only seemingly mocked the other side, the progressives, and their ideas on women, which, he wrote, have "deluded" many a decent girl (l. 15) and caused quite a few family rebellions (ll. 22–23). His matter-of-fact presentation of foreign-derived concepts such as equality of the sexes or liberation from male oppression and the images he drew of liberated women who have become captains, newspaper editors, bank clerks, or doctors (ll. 16–19) or who serve in government and at court speak a different language. These are public women, no longer confined to the home, and the editorialist obviously approved of them. It is all but impossible to refute the final implicit argument: criticism of spreading these concepts and promoting these types of women is just as unfounded as criticism of physical education (a controversial issue throughout the final decades of the nineteenth century). Why? Because clearly, countries teaching physical education, Japan among them, have shown their superior strength (most recently in the Sino-Japanese war of 1894–95) (ll. 24–25). Once more, this editorial alludes to the prevalent sense of national crisis to advocate the cause of women. It concludes that rather than concentrate on the details of the content of education, it would be the greatest good fortune for China if it tapped all those clever women (ll. 27–28).

The evolution in the titles is thus accompanied by an evolution in the editorial voice. In contrast to the diffident editorialist of "On Girls' Schools" who kowtowed to the reactionary reader after every sentence, this editorialist presented his radical views on female education to an implied reader who is probably aware of the new possibili-

ties and willing to risk them. This reader is expected to agree with the editorialist and to consider educated women a boon for China. By providing role models for women, the editorialist was also talking to an implied female reading public, who can thus envisage their own future and learn from his exemplars.

In view of the numerous discussions on the importance of women's education throughout Chinese history, the most significant qualitative change in the *Shenbao* texts analyzed here is the demand to educate not just a select few but all of China's women. This claim, however, served to magnify the problems envisaged to ensue from the "wrong" kind of education for women.¹¹⁴ Even among the educated elites, literate women had been accepted only under particular circumstances and conditions throughout Chinese history.¹¹⁵ Restrictions on what women should read, write, and publish were the rule,¹¹⁶ for education for women could be potentially dangerous.¹¹⁷ The rather belabored rhetoric of many *Shenbao* editorials and their potential for controversy indicate that despite the real changes in the educational system, this attitude remained widespread.

Accordingly, the official regulations on elementary and normal schools for girls published on 8 March 1907, addressed this perceived problem, too. Girls' schools were to teach the "beautiful virtues" of filial piety, submission, compassionate love, propriety, reverence, and chastity and the "feminine virtues" of honesty, diligence, and frugality. These traditional ideals of femininity, which had for centuries resulted in passive submission to familial authority, were to be the officially sanctioned standard of behavior. The products of girls' schools were

114. Ko (*Teachers of the Inner Chambers*, 98) observes that the advocates of female education in the Ming also envisaged a broader public—not quite as inclusive as during the late Qing. At the same time they were afraid of their own courage. The ongoing restraint mechanisms to be observed during the late Qing are thus an old established practice: no matter how far the writing/reading woman departed from her prescribed domestic roles, the assumption that her abilities and callings in life were to be distinct from those of public man persisted (*ibid.*, 231).

115. The cult of sentiment (*qing* 情) in the Ming, for example, made the entry of women into intellectual circles easier (Mann, *Precious Records*, 22). Similarly, the disillusionment with state Confucianism and bureaucracy during the Qing made women, who, even when educated, were barred from the examinations, models of the pure scholar, untainted by the hope of examination success (*ibid.*, 31).

116. Widmer, "Ming Loyalty," 366, 373; Ko, *Teachers of the Inner Chambers*, 176.

117. Waltner, "Writing Her Way out of Trouble," 231.

to be “worthy women, worthy wives, and worthy mothers,” transformed by their new knowledge of traditional virtues.¹¹⁸ Evidence from *Shenbao* editorials shows that little of this particular educational ideology found its way into the newspapers, however. Even the earliest editorials call for a new type of woman. The ideal schoolgirl is talented but by no means lacking in virtue; she is a mother of China’s future citizens but only because she can master mathematics and work as a journalist or a doctor as well. Once more, the *Shenbao* authors use well-known images and expectations, in this case of women, to subvert them for their own purposes. Only very few editorials perpetuate older stereotypes—most reconfigure them.¹¹⁹

Although there is significant variation and polyphony in the *Shenbao*’s attitude toward women’s public presence (often criticized, albeit apologetically) and women’s education (regularly promoted, albeit carefully), women’s issues are obviously of pressing concern since the earliest days of *Shenbao* reporting. Nevertheless, it is not easy to fathom an implied reader for these editorials. All of them invoke concerns that might be just as pressing for a man as for a woman. All of them give significant publicity to women, but none of them is openly directed at them. In these editorials, women and their cause are objectified. All the editorials discussed here invoke a sense of crisis, a sense of impending doom for China as a nation. All editorialists agree that woman is the metonym for all that is weak and “wrong with China.”¹²⁰ China’s national collapse could be averted only by a

118. For the persistence of this attitude from the late Qing into the early years of the Republic, see Luo, *Nüxing yu jindai Zhongguo shehui*, 145–65. See also Beahan, “Women’s Movement and Nationalism,” 334, 337, 338, 380. The argument recurs in Liang Qichao’s oft-cited essay “On Girls’ Schools” “論女學” of 1897, first published in the *Shiwunbao*. Liang contended that women should be educated in order to bring up superior sons who would be capable of ushering China into the modern world (Witke, “Transformation of Attitudes,” 30; Beahan, “Women’s Movement and Nationalism,” 115, 183). See also the discussion of a 1901 text in the journal *Jiaoyu shijie* 教育世界 (World of education) in Bastid, *Educational Reform*, 80.

119. The only ultimately conservative article is one dealing with the advantages of same-sex education over coeducation mentioned above in note 112: “男女分教合教平議,” *SB* 22.6.1906.

120. This remains true until the 1930s: “The image of shackles was a stock metaphor in early twentieth century Chinese feminism and literature, illustrating the oppression of women and even the nation” (Kristine Harris, “The New Woman,” 60).

change in the situation of women. Hence, improvement of the educational system for women and a reconsideration of old and new restrictions imposed on women will benefit the entire nation; indeed they are the panacea for the ills of China. *Shenbao* editorialists and the "civilized circles" in China were concerned about the women's question because they considered the European countries and the United States the most civilized countries in the world. Yet these countries treated women so differently from the way that China did and were contemptuous of Chinese practice. An aspiration to restore China's reputation in these countries was at the heart of these discussions, then. Footbinding, female illiteracy, and concubinage were to be abolished so that the foreigners would no longer regard China as a "land of savages."¹²¹ The discussion of women's independence and equality in the news media is a discourse about preserving China's national independence and restoring China to international equality.¹²² This was the social framework that shaped the content of the Shanghai news media in the early years of the *Shenbao*: nationalist sentiments were the clue to the women's question. Nationalism justified new female roles.¹²³

It is striking that women were not explicitly invited to join these discussions, that they were nowhere as obviously addressed as implied readers as they were in advertisements. Was the emancipation of women from the confines of the home a matter only of men's reputation?¹²⁴ Certainly not. Perhaps the real-life equivalents of the maid,

121. Witke, "Transformation of Attitudes," 155. To remark on what "others may (and indeed did) think of us" is a recurring topos in *Shenbao* editorials throughout the period 1872-1912. The most explicit editorial with regard to the treatment of women is the above-mentioned "述西人論中國貴男賤女之俗," *SB* 17.4.1882. For other examples, see Xu and Xu, *Qingmo sishinian "Shenbao" shiliao*, 123-25. See also Kang Youwei's clear regard for the opinions of Westerners in a memorial on footbinding in 1898. He was concerned that foreigners were taking pictures of women with bound feet (see Borthwick, "Changing Concepts," 70-71, for a discussion of his petition). For a contemporary example, see *Harper's Weekly*, 11.8.1894, 747.

122. Ute Gerhard ("Anfänge der deutschen Frauenbewegung," 196) makes a similar argument. She explains the close connection between the rise of the women's movement in Germany and the 1848 revolution.

123. Rankin, "Elite Reformism," 36. See also Borthwick, "Changing Concepts," 75.

124. Roske, "Geschichte eines Traumes," 138.

the prostitute, and the prison matron mentioned in *Shenbao* commentaries and editorials had more pressing personal concerns than the future of their nation.¹²⁵ But writings by their better-off contemporaries such as Qiu Jin, for example, and other women journalists before and after her suggest that the fate of the nation was their highest consideration, too.¹²⁶ Thus, women themselves used the nationalist project as an “authorizing discourse.”¹²⁷ Accordingly, unlike advertisements, these editorials do not prescribe the domestic road as the only feasible one for women; but not unlike advertisements, these texts have an ultimate aim: their implied reader is a nationalist, male or female alike. By emphasizing the importance of liberating and educating women for the sake of the Chinese nation, the Chinese newspaper editorial is another “encapsulated textbook” rather than purely a mirror of reality.

REPORTING WOMEN:

DESIRABLE “EMASCULATES”

A New York city editor once said that he needed to keep but four words in mind to determine the relative appeal of news stories. These four words, he said, are *blood, action, big-names, and women.*

—John Drewry¹²⁸

Both editorials and advertisements in the Shanghai press talk about and to a female reader some time before the turn of the century, yet the female reader thus prescribed was different from her counterpart on Shanghai’s streets. This section examines to what extent these findings also apply to news reports. It addresses such questions as: Do women have a place as implied readers in these reports? How are they depicted and to what end? Can we observe a perpetuation or a revision of traditional Chinese attitudes toward women? Can we argue that woman as the object of news reporting attained a new position

125. Lu, *Beyond the Neon Lights*, illustrates how different the everyday concerns of the lower classes living in Shanghai were from those discussed in intellectual writings of the time.

126. The first female journalists not writing exclusively for women’s magazines appear in the early 1910s (Li Xiting, “Minchu nüjjizhe”; Beahan, “Women’s Movement and Nationalism,” 200; and Eva Chang, “Chinese Women’s Place in Journalism”).

127. This expression is used and exemplified marvelously in Judge, “Talent, Virtue, and the Nation,” 765 *et passim*.

128. Drewry, *Concerning the Fourth Estate*, 138.

once she became a subject, reading the news? The answers to these questions are rather complex and ambiguous. From the very beginning, women appear prominently on the pages of the *Shenbao*. Although a majority of the articles treated them as passive victims of a cruel fate, alluring and exceptional heroines of womanhood, assertive, courageous, outspoken, and even cheeky, also appear, even in the earliest issues of the newspaper. As we saw in the depictions and descriptions of women in public discussed above, this type of woman is present in the 1870s and 1880s and shows up even more frequently toward the turn of the twentieth century. Although women are not as openly addressed as in advertisements, their presence as implied readers is invoked in news reports as well.

Arguably the most common news reports and commentaries about women in the first forty years of the *Shenbao* deal with brutalities committed against them. These stories of bitterness and misery 苦 deal with women of all kinds and from all classes and age groups. They are assaulted (*nüedai* 虐待), kidnapped (*guai* 拐), or killed (*beisha* 被殺).¹²⁹ Cases of adultery (*jian* 姦) also appear regularly.¹³⁰ Although many of these texts complain that there should be a way of redeeming women, they invariably conclude that "it is sad enough to be born a girl" 人生不幸而為女子.¹³¹ Even as these writers sigh, they acknowledge women's fate as ordained, thus delimiting and binding women to this very object-position. Typical of this type of attitude is an 1872 commentary on footbinding.¹³² The article con-

129. See *SB* 10.5.1872, 31.5.1872, 7.5.1877, 26.5.1877, 8.5.1882, 10.5.1882, 13.5.1882, 20.5.1882, 23.5.1882, 24.5.1882, 25.5.1882, 27.5.1882, 28.5.1882, 17.5.1892, 14.5.1902, 31.5.1907, 23.2.1912, 15.5.1912, 16.5.1912; and *SHXB* 14.11, 16.11, 28.11.1872. Xu and Xu, *Qingmo sishinian "Shenbao" shiliao*, 301-2, mention a few more examples. Depictions of attacks by men on women were common in the *Dianshizhai huabao* and in the *Tubua ribao* (see, e.g., 35/7, 39/7, 40/7).

130. See *SB* 29.5.1877, 11.5.1882, 18.5.1882, 19.5.1882, 31.5.1882, and 22.5.1907.

131. For this citation, see *SB* 15.5.1897, l. 1, and 27.10.1899, l. 8. News reports as well as editorials and commentaries deal with the sufferings of women (many of which lure the reader by catchy phrases such as "abused" or "brutally treated"), see *SHXB* 24.12.1872; and *SB* 28.7.1873, 5.5.1882, 16.10.1882, 25.5.1888, 16.3.1891, 5.5.1892, 2.1.1897, 12.1.1897, 6.5.1897, and 26.5.1897.

132. "纏足說" (On footbinding), *SB* 24.5.1872. The *Shenbao* regularly carried news reports, commentaries, and editorials on the question of footbinding (e.g., a news report in *SB* 7.9.1877, and the article discussed below in note 134, *SB* 29.5.1907;

cludes on the pessimistic note that the custom of footbinding has been sustained for more than a thousand years in China and will not soon be changed (ll. 18–20). Although the practice renders some women unable to walk and even causes sickness (ll. 8–9), according to the author, concepts of beauty are unchanging (ll. 18–20).¹³³ Despite his tone of lament and pity, his commentary inscribes a well-established role for women that is to be perpetuated over the decades:¹³⁴ women appear as passive victims and helpless, dependent (if identified at all, it is by their position in a family) objects in Chinese society.¹³⁵

further examples are discussed in Xu and Xu, *Qingmo sishinian "Shenbao" shiliao*, 303–8).

133. Incidentally, Zheng Guanyin's 鄭觀應 (1842–1923) condemnations of footbinding in his 盛世危言 *Shengshi wei yan* as "painful, as causing an imbalance in the women's *yin-yang* physiology, and as a practice without sanction in the Classics or the Three Dynasties period were all variations on traditional themes. But his criticism on the grounds that it caused China to be ridiculed by foreign nations was a new consideration" (Beahan, "Women's Movement and Nationalism," 81) and one reminiscent of rationalizations of the public function of women mentioned above in note 121. These views, as well as those published by Liang Qichao in the *Shiwubao* in 1897 and by Zhang Zhidong prefacing a poem on natural feet (translated in *NCH* 19.12.1897, 1093), deserve further study; the subject has recently been taken up by Dorothy Ko (e.g., Ko, "The Written Word and the Bound Foot") among others.

134. The patronizing tone of a 1907 report on a provincial ban against footbinding allows for the conclusion that this trend continued well into the first years of the twentieth century. "江督示禁纏足" (Jiangsu provincial governor bans footbinding), *SB* 29.5.1907, reiterates some of the arguments made earlier. It acknowledges the long history of footbinding (l. 4) and the exclusive claim of China to the invention of this "strange custom" (l. 5). Among the four evils of footbinding, it mentions "creating weakness" by causing diseases (ll. 9–10) and "losing shame" (ll. 8–9) by luring men. It then continues to cite traditional reasons for the modern idea of unbinding the feet, a concept that was to open doors for women and that would enable them to leave their homes: according to this report, however, parents are asked to unbind their daughter's feet in order better to adhere to Confucian principles. Only women with big feet can be truly modest (ll. 8–9), only they can nurture healthy offspring, an objective of importance both for the country and the family (l. 9), and only they can become good workers and thus help, rather than be a parasite to, the family (l. 17).

135. Cf. the subsuming of women under their family or husband's affiliations in 1970s America (*Hearth and Home*, 145 and 146): "On those rare occasions when women appear by name on the general pages of the newspaper, it is from a perspective embedded in 'locker-room talk.' Otherwise, newspapers reduce women

A typical example is the 1882 news report "Pregnant Woman Trampled to Death" ("Yunfu tabi" 孕婦踏斃, *SB* 13.5.1882). It relates a cruel incident at the port of Fuzhou: a group of boatmen were talking and singing merrily on their way to shore. Without noticing, they had trampled a pregnant woman, who apparently died of her wounds. She *apparently* did so. The title of the report suggests so, and a certain Mr. Chen, who takes charge of the investigation, learns that "a life had been involved in the matter" 事關人命 (l. 4). The woman is objectified and not introduced as a person: "a life," not "her life," has been lost. In fact, the report, some seven lines long, mentions what happened to her only in a third of a line (l. 3). The bulk of the article deals with the corrupt management of the port. Rather than attending to law and order, port officials hold lavish banquets, and their superintendent does not heed advice (ll. 1-2, 5-6). The death of the woman is really not the point of this report. Nevertheless, it is titled "A Pregnant Woman Trampled to Death." This is an obvious use of sex and crime to attract readers. If death does not grab the reader's attention, death in pregnancy certainly will.¹³⁶ Women are good for scandals, and scandals are good for newspaper sales.¹³⁷

to that nameless brunette 'stabbed to death.' And "Still a sex object to men and the satellites of a man, women are not considered independently to be 'real news.' Adjuncts to the world of men, they remain wives, mothers, daughters, and nameless blondes and brunettes."

136. One of the most infamous cases of such objectification of women is the story of Yang Naiwu, brilliantly analyzed in Dong, "Communities and Communication"; and more recently Vittinghoff, "Am Rande des Ruhms." Dong shows that although the woman involved was the center of *Shenbao* reports, her own voice never appeared in the paper. Although the paper published pages of men's words, she remained a voiceless object of desire for male readers' imaginations throughout.

137. It was in the 1930s that this use or abuse of women as object of news interest became a heated point of discussion in China. The 1934 movie *The New Woman* 新女性 was "at the nexus of a controversy over the responsibility of the urban news media—as the modern creators of 'public opinion' (*yulum*)—towards women and society." It "reiterated the question of woman and modernity on the screen, serving as a two-fold critique of traditional constraints on women and of the mistreatment of women in the mass media and urban society" (Kristine Harris, "The New Woman," 56, 57).

Time and again, and all throughout the period examined, women are thus objectified in news reports.¹³⁸ The very frequency of articles on crimes committed against women, clearly marked in their titles as gendered, suggests that they were intended as bait for a particular reading public.¹³⁹ They are not necessarily a sign of the newspaper's interest in improving women's lot.¹⁴⁰ Indeed, they were not primarily written to attract female readers or even to talk to female readers at all. To the contrary, these reports invoke an implied reader who is simultaneously fascinated with and disgusted by the pitiable fate of women. In many of these early reports, the woman becomes the object of a male gaze rather than a reading subject with whom the text communicates. Many reports may be situated under "feminine" headings precisely to attract male readers.¹⁴¹ The inclusion of women in reporting is thus not a democratizing device. The ideology behind these stories suggests an image of the weak but fascinating female that needs male support to live and survive.

This view of the depictions of women in the *Shenbao* is supported by the fact that a special type of women, "trendsetters" as they have been called,¹⁴² the courtesans and prostitutes, are portrayed particu-

138. The language in which the kidnapping of two girls, a fifteen- and a sixteen-year-old, is reported in 1912, for example, is accordingly completely neutral: the police have been informed and are looking for the kidnappers ("拐失女子" [Girl kidnapping], *SB* 16.5.1912).

139. By contrast, some of the news reports dealing with crimes committed against men appear to give more credit to them as subjects but—significantly—do not mention them explicitly in the headlines. This is true for two of the news reports discussed in Chapter 1: "失銀傷命" (Losing one's silver, hurting one's life), *SB* 8.2.1877, deals with the misfortunes of a man who lost all his borrowed money to a thief. The title does not identify the victim as a man to attract the reader's attention. Similarly, "無屬浮屍," *SB* 29.4.1873, deals with the body of a dead man who is described in detail but does not appear as gendered in the title. See also *SB* 7.3.1892.

140. Indeed, the frequency of such reporting may even be dangerous to women. The reader is numbed into accepting certain happenings if they are reported too often. Wife beatings, kidnappings, and rapes turn into commonplace matters just like natural disasters if they are mentioned every other day.

141. The depictions of wife murderers and chaste women in the *jingbao* fulfilled a similar function, as argued in Chapter 3. See also Lent, *Women and Mass Media in Asia*, v.

142. Yeh, "City, Courtesan, and Intellectual," esp. chap. 2. Yeh echoes and expands Virgil Kit-yiu Ho ("Selling Smiles," 120), who quotes a contemporary observer: "On the streets she is the object of attention for those who wish to see the

larly frequently. The sheer number of news items and editorials dealing with courtesans show that they were considered good entertainment¹⁴³ (indeed, an entire genre of newspaper writing, the entertainment press, or small papers [*xiaobao* 小報], beginning with Li Boyuan's 李伯元 [1867-1932] *Youxi bao* 遊戲報 [Entertainment, 1896] would eventually capitalize on this interest).¹⁴⁴ These texts epitomize two aspects of (male) fascination: sex and crime. The elaborate dress and fancy carriages of courtesans are described, as are their deaths from opium addiction or at the hands of crazed killers. Courtesans and prostitutes are described as thieves but also as victims of cruel mistreatment and betrayal by their madams.¹⁴⁵ One special "record of bitterness," which appeared in 1907,¹⁴⁶ reported that a prostitute had been heard crying indignantly all night. A policeman, afraid that she might have been assaulted by her madam, reports the matter and is ordered to investigate. He finds that indeed she had been scolded by her madam since her business had been doing poorly.¹⁴⁷ Like many of these articles, this report is patronizing in tone and places the woman

latest style in feminine dress"; and Ye Xiaoqing ("Popular Culture," 13, 15, 274) who argues that in Shanghai courtesans set the fashion, and upper-class ladies followed. Cf. also Henriot, "Chinese Courtesans." For a view from literature, see David Wang, *Fin-de-siècle Splendor*, chap. 2. Wang claims that courtesan novels of the late Qing set new values: excess became a virtue, and no longer were women to be *neiren*. A similar image of the courtesan during the Ming is presented by Dorothy Ko (*Teachers of the Inner Chambers*, 282), who argues that the courtesans were the only women who could live a man's life as a woman. She argues that in return for this, however, they were no longer in contact with women and depended solely (and—paradoxically—perhaps more gravely than other women) on men. The ambivalence of the courtesan's powers and weaknesses determine the discourse in *Shenbao* texts dealing with courtesans, as we will see below.

143. See, e.g., news reports in *SB* 12.9.1872, 7.10.1872, 12.5.1882, 16.5.1887, 29.5.1902, 20.5.1907, and 29.5.1907; and editorials in *SB* 10.6.1872, 29.7.1873, 20.11.1887, 16.3.1891, 5.5.1892, and 13.11.1902; and in *XWB* 11.8 and 27.8.1893.

144. For an interesting study, see Yeh, "Deciphering the Entertainment Press." For the *xiaobao*, which, during the Republic, continued the tradition established by Li Boyuan's papers, see Zhu, "Shanghai xiaobao."

145. Hershatter (*Dangerous Pleasures*, 17-20) examines cursorily later articles on prostitution in the *Shenbao* (from 1919 on) and appears to reach similar conclusions.

146. "妓女苦況" (A prostitute's bitter situation), *SB* 20.5.1907.

147. The cruel madam is a stock figure in Chinese descriptions of prostitution as Virgil Kit-yiu Ho, "Selling Smiles" (esp. 107-8), shows. See also Hershatter, *Dangerous Pleasures*, 75-76; and the illustration in *Tuhua ribao* 40/7.

firmly in a position of weakness and subordination. The policeman plays the role of the protector, but he, too, is helpless. He cannot change the prostitutes' rules of business. As in the case of footbinding, prostitution and its evils are accepted as facts of life.

A report from 1882 tells much the same story.¹⁴⁸ Trouble often arises, it explains, at the busy Shanghai harbor because of the "pheasants" (*yeji* 野雞), the lowest class of prostitutes. The report cites a saying: "They are just like pheasants: when they have grown their wings, they fly away, and no dart can catch them" (ll. 7-8). Indeed, many a clever "pheasant" runs off with other people's luggage (l. 7). Nevertheless, the journalist puts in a good word for these prostitutes: "How could one hate those who suffer?" (l. 8). This combination of sympathy and disdain can be found in many of the reports and editorials on the subject of prostitution during the early decades of the *Shenbao*.¹⁴⁹

148. "野雞擾事" (Trouble with pheasants), *SB* 12.5.1882.

149. One editorial ("論誘娼" [On enticing courtesans] *SB* 20.5.1882) asks, for instance, whether it is really fair to say that courtesans are worse than even robbers and murderers (ll. 1-2). Indeed, why should families who have a relative who is a courtesan be ashamed (l. 3)? Another editorial ("論虐妓事" [On the maltreatment of prostitutes], *SB* 25.5.1888), dealing with assaults on prostitutes, begins by describing the abundance and prosperity of Shanghai and some of the courtesans there (ll. 1-3), who may have the finest horses and carriages in front of their houses and the most exquisite shoes and clothes (l. 12-13) (this alleged prosperity is a well-known topos; see Virgil Kit-yiu Ho, "Selling Smiles," 110). On the other hand, the mistreatment or murder of courtesans often goes unremarked (l. 16); indeed, in this respect, their situation is worse than that of prisoners (ll. 23-24). Accordingly, it is rather understandable that a prostitute might take opium or even hang herself (ll. 24-25). Another editorial ("論滬上妓女之苦" [On the hardships of courtesans in Shanghai], *SB* 12.1.1897, mentioned briefly in Chapter 1, pp. 82-83) argues that courtesans, who are regarded as the lowest class of women, also have the greatest difficulties (l. 1). The editorialist opines that courtesans are looked down on even though they are honest (l. 2). They may earn a great deal, but they have to spend a lot on makeup and clothes, which have to be renewed at least every month (ll. 4-6). Still, "Why should one feel pity for them?" (l. 7) Courtesans are not born courtesans (l. 8). Indeed, they may have been sold into prostitution by their parents or forced into it by a matchmaker (l. 9). They have a very stressful occupation: those who have many clients have to serve them constantly and have not a minute of peace, and those who have few clients sit up, hoping for a client to come, and never dare go to sleep (l. 11). Courtesans should not be considered shameless. For if a courtesan does not lure a client today, she may be dead tomorrow (ll. 14-15). She needs to go out on the streets to attract clients, even if it is illegal (ll. 15-16). Indeed, since "the difficulties of a courtesan are enormous" 妓之苦亦可為至矣, they cannot but be pitied (l. 25). The only remedy for this

The ambivalence of these articles is not new; it has been a trope in depictions of prostitution since at least the Ming.¹⁵⁰ In the newspaper reports, however, the courtesan or prostitute becomes an extreme, and in the end the ultimate, paradigm of womanhood in general. The portrayal of the courtesan perpetuates traditional attitudes toward women: they are both the weaker and the more immoral sex, and therefore, they are both the cause and the victim of great catastrophes, *nübuo*.¹⁵¹ Thus, even if part of the intended readership may have been female, this part of the readership is again kept within certain bounds. These articles serve as cautionary tales, victimizing women, instilling fear, and prescribing traditional values. They remind women of their position, and they circumscribe them. In view of the much-decried weakness of China's men in the late Qing, these texts may say more about a need to boost male self-confidence than about the need (or even men's ability) to protect women, however.¹⁵²

Indeed—as in the case of advertisements—victimization and circumscription on the pages of the newspapers can be seen as an antidote to the ongoing revolution taking place on the streets of Shanghai: woman as victim in the Shanghai press is most probably an indication that the opposite was the case in reality. One piece of supporting evidence for this view is that carnivalistic signs of stress can be observed in all three types of newspaper texts examined so far. The establishment of women as the overt addressees of advertisements and as educated readers and participants in public debates as discussed in editori-

之苦亦可為至矣, they cannot but be pitied (l. 25). The only remedy for this situation is to eradicate prostitution in order to save these women.

150. Ropp, "Ambiguous Images of Courtesan Culture"; Wai-Yee Li, "The Late Ming Courtesan." For the development of this ambiguous view in Republican times, see Virgil Kit-yiu Ho, "Selling Smiles," esp. 106–7, 122, 127; Hershatter, "Courtesans and Streetwalkers"; and Henriot, "From a Throne of Glory."

151. For this concept, see note 89 above. The ambivalence toward the courtesan/prostitute and womanhood in general continued to dominate the Chinese scene for more than half a century. These ambiguities are essentially still exemplified as late as 1934 in the three women protagonists of the *New Woman* (cf. Kristine Harris, "The New Woman," 67).

152. Indeed, Ebrey (*Inner Quarters*, 8) argues that the victimization of women in Ming and Qing writings may be no more than a trope. In her view, the extreme changes in Ming and Qing society, on the social as well as the economic and cultural levels, had profound influences on gender relations and did not leave women's position within society unchanged.

als and depicted in pictorials is echoed in news reports. Even among the numerous "records of bitterness," we see women speaking up and acting. Obviously, the evaluation and construction of women as readers (and as social actors) were still in great flux.

One typical example, published in May 1872, relates the story of a certain Ms. Chen.¹⁵³ She is praised as extraordinary with the remark: "To keep one's chastity is the glory of womankind, but to stake one's life on it is not something the common person can attain to" (l. 1). Ms. Chen is the wife of the younger son in the Huang family. When her husband dies, she is determined to keep her chastity and not to remarry (ll. 1-2). The Huang family is run not by Mr. Huang, a spoiled glutton, but by his wife, who dotes on her other daughter-in-law, the wife of her elder son (ll. 2-3). This daughter-in-law secretly dislikes Ms. Chen (ll. 3-4). After the death of her husband, she considers Ms. Chen a parasite and, in a conversation that is reported, even suggests to her mother-in-law that she be expelled from the house (ll. 4-5). Ms. Chen is an orphan (l. 5). The only refuge she has is her elder brother's family, but they are not able to help her (ll. 5-9). So Ms. Chen returns to her husband's home and commits suicide by taking an overdose of foreign drugs 洋藥 (i.e., opium). Fortunately, she is saved. When her parents-in-law learn the reason for her action, even they praise her chastity (ll. 9-10).

In this report, Ms. Chen is depicted as a *lienü*, a traditional heroine 烈女, and a female exemplar 列女.¹⁵⁴ Ms. Chen is exemplary because she is chaste. Chastity became the cardinal virtue of womanhood in Song times.¹⁵⁵ As noted above, the moral tales appearing in the court gazette and the sections of dynastic histories devoted to exemplary women frequently feature tales of chastity. In its early years, the *Shenbao* was equally devoted to the topic.¹⁵⁶ Ms. Chen's method for be-

153. "陳女苦志" (A record of Ms. Chen's bitterness), *SB* 31.5.1872.

154. Liu Xiang's *Lienüzhuan* became the model for the writing of biographies of female exemplars as an established part of the dynastic histories. See Balfour, "Fragments"; Sung, "The Chinese Lieh-nü Tradition"; and, most recently, Raphals, *Sharing the Light*.

155. For a discussion of female virtues and their use and abuse by the state since Song times, see Elvin, "Female Virtue and the State"; Borthwick, "Changing Concepts"; Linck, "Hätte anstelle des Herzogs," esp. 15; and Carlitz, "Desire, Danger, and the Body," 108, 114, 117.

156. On the occurrence of virtuous wives in *jingbao* reports reprinted in the *Shenbao*, see Chapter 3, pp. 202-3. For other such news reports, see "金節婦傳"

coming a traditional heroine, however, is modern: she takes the foreign drug opium. Here, the stock characters of traditional storytelling, the evil mother- and sister-in-law, are presented in the modern medium, the newspaper. On the surface, already, this early news item mixes foreign and Chinese elements.

If we dig deeper into the text, we find signs of stress between these divergent elements. The stock figures, their stock behavior, and the happy ending seem to owe more to fiction than to news writing (a phenomenon illustrated as typical of *Shenbao* reports in Chapter 1). The predominance of recorded speech by women in a text that is praising the submissive qualities of women is striking, too: the conversations between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law and Ms. Chen and her sister-in-law occupy over half the body of the text. It may not be unusual for a newspaper to record conversations; newspapers are, after all, the typical medium reprinting interviews (and the *Shenbao* was, as illustrated throughout this book, dominated by dialogue-structures in its textual body, in editorials, advertisements, and news). But the depiction of women through dialogue as deliberating their different cases, as manipulating and organizing—long forgotten since the days of the *Lienüzhuan*—is certainly a novelty, especially in a public medium that claimed to attain the Truth and wanted to be taken more seriously than traditional works of fiction.¹⁵⁷ A news report such as

(Biography of chaste Ms. Jin), *SB* 6.5.1872; “烈女殉節” (A heroine dies for chastity), *SB* 13.9.1872; “馬烈女行” (Heroine Ma’s conduct), *SB* 8.10.1872; “李烈女金烈婦合傳” (Joint biography of heroines Li and Jin), *SB* 10.10.1872; “張貞婦傳略” (Short biography of chaste Ms. Zhang), *SHXB* 19.12.1872; and “余節婦傳” (Biography of chaste Ms. Yu), *SB* 7.9.1877.

157. The depiction of deliberating women in newspapers may thus have had a greater significance than similar portraits in Chinese fiction, which does contain examples of “outspoken women.” However, even there, they are often depicted as the exception rather than the rule: the deliberating women who appear in Yuan and Ming dramas and in prose works such as the *水滸傳* *Shuǐhūzhuan* and some of the early scholar-and-beauty stories 才子佳人小說 are very particular (and all the less “real”) women. Indeed, McMahon (“The Classic ‘Beauty-Scholar’ Romance,” 227) explicitly calls them “a deviation . . . from the discourse of obligatory male and female roles.” Speaking women appear with increasing frequency in late Qing fiction. In David Wang’s view, as scenes of speaking women “surface again and again,” they provide “the interlocutory conditions under which a new woman can be fashioned” (*Fin-de-siècle Splendor*, 166; for more examples, see *ibid.*, 172). It can be argued, however, that even as late as the 1930s it was uncommon to create a

this, by representing their activities, publicly acknowledges women to be forces even outside the household. However faithful this may have been to the actual situation in China,¹⁵⁸ it was not the kind of truth that was supposed to appear in print: although good speech was one of the four attributes of women listed in the *Rites of Zhou*, later Confucian teaching would insist that women's speech was not to be heard publicly, in order not to threaten the established order.¹⁵⁹ In the late Qing, women's speech was generally considered "gossip," and "long-tongued women" *changshbefu* 長舌婦 (already mentioned in the *Book of Odes*) were to be suppressed. Arguments between sisters-in-law, in particular, were seen as one of the main irritants in a big family,¹⁶⁰ and generally it was considered that women's speech ought not be heard outside the women's quarters 內言不出門外.¹⁶¹ Given this social background, the dialogues of women in the public medium of the newspaper function as carnival, they present a "second Truth,"¹⁶² they "relativize the primary language system," and thus they create the type of polyphony that is typical of and crucial in times of change.¹⁶³

Voices of the old and the new appear together here. However reinforcing the return to traditional values at the happy ending of the article may be, the carnivalesque element of the dialogues is a harbinger of the future. In these articles, past, present, and future meet and contend with one another.¹⁶⁴ The issue at stake in reading this article is not whether it "resembles" and "calls to mind" the tradition of heroic

"strong female narrative voice" (see the discussion of *The New Woman* in Kristine Harris, "The New Woman," 58).

158. Female dominance within the household has been found in anthropological studies of women in China; see, e.g., Freedman, *Study of Chinese Society*; Olga Lang, *Chinese Family and Society*.

159. Mann, *Precious Records*, 89, 101, 119. Ban Zhao remarked that "womanly speech" does not mean she should be argumentative. See Ko, *Teachers of the Inner Chambers*, 145. Even the "deliberating women" in the *Lienüzhuan* are praised as great exceptions only. For their condemnation, see SB 20.3.1873, discussed on p. 92.

160. Dong, "Communities and Communication," 90. The heated discussion of women poets recorded by Susan Mann (*Precious Records*, 77) illustrates how speaking and writing women are always considered potentially disruptive: women's poetry upheld Confucian honor while voicing the very passions and sentiments that threatened to violate it.

161. Mann, *Precious Records*, 89.

162. Bakhtin, *Rabelais und seine Welt*, 9, 14.

163. Cf. Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination*, 368.

164. This formulation follows Bakhtin, *Probleme der Poetik Dostoewskijs*, 101.

women exemplars (which it most certainly does). What matters occurs beyond this type of canonical resemblance and works in a similar fashion as the quotations from the Classics discussed in a previous chapter. The obvious reaffirmation of traditional ideology can be read not as another instance of a familiar and immediately comprehensible ideological closure but as a possible rupture and point of departure for a different discourse, and as signifying a distance from that ideology.¹⁶⁵ Although the implied reader clearly believes in traditional values such as chastity, although he clearly believes in the virtue and necessity of chastity, he is also aware of the changes taking place around him, he can hear the potentially subversive voices of the women's carnival. The signs of stress within the text may presage the changes that would eventually allow women to talk not only *on* but also *over* the page of a newspaper.

Another "record of bitterness" appearing some thirty years later, in May 1902,¹⁶⁶ bears witness to the fact that such changes had indeed taken place. Carnival has become (textual) reality. It is the three-line story of a boatman, Lin Maomao, who drowned in the Pu River. The news item records that the younger sister of the dead man, Lin Ahduo, had gone to the Department of Streets and Public Works and had reported the following: "That night, the . . . boatmen Chen Cailin, Ni Guisheng, and Zhu Ahbian had observed Maomao holding his boat back with a punting pole. Together they had insulted, scolded, and yelled at him. This made Maomao so nervous that he lost control [of the boat] and fell into the river." Lin Ahduo is acting as a woman should: she is supporting her male relative. Thus, she is adhering to certain traditional social norms. But she is also depicted engaging in revolutionary acts: not only is her complaint recorded in the public medium of the newspaper, but it is a complaint made at a public office, not simply in her home. She is an active, self-confident, fearless woman who is willing to accuse men openly, and she is successful: her accusation is communicated to higher authorities. Clearly, she no longer follows the old dictum that women's speech ought not be heard outside the women's quarters. The implied reader of such an ar-

165. Rey Chow, *Woman and Chinese Modernity*; and Levenson, *Confucian China and Its Modern Fate*.

166. "女(character illegible)訴苦" (A woman proclaims her bitterness), *SB* 14.5.1902.

ticle not only approves of her "filial" action for her brother but also applauds her bravery and her self-confidence as a public woman. The implied reader may herself be such a woman, for the woman who dares to visit public offices dares to read the paper, too.

Admittedly, the great bulk of *Shenbao* articles cannot be said to depict women as active makers of their fate. But such calls do appear more and more frequently throughout the period discussed. These reports form a powerful counterpoint to the dominant message of the sufferings of women. Most obviously in the early 1910s, after the foundation of the Republic of China, news items concerned with women no longer dealt merely with sex or crime. There were numerous articles on new, more egalitarian concepts of marriage and divorce, for example,¹⁶⁷ as well as on women's economic independence, the suffragettes' movement, women's participation in politics, and physical activities.¹⁶⁸ Women, who had once appeared in the public arena only in reports of bitterness, were now visibly participating in all kinds of activities and functions. They were no longer defined by their family affiliation as wife 婆 or future daughter-in-law 養媳 but by their membership in the "new female world" 新女界 (e.g., *SB* 1.5.1912). These women were now "female lords (or ladies)" 女公子 (*SB* 8.5.1912) or "female scholars" 女士 (*SB* 21.5.1912). The weak and subordinate "emasculate" now becomes masculine, even in name.¹⁶⁹ Al-

167. See, e.g., "訂婚之改良" (Engagements reformed), *SB* 7.5.1912, which relates in detail an engagement ritual on the previous day, complete with modern-style engagement treaty, exchange of ornaments, and the controversial "handshaking ritual" (see note 172 below). "離婚之習俗" (Divorce customs), *SB* 8.5.1912, relates that marriage for women in America is extremely free, and 15 percent of the marriages end in divorce. It then discusses three prominent divorce cases in detail. Another report reprints regulations for free-style marriage ("自由結婚" [Free-style marriage], *SB* 3.10.1912; also discussed in fictional form in "自由女之新婚禮" *SB* 19.9.1912).

168. See, e.g., on political participation, *SB* 26.1.1912, *SB* 24.3.1912, *SB* 25.3.1912; on physical exercise, *SB* 22.12.1912 (illustrated with a woman on a bicycle); on economic independence, *SB* 24.9.1912.

169. Rankin ("Emergence of Women," 45) remarks on the frequent use from around the turn of the twentieth century of the term *nüshi* (female scholar) almost as a title. In fact, *nüshi* is not a new term. It was used at least since the late Ming for the respectable domestic woman and then for the courtesan, crowning her as an honorary man. The term acknowledges that women somehow had to become men in order to do certain things. Whoever gained "real acceptance" in the world of men, by being able to talk and write poetry, would eventually be honored with

though reports on the mistreatment of women do not disappear completely, by Republican times, articles on women often revolve around “freedom,” “equal rights,” and “political participation” rather than “bitterness,” “shame,” or “suicide.”¹⁷⁰ And although articles on women appear in more concentrated form in the entertainment section entitled “Free talk” (*ziyoutan* 自由談), women continue to have their rightful place in all other sections of the newspaper as well. Nevertheless, carnivalesque elements, polyphony, and heteroglossia may still be found even now and not only in caricatures of women in feminine robes but in pictures of women with masculine haircuts (see Fig. 4.6).

One news report, for example, consists largely of speeches at a public meeting dealing with the establishment of a girls’ school by two female returned students from Japan.¹⁷¹ Vigorous discussions marked by assertiveness on the part of the women are reported. Men are accorded no say in the organization of the school: “As concerns girls’ schools, they are managed by the female world; men don’t get to hear about it” (l. 16). Women are portrayed arguing rationally with one another in a situation that was once exclusively a male preserve, the public assembly. Nevertheless, as the meeting draws to its close, the alleged shamelessness of one of the founders (who had shaken hands with Sun Yatsen) becomes the crucial point in the argument and the reason for her resignation. She cannot accept that her “modern” behavior (which in days of equal rights between men and women, as is emphasized by another speaker, should be perfectly acceptable, but which was in fact the matter of controversial debate even as late as 1912)¹⁷² should weigh more than the usurpatory and

that name (see Ko, “The Written Word and the Bound Foot,” 80; Mann, *Precious Records*, 67; Ko, *Teachers of the Inner Chambers*, 117, 139ff).

170. See, e.g., “女士造福社會” (Ladies found a charity), *SB* 3.2.1912; “發起中華民國女子國學會啓” (Statement on the initiation of the Chinese Republic Women’s National Education Association), *SB* 27.3.1912; “論女子要求參政權問題” (On the question of women demanding the right to vote), *SB* 25.3.1912; “時評三” (“Timely criticisms no. 3”), *SB* 6.9.1912, which deals with women’s political rights; and “時評三” (“Timely criticisms no. 3”), *SB* 24.9.1912, which deals with women workers. For the continuing publication of articles dealing with women’s maltreatment, see notes 129 and 131 above.

171. “兩女士權利之競爭” (Two ladies competing for their rights), *SB* 21.5.1912.

172. The *Shenbao* and other newspapers carried endless debates about “disgusting” foreign habits such as handshaking (or, even worse, kissing) as a greeting that



Fig. 4.6 Visible polyphony (SB 3.4.1912)

criminal acts of her cofounder, who had misappropriated money and engaged in nepotism by employing her brother as the temporary head of the school. This element of traditional morality is a carnivalesque reminder of the past and reinforces the suspicion that in the 1910s, the male gaze (which, as here, was quite often appropriated and voiced by women themselves) and with it, long-established patterns of behavior, still ensured that—even in such times of change—women were not completely “defeminized.”¹⁷³

In this respect, the title of the piece is significant: “Two Ladies Competing for Their Rights” (“Liang nüshi quanli zhi jingzheng” 兩女

soon “infected” China’s modernists (see, e.g., Mateer, *New Terms*, 116–17). For a typical (if ironical) view, see Lin Yutang, *Importance of Living*, 256–57: “I may be very progressive and able to appreciate Western art, literature, American silk stockings, Parisian perfumes and even British battleships, but I cannot see how the progressive Europeans could allow this barbarous custom of shaking hands to persist to the present day.”

173. For another such example, see “論女子宜注重道德” (Women ought to emphasize morality), SB 5.9.1912.

士權利之競爭). To “compete for one’s rights” has a sour flavor in the Chinese ear: it is the habit of vulgar people pursuing selfish aims. One of the speakers, a Ms. Zhou, urged women not to fall into this trap lest the female world become the laughingstock of the male world (l. 12). The choice of such a negative image as the title for a piece featuring publicly active women is ideological. It becomes another marker of polyphony in the text.

The nature of polyphony had certainly changed since the early 1870s, when voices of the old and the new could already be detected. “Modern” values now dominated writings on women, but “traditional” values were not yet completely discarded. In “In Praise of the New Female World” (“新女界雜詠,” *SB* 1.5.1912), this polyphony is explicit. The article constantly plays with elements both from China’s tradition and from China’s modernity. It mocks the so-called three followings 三從 (that is, a woman had to live with and obey first her father, then her husband, and finally her son; l. 1), which the editorialist conceives as “strange” 奇觀 or even “heterodox” 邪說 conceptions, but it also makes light of the emphasis on “equal rights” (l. 2) and women’s participation in politics (l. 4). And indeed, the author’s jeering at those who “remain unmarried” (l. 8) or wear “foreign [leather] shoes” (l. 20) sounds rather more like ridicule.¹⁷⁴

The construction of womankind in *Shenbao* news reports contains both traditional and modern strains, and these change gradually over time. What emerged as new in the 1910s was not really a reformulation of the old. Rather, it was a displacement, a shift of emphasis. The continuing prescriptiveness of many of these texts, both in terms of modern and of more traditional values, inclines me to the view that women were implied readers of these texts, too. Yet following these prescriptions may have proved difficult, for each of these texts constructs a different female exemplar. The implied readers of these reports as well as the message being conveyed remain ambivalent.

174. Reports on modern female exemplars are frequently found on the pages of the *Shenbao*. After 1911, most of them appear in the “Free talk” section. For writings by and on Qiu Jin in the *Shenbao*, see Xu and Xu, *Qingmo sishinian “Shenbao” shiliao*, 196. On 22.7.1907, the *Shenbao* reprinted the inaugural statement for the *Zhongguo nübao* in her honor and reprinted some of her writings, especially her poetry, on the following days (for a commentary on her death, see *SB* 1.9.1907). In December 1908 a memorial poem was printed.

Circumscribing the Reader

Life is one world and life seen in the newspaper another.

—G. K. Chesterton, 1908¹⁷⁵

As late as the mid-1970s, Gaye Tuchman could speak of the trivialization and the symbolic annihilation of women in American newspapers.¹⁷⁶ She found that even though women made up more than 40 percent of the workforce, they were portrayed in contemporary newspapers and magazines as inhabiting a feminine idyll of hearth and home. By entering the labor force at increasing rates, women appeared to be ignoring the media's message, a conclusion that, as Tuchman pointed out, contradicted every existing theory about the mass media and their power to mirror and to influence society.¹⁷⁷

In line with established media theory, it is commonly stated that the foreign-style newspapers and magazines introduced to China in the nineteenth century had considerable power and influence in changing, modernizing, and nationalizing China. In view of Tuchman's findings, we can ask at least two questions concerning the alleged might of these media: What tangible power did they have, first, to mirror and, second, to influence and change Chinese reality? Historians have found a quantitative change in female readership around the turn of the twentieth century, usually considered one of the first fruits of women's education.¹⁷⁸ But did the fact that newspapers were writing about women and women's concerns also play a role here? Did they make women read? Analysis of inaugural statements, advertisements, editorials, illustrations, and news reports in the Shanghai media shows that around this date, 1900, the implicit figure of the female reader becomes ever more explicit. There is evidence, too, that some of the changes in the conception of female readership occurred much earlier, however. Several decades before the turn of the century, women were included in the envisaged readership of a rising number of "fair-sexed" news media (for example, vernacular journals such as the *Minbao* in the 1870s and pictorials such as the *Dianshizhai huabao*

175. Chesterton, *All Things Considered*.

176. Tuchman, "Introduction," 3.

177. *Ibid.*, 37, 30.

178. Nivard, "Women and the Women's Press," 48.

in the 1880s). Women were being addressed explicitly or implicitly in advertising, editorials, and news reports.¹⁷⁹ They may be weak or beautiful, self-assertive or motherly; they may be addressed directly or be presented indirectly through a male mediator; they may appear as female narrators engaged in conversation or be depicted visually as public figures. They occur in texts that are “fair-sexed” through coding, in writings that are “not too profound” stylistically or even written in *baihua* or easy *wenyan*¹⁸⁰ and punctuated, or they may be segregated into certain genres and subjects such as household matters or light fiction rather than straight politics. The introduction of women of all classes as objects and subjects of reading may have been invigorated by the introduction of women’s magazines around the turn of the century, but it was a revolution that had taken place some time before the magical date of 1900—except that it did not have any repercussions in actual readership numbers.

By studying the depiction of women and women readers in women’s magazines and daily newspapers from late Qing Shanghai, this chapter has attempted to find evidence that these print media had the potential to modernize Chinese society. If they created women as implied readers—which they did, and long before they would be recognized as actual readers—did these media thereby envisage and engender the “new woman” (later to be called *xin nüxing* 新女性)? Who is she?

There are two answers to this question. The implied female reader constructed on the page of these news media was a special woman and delimited in particular ways, but there were several variant options for circumscribing her. News reports and editorials never

179. Young J. Allen’s *Jiaohui xinbao* 教會新報 (later *Wanguo gongbao* 萬國公報) is a case in point: he intended to reach the chief mandarins and literati and their ladies and children. It is known that among the Chinese contributors to the journal there was at least one woman. In September 1869 Allen initiated a discussion on the issue of the position of women, and in 1870 he started a series attacking footbinding (Beahan, “Women’s Movement and Nationalism,” 53–54, 57; Adrian Bennett, *Missionary Journalist*).

180. Evelyn Rawski (*Education and Popular Literacy*) contends that primary school texts trained students not to read a vernacular *baihua* but rather an easy classical *wenyan*. The attempt, then, to create a new type of *baihua* for lower-class audiences may have further contributed to their reading problems rather than solving them. The texts analyzed here appear to have been written in easy *wenyan*.

explicitly established women as their implied readers. They made women—and often women of the lower classes in particular—into objects to be talked about; women become rhetorical markers, carriers of sympathy and fascination—metaphors for China, the subdued nation—to lure a still primarily male readership into reading certain articles. Although these texts called upon long-established norms and traditions of womanhood, they often did so only as a counterpoint to the more radical thoughts and images they presented. The changing but continuously polyphonic nature of these texts ultimately acknowledges the inevitability of woman becoming a subject and no longer remaining the submissive object of once-repressed but no longer merely utopian wishes and indeed advocates this change. Woman is both the martyr and the heroine of Chinese modernity in these texts. Women's magazines and advertisements, on the other hand, called women up as subjects to be talked to; they establish the figure of the female reader, but only on certain topics, most often related to a woman's traditional domestic functions. In many different voices and formats, the Shanghai news media describe and thus at the same time prescribe certain types of women as new female exemplars.

The domestic model—to be found in women's magazines and advertisements—was targeted at women who were able to read (and who would in turn relate the model to other women). This could be interpreted as hegemonic method: saving men from women whose power they had always feared, a fear visualized but also effectively ridiculed in a caricature of 1912 in which a huge woman warrior tramples a rather small policeman (see Fig. 4.7).¹⁸¹ The caricature itself can be seen as part of the "other" media model as well: editorials and news reports depicting the alluring, bewitching female heroine (or, alternatively, the deplorable martyr). This latter model is not primarily targeted at a female readership. For the circumscription of women on the pages of newspapers and magazines was not solely didactic: in a Chinese world that was increasingly accepting foreign values, Chinese men could—by dealing with women—elevate their own standing and become "new men" (*xin nanxing* 新男性). Nationalist motifs justified

181. See Ahern, "Power and Pollution of Chinese Women"; and for the particular iconography of the woman warrior portrayed here, which combines fascination, fear and ridicule, Altenburger, "Die Schwertkämpferin," 167.



Fig. 4.7 Frightening women (SB 30.3.1912)

and called for a “new woman,” but one prescribed by them.¹⁸² The fact that women were nowhere openly addressed in these articles supports this view: women were not expected to share these thoughts or only those parts a mediating male reader deemed fit for them to hear and understand. They became mere signs of discourse, symbols of power and of China’s modernity.

182. Rankin, “Elite Reformism,” 36. Reading Shevelov (*Women and Print Culture*, 5), one realizes that the emergence of the schizophrenic “emancipated domestic woman” in China during the late nineteenth century mirrors rather closely the situation in England a decade before, where one could find “a highly idealized construction of femininity, one situated within a long tradition of literary representation of women, but here newly formulated in such a way as to involve the woman both as reader and as writer, as subject as well as object, in the service of an as yet unestablished but coalescing ideology.”

The analysis of women's magazines has shown that even the few women involved in the process of writing for women followed particular normative standards by creating household management, *jiazheng* 家政, as the ideal aspiration of a woman.¹⁸³ If Qiu Jin (and many others like her) in her argument for teaching women returns to the nationalist rhetoric of saving the nation, if women are provided with information catering especially to their allegedly feminine interests and needs, if advertisements written for women advocate their responsibility to keep themselves healthy in order to be able to provide offspring, it is evident that both women and men write for women from a particular viewpoint.¹⁸⁴ The "feminization of discourse" in periodicals and especially in women's magazines was a feminization according to a peculiar set of standards—should one call them conservative, Confucian, traditional, male? Men needed to be trained to function in a technical world; women needed to be trained to function in a technical home. Within the Shanghai press, the household arguably became a site of "raised expectations," domestic economy "shifted from an innate capacity to a 'science,' a product of learning and intelligence," and thereby it was "brought closer to a definition of a male competence, created or reinforced by learning."¹⁸⁵ And yet, the elevation of women's work by introducing men's scientific and technical concepts and instruments to her world, the household, as seen in sections such as "science for daily use" (*riyong kexue* 日用科學) in women's magazines (or in advertisements in the *Shenbao* that empha-

183. In China, too, "unlike men, women never possessed the power to define the nature of good literature; when women served as critics, they displayed their internalization of male standards as universal standards" (Tuchman and Fortin, *Edging Women Out*, 204). Thus, the story presented by Shevelow for eighteenth- and nineteenth-century women's magazines in England is directly paralleled in China. Shevelow (*Women and Print Culture*, 198) writes: "My history begins with men writing, writing by, for and as women. Their writing was complemented by women represented as writing within the structures dominated (textually and extra-textually) by men. My history chronicles women taking on those structures and in some ways reformulating them, but remaining situated firmly within the dominant patriarchal ideology."

184. This is, of course, no different from traditional writings by women such as the primer by Ban Zhao. Tellingly, however, women seldom attacked female writers such as Ban Zhao for what they had imposed on womenkind; see Ono, *Chinese Women in a Century of Revolution*, 67.

185. Shevelow, *Women and Print Culture*, 166.

size the scientific qualities of their product), give as much credit to women as they take from them. The women's press would become female terrain as envisaged and constructed for them.¹⁸⁶ The rise of the woman reader in late Qing women's magazines and advertising, then, can be interpreted as a "sign largely of the strength of the Confucian gender system, not its demise."¹⁸⁷ The educated woman was to put her new cultural resources at the service of her "natural" duties of motherhood and moral guardianship. Therefore, the introduction of women as subjects of reading was a revolution only half-accomplished. The female figure constructed in the Chinese news media was caught in a web of gender prescriptions: she was not a free woman, and the pressures of societal and family expectations, as well as national hopes, subjected her to a harsh yoke of duties in her attempt to perform the role of the "new woman."

At the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, both Chinese women and Chinese men lived in a "rapidly changing world in which the old notions of womanhood were constantly being challenged." Accordingly, they were "faced with the unprecedented task of redefining womanhood, of searching for a new [female] identity."¹⁸⁸ In the first forty years of the *Shenbao*, this redefinition played a decisive role. The newspaper created the image of woman as an implied reader, and it changed from talking *about* women to talking *to* women. Paradoxically, it was not in talking to

186. This situation corresponds exactly with the situation in seventeenth-century Europe described by Engelsing, *Bürger als Leser*, 322: "Intellectual life derived its powers from the fact that it emancipated woman as a reader, but only a reader, and not a real, but solely an ideal carrier of morality and humanity for which men would praise her." See also Shevelov (*Women and Print Culture*, 1-2) contends for the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: "At the same historical moment that women were, to a degree unprecedented in western Europe, becoming visible as readers and writers, the literary representation of women—whether as members of an intended audience, as writing subjects, or as textual objects—was producing an increasingly narrow and restrictive model of femininity . . . the periodicals' characteristic attention to women and 'women's concerns' (the editorial policy that Swift sneeringly labeled 'fair-sexing it') served an emerging ideology that, in the act of making claims for women's capabilities and social importance, constructed women as essentially, that is, both biologically and socially, 'other' than men."

187. Ko, *Teachers of the Inner Chambers*, 67.

188. Ye Weili, "'Nü Lixuesheng,'" 339.

but more in talking *about* them—in editorials and news reports—that the newspaper created images of the liberated “modern woman.” The revolution taking place here was not targeted at, and perhaps was consciously hidden from, the female reader.

For years to come, the formulation of a new femininity in China’s media retained its polyphony. Voices of the old and the new were intermingled, and it is not always easy to determine which one of them should be called “carnavalesque.” In editorials and news reports arguing the modern cause of women, writers remained caught in traditional conceptions and value systems while attempting to break free from them or even ridiculing and subverting them for their own purposes. This is obvious in many of the articles discussed above and would remain so throughout the 1910s and 1920s.¹⁸⁹ In studying the evolving polyphonic image of the “new woman,” one understands the changing relationship between male and female, man and woman, in China around the turn of the twentieth century as an ambiguous one in which traditional ideologies and fears as well as modern conceptions of enlightened behavior and China’s international profile all play an important role.

If Gaye Tuchman finds that media in the 1970s trivialize and symbolically annihilate women and their true range of activities, she might have found the media in Shanghai around the turn of the last century to do the same. Quite evidently, women had a different presence in Shanghai, where the news media I discuss flourished, than they had in traditional Chinese society. Indeed, it is questionable, as historical studies illustrate, whether women in late Qing Shanghai were ever truly confined to the private space of the household.¹⁹⁰ In contrast to the

189. This is still apparent in the ironical rhetoric used by Lu Xun in an essay appearing in the *Xin Qingnian* in August 1918 (“My Thoughts on Female Chastity” [我之節烈觀]; for a full discussion and translation, see Witke, “Transformation of Attitudes,” 117–18). Lu Xun condemned the idolatry of female chastity: “Some charge that girls who lose their chastity harm the nation while others argue just the other way around—that responsibility for ‘saving the nation’ belongs to women. But this is absurd. Because women are looked upon as manifestations of *yin*, they are confined to the home and are totally dependent on men for survival. So how can they plausibly be held responsible for ‘saving the nation,’ for public affairs belong to the *yang* sphere reserved for men.”

190. See the description in Luo, *Nüxing yu jindai Zhongguo shehui*. I agree with Mary Rankin (“Elite Reformism,” 29), who talks of the success of women’s liberation as a local rather than a national event. Shanghai was one such locality.

general situation of women elsewhere in China during the late Qing, a good part of the workforce in Shanghai was female: silk-factory workers, courtesans and entertainers, mission workers, servants and soldiers, but also bankers and journalists, nurses and doctors.¹⁹¹ Around the turn of the century, the city was the main center of the elitist women's movement.¹⁹² Clearly, Shanghai, a city between two worlds, and the women who lived there did not worry too much that they were constrained by the rules and conventions of traditional society.

We can make the assumption therefore that at least some of these women read the Shanghai news media, too.¹⁹³ But what could they learn from them? Could the media mirror, change, or influence a woman's life in Shanghai and elsewhere? Why did they choose to publish what they did? One could argue that the conservative but open as well as the more radical but closed discourse in these media was the sign of an increasingly nervous public, both male and female, watching women's lives and lifestyles change radically.¹⁹⁴ Rather than mirroring reality, advertisements or articles on the Three C's of female role performance, editorials on girls' schools couched in hackneyed conservative language, and news reports on outspoken women fulfilling their filial duty to their dead brothers or husbands all produced soothing and reassuring images of women at a time of radical change.¹⁹⁵ The polyphonic and ambiguous nature of the media text reflects the agonies and difficulties of entering modernity in China. It may not reflect street re-

191. See Honig, *Sisters and Strangers*; Hershatter, *Dangerous Pleasures*; Henriot, *Belles de Shanghai*; Lu Han-chao, *Beyond the Neon Lights*; Luo Suwen, *Nüxing yu jindao Zhongguo shehui*; Chu, "Biographical Notes on Lady Xie Yao Zhilian"; Li Xiting, "Minchu nüjizhe Liu Yunqin"; Vittinghoff, "Am Rande des Ruhms"; and Hu Ying, *Tales of Translation*.

192. Rankin, "Emergence of Women," 53.

193. Rudolf G. Wagner ("First Encounter") is digging up further evidence for the apparent female interest in reading and writing the new media products, suggested by the enormous commercial success of *Shenbao guan* publications such as a collection of *tanci* by a woman, Qiu Xinru, from 1867 (*Bishenghua*; The literate woman), and a guide to letter writing for women of 1878 (*Chidu jimian*).

194. From the point of view of women, Ko (*Teachers of the Inner Chambers*, 292) describes for the Ming a circumscribed world that was punctuated by freedom and fulfillment. In the late Qing, especially in treaty port cities such as Shanghai, the situation seems to have been the reverse: women confronted a world of freedom that needed to be circumscribed, not just in men's eyes.

195. For a similar observation on U.S. women's magazines in the 1970s, see Phillips, "Magazine's Heroines," 124.

alities in Shanghai, but it captures very clearly the realities of mind in late Qing China. Both male and female readerships of the Shanghai news media (men apparently read women's magazines as much, if not more, than women did),¹⁹⁶ occasionally spiked and excited by bouts of feminist activism described on the pages of the news media, may have found the prescriptive talk of women's proper morals, beauty, and duty, such as childcare, relaxing and amusing. From the *Shenbao* text, it appears that in China, as in the West, the commercial viability of women's magazines and newspapers was and is inversely related to their feminist tendencies (this explains the sudden reversals in many early women's magazines after the first few issues).¹⁹⁷ The question of amusement is not to be brushed aside; to read about accepted patterns of behavior and familiar role models, both ironically treated and innocently endorsed, must have felt rewarding to some—or so the newspaper makers envisaged.¹⁹⁸ Implicitly—and probably realistically, but against their own proclaimed statements of intent—these news media addressed women from the higher classes in particular, rather than their economically weaker sisters, even if they described the latter to titillate their readers' palates occasionally. The revolutionary hope to reach, in these media, all of womankind, was obviously not fulfilled.¹⁹⁹

196. Based on an interview with the editor-in-chief of the paper, Perry Link (*Mandarin Ducks*, 250) writes of the *Woman's Times* (婦女時報 *Funü shibao*, 1911–17) that its readership was probably less than 10 percent female; the attraction for the more than 90 percent of the readers who were male lay not in the progressivism of the paper but in its depictions of a fascinating curiosity: “new-style women.”

197. For a fuller argument, see Mittler, “Cooking, Cleaning, Caring.” See also Nivard, “Women and the Women's Press,” 42; and idem, “Histoire d'une revue feminine chinoise: *Funü zazhi*, 1915–1931.” For Europe and the United States, see Braithwaite, *Women's Magazines*, 12. See also Peterson, *Magazines*, 445: “Commercial magazines generally were inclined to perpetuate what they perceived as the accepted social and cultural standards of the majority. In order to survive, magazines, particularly those with a wide circulation, need to attract and sustain readership, and under pressure to build the widest possible audience, would be unlikely proponents of changes which might threaten or alienate their readers.”

198. On the boundaries between pleasure and ideology, see the perceptive study of women's magazines by Ballaster et al., *Women's Worlds*, and, on this latter point, esp. 106–7.

199. For a number of examples that illustrate how far apart the publics envisaged in inaugural statements and those implied in later articles of the news media are, see note 32 above.

There is no single voice on the women's question in the *Shenbao*. The texts I have been analyzing originate from different sources: advertisements are created by the firm placing the ad; editorials are written by any one of several editors or guest editors of the *Shenbao*; and news reports by a great many individual writers. Each of these different sources and formats constructs a particular and unique image of the implied reader and the "new woman." From the resulting ambiguous fare of full-blown conservatism and considered radicalism, it is obvious that newspapers were not prime movers behind the liberation of women. Some of their discourse can even be considered retrograde in comparison with contemporary or even earlier historical developments in the Chinese women's sphere.²⁰⁰ Neither the women's press nor the newspapers created the Chinese women's movement. Nevertheless, these news media consistently stoked the fire by reflecting ongoing changes—if only to make use of them to enhance their sales. Contrary to existing theories about the media, then, Shanghai's newspapers and women's magazines did *not* truly mirror the reality of female life in Shanghai *nor* did they have the power to influence that life significantly. And even though the hidden agenda behind the incorporation of women in newspapers and magazines may have been to provide encapsulated textbooks for women—description was almost inevitably coupled with prescription—Shanghai's women obviously ignored the media's message.

200. Recent scholarship, especially by Ko, Ebrey, Bray, and Mann, has clearly shown that the assumption that the situation of women had "always been bad" until the days of reformers such as Liang Qichao and, following in his footsteps, the May Fourth movement, is simply part of reformist and May Fourth rhetoric and far removed from historical realities. These scholars illustrate that throughout Chinese history, women's position within Chinese society was strong at different levels: women were regularly educated in the Han, they were active as traveling entertainers in the Tang, they enjoyed rather substantial legal equality with men in the Song (even as footbinding was introduced), and they profited from the cult of *qing* in the Ming (even through widow chastity became a cardinal virtue then). Many openings met with vehement opposition, and therefore, the polyphony characteristic of the texts I work with may well be a significant marker in all texts dealing with female equality throughout Chinese history.

CHAPTER 5

'Multiple Personalities'

Image and Voice of the Shanghairen

Shanghai's newspapers, although circulated and read on a national scale,¹ were—outspokenly and decidedly—newspapers of Shanghai. This is evident not only from the local nature of advertisements and news and from the overwhelming number of editorials concerned with Shanghai but also from the frequency with which they printed poetry,² fiction, and caricatures dealing with Shanghai. Shanghai's newspapers were an invaluable guide to the city.³ Indeed, they were a perfect metonym for the city itself. As foreign media written in Chinese, they reflected the inherent dichotomy of Shanghai: its simultaneous acceptance and rejection of the foreign.⁴ The preceding chapters

1. From its first days, the *Shenbao* was sold in more than 22 places and had its own reporters, most of them in the bigger cities and treaty-ports (see Song Jun, *Shenbao de xingshuai*, 38). The paper also established an elaborate system of agents at regional post offices who distributed the newspaper to towns in China's interior (see Vittinghoff, "Am Rande des Ruhms," 189-91).

2. Gu Bingquan's collection, *Shanghai yangchang zhuzhici*, of bamboo-rhymes from the *Shenbao* and other sources and my own reading of the *Shenbao* show that, especially in the earliest years of the *Shenbao*, a bamboo-rhyme dealing with Shanghai appeared almost every week. In the early 1910s there was a separate poetry section dealing with Shanghai, entitled 海上閒談 ("Idle chatter about Shanghai").

3. Fritzsche, *Reading Berlin*, 8, observes this for Berlin newspapers.

4. This was true for many of the other treaty-port cities, even if the degree of westernization may have been less than in Shanghai. For Hankou, see Rowe, *Hankow*, 50, 51; for Hong Kong, see Sinn, "Fugitive in Paradise," an essay that contains many echoes with the descriptions of Shanghai given here.

have shown how these ambiguities surfaced in the language, the literary forms, the contents, and even in the descriptions of women that appeared in these newspapers. It is, however, in the depiction of Shanghai and its inhabitants that these ambiguities find their most blatant expression.

It is said that men, not walls, make a city. The Shanghai media clearly believed in this dictum: they formed images not just of Shanghai as a city but of its inhabitants as well. By describing the uniqueness and importance of Shanghai, these newspapers characterized those who had come to live there as unique and important: to use a term that appeared only in the last years of the Qing, they were "people of Shanghai," or *Shanghairren* 上海人.⁵ The newspapers' *Shanghairren* was schizophrenic, however. They prescribed a moral, refined, clean, seasoned, and rational resident of Shanghai, but they described the vicious, vulgar, dirty, inexperienced, and irrational newcomer to Shanghai. On the pages of Shanghai's newspapers, the *Shanghairren* lives a beautiful dream and an ugly reality at the same time. The fact that this person was never explicitly identified by a name speaks for itself. As will become apparent below, one is never sure whether those who bragged about living in Shanghai were celebrating the enlightening adventure of life there or congratulating themselves on surviving the city's tormenting challenges.

Shanghai was the test case for the foreign presence in China. The obsession with Shanghai and its people in the media can be taken as the opposite of local patriotism: as the exemplar of Chinese modernity, the city captured and fascinated the imaginations of an implied national reading public. Shanghai's newspapers were "newspapers of Shanghai" precisely so that they would be read throughout China. The advertisements, poetry, and editorials in Shanghai's newspapers did not present an accurate mirror of Shanghai society. Rather, they

5. The earliest use of the term that Ye Xiaoqing ("Shanghai Before Nationalism," 42) found occurs in a 1911 novel, where it is used of an immigrant to Shanghai. On the slow development of a Shanghai identity and the survival of many local identities perpetuated through the establishment of native-place organizations (*tongxianghui*) in Shanghai, see Goodman, *Native Place*, esp. chap. 6. For a discussion of the term *Shanghairren*, see Liu Tao Tao and David Faure, "What Does the Chinese Person Identify With?" 7. Foreigners in Shanghai much more self-confidently called themselves "Shanghaiander" almost from the first days of their sojourn there; for a thorough study, see Bickers, "Shanghaianders."

depicted what Shanghai life could be if one were able to buy and do everything in the advertisements; what it would be if it were just like the dream Shanghai visited in much of the poetry; and what it should be if everyone acted according to editorialists' prescriptions. This vision of life was not just for Shanghai, however, but for all of China. Even though its status remained a cause for national shame, "colonial" Shanghai came to connote the prototypical setting for the formation of a modern, Chinese-style civitas.⁶ On the pages of Shanghai newspapers, the essentialized *Shanghairen* emerged as an attractive yet frightening, exotic yet necessary, model for Chinese inside and outside Shanghai. Again, as in the case of women, the newspapers reflected not the realities found on the streets of modernizing China but the realities found in the minds of the modernizers. The *Shanghairen* functioned as a "cultural experimental animal," on whom the often painful transformation of Chinese civilization was performed.⁷

Describing Shanghai: The Image of the Shanghairen

The foreigner appeared . . . half divine and half devilish, double-faced and many-handed like Vishnu, holding an electric light, a steam boat and a pretty doll in one set of hands, and a policeman's club, revolver and handful of opium in the other. When one looked at his bright side, he was an angel; on the dark side he was a demon.

—Chiang Monlin 蔣夢麟 (1886–1964), 1947⁸

In late Qing and early Republican city guides, personal memoirs, and fiction, Shanghai has a number of stock features. First, it is "the Paris of China," a foreign entity on Chinese soil, and thus a very modern city.⁹ Second, it is a city of unequalled entertainment possibilities (due

6. For an early formulation of Shanghai's modernism, see Frühauf, "Urban Exoticism in Modern Chinese Literature," 204; Frühauf's work was pivotal for both Leo Lee, *Shanghai Modern*; and Lu Han-chao, *Beyond the Neon Lights*. The images of Shanghai established in these three books, based mostly on Republican sources, in fact built on the earlier newspaper discourse surveyed here.

7. Cf. Frühauf, "Urban Exoticism in Modern Chinese Literature," 205. Thus, Shanghai becomes the stand-in not only for the other colonial or treaty ports and treaty-port civilizations (Feuerwerker, *Foreign Establishment*, 8) but eventually even for China proper.

8. Chiang, *Tides from the West*, 43.

9. See, e.g., Hardy, *John Chinaman at Home*, 70; Leo Lee, *Shanghai Modern*, chap. 1; and, for a critical view, Wasserstrom, "Questioning the Modernity of the Model Settlement."

partly to the foreign presence),¹⁰ and finally, it is a place of great contradictions (again because of foreign influence).¹¹ Shanghai's early newspapers—the advertisements, poems, and editorials that appeared in them—helped create these tropes.¹²

ADVERTISEMENTS

Newspaper advertisements presented the objects and institutions that offered to play a part in the life of Shanghai and the *Shanghainers*.¹³ Telegrams are useful (*SB* 16.9.1872); a foreign steamship has arrived and its cargo is offered for sale; an international insurance company offers its services (*SB* 16.9.1872). In the late 1870s a craze for machinery set in: ads touted steam-powered weaving-machines (e.g., *SB* 4.9.1877), scales (*SB* 12.9.1877), and fire engines and printing machines (*SB* 19.9.1877). From the beginning, advertising in the newspapers was dominated by foreign firms, foreign goods, and foreign services: *yanghuo* 洋貨. Chi-

10. See Dyce, *Personal Reminiscences*, much of which deals with entertainments in and around Shanghai during his residence there, 1870–1900. See also Hickmott, *Guide to Shanghai* (1922), 27 and chap. 21; and idem, "Foreign Devils at Play," in Crow, *Foreign Devils* (1940). The emphasis on entertainment was the reason Shanghai was called the "Paradise for Adventurers" 冒險家樂園. This common expression for Shanghai is discussed in *Anecdotes of Old Shanghai*; Xu and Xu, *Qingmo sishinian "Shenbao" shiliao*, 1; and Gu, *Shanghai yangchang zhuzhici*, 7.

11. See, e.g., *All About Shanghai*, 43, 44, a guide from the early 1930s. Even earlier city guides talk of Shanghai as a "cosmopolitan Western Metropolis in Chinese surroundings" (*Hotel Metropole Guide to Shanghai* [1903], 1). A similar view is voiced in Crow, *Traveller's Handbook* (1913), 93: "Shanghai, the commercial metropolis of the Far East . . . is a peculiar mixture of East and West." For a thorough study of foreign and Chinese city guides from the late Qing, see Yeh, "City, Courtesan, and Intellectual," chap. 1. See also Wasserstrom, "Locating Old Shanghai."

12. This chapter offers readings from the *Shenbao* and the *Xinwenbao*. In a lecture at Heidelberg University (17.5.1996) entitled "Life in Shanghai: Reading the *Shanghai Xinbao*, 1862–1872," Luo Suwen made many similar observations for the earlier *Shanghai xinbao*.

13. For a more detailed survey of Shanghai newspaper advertising, its contents, and its methods, both in Chinese- and in English-language papers, see Mittler, "Stay Home and Shop the World." Due to the national circulation of *Shenbao*, the textual and visual presence of these goods was felt by people outside Shanghai, too. Accordingly, after the turn of the century, more and more shops from outside Shanghai advertised in *Shenbao* (e.g., a Hong Kong firm in *SB* 5.10.1902, and a Singapore firm in *SB* 13.9.1907).

nese advertisers are notable for their absence, even though the *Shenbao* offered lower rates in an unsuccessful attempt to attract them.¹⁴

Most early advertisements appear to have been directed toward wholesale merchants. This is also true of auction sales offering foreign delicacies such as brandy, butter, wines, and ham (*SB* 19.9.1877) and foreign furniture and accessories such as clocks that struck the hour (*SB* 30.10.1882). The private customer is addressed more frequently by the 1880s: Frederick Smith & Co of Halifax, England, offer to install the "Best Telegraphs and Telephones." Electric lighting is to be had (*SB* 13.10.1882).¹⁵ Medicines, cosmetics, and perfumes can be obtained from a British pharmacy (*SB* 22.9.1882). Toothpaste is praised (*SB* 9.10.1887).

Around the turn of the twentieth century, ever more foreign articles appeared: pocket watches (e.g., *SB* 25.9.1907, 6.10.1907), spectacles (*SB* 6.10.1907),¹⁶ even artificial teeth (*SB* 13.9.1907). In the 1910s, knitting machines are advertised (*SB* 29.10.1912), next to hats imported directly from London (*SB* 15.10.1912)¹⁷ and long cotton socks (*SB* 29.10.1912).¹⁸ A new type of "hygienic and beneficial" 衛生有益 lamp is available (*SB* 16.9.1912), as is a gas boiler that produces "cheap hot water" 價廉之熱水 in only a minute's time (*SB* 5.9.1912). Bicycles, too, can be obtained (*SB* 22.10.1912, cf. also earlier *SB* 20.9.1902),¹⁹ as can "the car that all of you need" 此為諸君所需之車也, a Studebaker (*SB* 21.10.1912).

14. On the lack of Chinese advertisements, see Vittinghoff, "Am Rande des Ruhms," chap. 4; Patrick Hess, *Anzeigen*; and Mittler, "Stay Home and Shop the World."

15. The presence of lamps and, since the 1880s, electricity in Shanghai gave rise to its name "the nightless city" 不夜城. The epithet appears in bamboo-rhymes in *SB* 12.7.1872 and 28.1.1885 (in slightly different form as 天不夜 "Heaven is never dark" in *SB* 12.8.1872 and 9.3.1874; and as 申江無夜 "Shanghai has no night" in *SB* 13.2.1873). Vittinghoff, "Shanghai unter Strom," discusses other bamboo-rhymes and the effects of electricity in Shanghai. See also footnote 57 below.

16. Although used in China before foreign contact, spectacles become the emblem of foreignized modernity around the turn of the century.

17. For the hat craze, see also *SB* 27.9 and 7.10.1912; and Harrison, *Republican Citizen*.

18. Secker, *Schen*, 58, relates: "Western shoes and socks were the first 'civilized' attire of the Chinese."

19. On the difficulties of introducing the bicycle to China, see "腳踏車將來必盛興說" (On the fact that bicycles must flourish in the future), *SB* 1.4.1898, paraphrased in Appendix A, p. 428.

These objects encouraged a life-style distinctly more foreign than Chinese, one readily available in the shops, often Chinese-run, that specialized in foreign products, such as glass- and porcelain wares, rugs, curtains, iron-framed beds, and furniture (*SB* 19.9.1912). This life-style was often illustrated in the advertisements themselves: one advertisement for an acne medicine (*SB* 1.9.1912), for example, shows a Chinese couple eating at a foreign-style table with a tablecloth, wine carafes, and foreign-style chairs.

Thus, the pages of the Chinese-language newspapers constantly confronted the reader with foreign objects and images. From at least the mid-1870s on, he was also—as if naturally—presented with foreign languages: advertisements with English, French, or German texts, logos, trademarks, or addresses were common, increasingly so from the early 1880s.²⁰ The companies often gave only their London, New York, or Paris address, sometimes translated into Chinese, as in the case of Sir W. A. Rose's or Thomas Hubbock varnishes (*SB* 11.4.1877, 22.10.1882, 9.10.1887). In these advertisements, Shanghai was just another adjunct of these foreign cities, a foreign entity on Chinese soil. It is a very up-to-date city, too, since many of the objects (such as gas boilers, bicycles, and cars) were new everywhere, not just in China.

Shanghai's modernity was all the more striking in advertisements for the entertainment world, which was not restricted to Chinese pastimes. Next to numerous advertisements telling of daily performances of Chinese opera in the teahouses (*SB* 16.9.1872) can be found notices for the foreign "Lyceum Theatre" (*SB* 19.9.1877). European-style horse races take place twice yearly (*SB* 16.10 and 22.9.1882). An advertisement for the new publication *A Critical Record of Flowers in Shanghai* 滬上評花錄 (*SB* 13.10.1882) alerts readers to the latest update of that guide to courtesan life. Japanese or Western celebrities appear in the teahouses (*SB* 1.9.1892, 6.9.1897), and modern Chinese operatic theater (*xinju* 新劇 or *wenming ju* 文明劇) is presented at the New New Stage 新新舞台 (e.g., *SB* 6.9 and 16.9.1912).

In the entertainment sector, it is apparent that life in Shanghai was full of contradictions: the image of a horse-riding foreigner in front of

20. For examples of such advertisements, see Sanatogen: "I have received a second life," *SB* 4.9.1912 (English text and logo); "Devoes Brilliant Oil," *SB* 4.9.1877 (name in English); J. B. White & Brothers, Portland, *SB* 2.10.1897 (trademark); and Sir W. A. Rose & Co, 66 Upper Thames Street, London, *SB* 22.10.1882 (address).

大西洋跑馬票



啓者本行創賣跑馬彩票業蒙頭事照會
按期開彩向無錯悞迄今已有五年之久
衆商均獲樂利莫不稱頌現屆期即自應
出售預定三千五百號每號計洋二元半
號四開均可分售準於華九月十九日三
點鐘常場開看抽取馬名待三日跑馬畢
照式對號毫無私傷其得彩數目甚多上
下俱有附彩得一號竟有兩號之彩章程
列后以上得彩共計三百二十號之數凡
賜顧紳商務速來購取外埠原班寄回
彩洋八五扣兌現特此佈聞 甲
福記洋行應加能與啓

新開

本號創設上海棋盤街北首自
開選呂宋發財票茲因初創暫爲
減價以廣招徠而蒙衆願今有
英十月份票出售每張價洋五
元八角

得彩

算外
半照
角分
元八

號減

發各埠紳商片願者新請函致
寄本號看屆期明出牌當可照班
寄呈庶不有悞 乙



Fig. 5.1 Western and Chinese imagery on a typical advertising page (SB 24.9.1882)

a background of foreign buildings, tails flying, blowing a trumpet, in an advertisement for horse-racing shares (SB 24.9.1882) is situated right above an advertisement for Chinese shares with an illustration of a Chinese official holding an advertising sash, a familiar image from the *baofang* editions of the court gazette, *jingbao* (see Fig. 5.1).²¹ The advertising page juxtaposed images of China and “the West” in an imaginary space just as the city juxtaposed them in reality.

Even within one and the same advertisement, the contradictory nature of life in Shanghai, an existence amid multiple systems of meaning, may be apparent. One rather typical advertisement announcing the date of an auction sale gives both the Chinese and the foreign day of the week (SB 16.9.1872). A foreigner searching for his lost dog 尋失狗

21. Compare also the original *baofang* official in Fig. 3.2, p. 210.

resorts to the Chinese calendar to provide the date of his loss yet gives an exact time, from a Western watch (a clear sign that the rule of the clock had already arrived in Shanghai; *SB* 8.10.1877).²² The advertisements for the foreign firms "Madini guns" and Devoe Manufacturer to either side of this notice employ the foreign calendar 西歷 in one case and the Chinese calendar 陰歷 in the other. Both the advertisement itself and the page on which it appeared thus feature several distinct methods of reckoning time.

Such multiplicities in time, space, language, and imagery were a result of the ever-growing—and immediately negotiated—presence of foreign goods in Shanghai. Advertisers were aware of the effects of presenting products in foreign attire and language. An advertisement promoting foreign cloth (*SB* 5.10 and 7.10.1912) uses the image of a beautiful foreign woman with curly hair, deep-set eyes, and a close-fitting evening dress. The foreignness of the image is obviously intended to make the product attractive and to give it authority.²³ On the other hand, the text of the ad advises the reader: "All the shop assistants in our company know the Chinese language. So if our customers happen not to know English, they will be served in Chinese." The advertiser negotiated the degree of westernization in the advertisement so as to attract and yet not frighten potential customers; he returns, and acts upon, the Chinese gaze cast on all foreign faces and objects in Shanghai.²⁴

Such creative, if somewhat schizophrenic, shifts between image and text, iconography and language, are particularly pronounced in advertisements by the Japanese firm Morishita & Co. to promote its patent medicine "Jintan" (see, e.g., *SB* 29.10.1912). The logo shows the head of a man in dress uniform with a hat and a great moustache, apparently an image of Kaiser Wilhelm II (see Fig. 5.2).²⁵ This image surrounds a

22. Earlier, in the *Shanghai xinbao*, it is mentioned that a salute would be fired to mark the noon hour (Mittler, "Stay Home and Shop the World").

23. For some examples, see *ibid.*; and Patrick Hess, *Anzeigen*.

24. According to Rey Chow (*Woman and Chinese Modernity*, 78), "The Chinese market was increasingly filled with foreign commodities that did not really return the Chinese gaze and yet insisted on being there." I contend that the (more or less) creative multiplicities evident in newspaper advertising show that the gaze was returned; see Mittler, "Stay Home and Shop the World."

25. The picture is not Bismarck (also very popular at the time in Japan and in China), as Patrick Hess, *Anzeigen*, 36-37 holds.



Fig. 5.2 Multiple levels of signification in an advertisement for Jintan (left); with a detail showing an enlargement of the logo (right) (SB 29.10.1912)

box with the name of the product, Jintan (*jin* is the Japanese reading of the Chinese *ren* 仁, “humanity”—one of the prime virtues in the Confucian canon; *tan* 丹, “pill,” is read *dan* in Chinese). The name appears in three writing systems: Chinese characters, katakana indicating the Japanese pronunciation, and romanization. Also within the logo are the address of the firm’s home office in Japan and a slogan that claims the pill “restores the dead to life” 起死回生. The logo thus combines different signifiers from both western and eastern traditions. The strength of the product and its modernity are supported by the Kaiser, the Japanese address, and the use of romanization; its moral and ritual authority is certified by slogan and product name.

Similar ambivalences can be found in other medical advertisements. The logo for Sanatogen tonic was a Chinese official wearing a long gown and *magua* jacket. In advertisements this “Chinese” logo was paired with ever-changing, yet never very Chinese-looking illustrations. The illustration in Figure 5.3 (SB 4.9.1912) is typical. The crowds surrounding the Greek goddess dispensing the nostrum include quite a few Chinese, most clearly women in *shanku* 衫褲 (long shirt and trousers),²⁶ but the authority of the product is underlined by its foreign

26. The advertisement in SB 2.9.1912 shows a Chinese woman in *shanku* 衫褲 (long shirt and trousers) with a little boy in the front. The one in SB 4.9.1912 (Fig.

SANATOGEN

RECEIVED A SECOND LIFE

德之生再

散拿吐瑾能使弱者康寧弱者強健俾人人得有少壯之精力

大凡人每覺其氣力衰頹精神委頓身健日弱一則幸常自謂曰求知余能再得復原否 吾曰能之若散將此最壯力最滋補之良藥即所謂散拿吐瑾者服之則其氣力精神與身體必能獲得復原也

爲世界名醫所贊頌

維也納大學堂化學醫學博士云散拿吐瑾爲稀珍之良劑於腦筋衰弱血虛氣衰者最有益 前德京御醫吐瑾藥君云凡患腦筋衰弱者服散拿吐瑾立能精神充足氣力復原 此外尚有一萬五千醫士紛紛來函證其所治病如腦筋衰弱精神委頓血虛氣衰腸胃諸疾等症由散拿吐瑾而獲愈者功效卓著 身體復原

請君即服此散拿吐瑾蓋此藥爲世界惟一之妙劑可使腦筋吸收諸化生之精華此藥實有滋補生血極大之功能與散拿吐瑾內所含之鐵素用化學配製能治能使君肌肉長力血液稠紅並榮養全體之周圍能爲他藥所莫能爲之工散拿吐瑾所有一切功效凡精力軟弱或精力消耗者已確有明證者服散拿吐瑾能使精力充足以增益人之百倍生

散拿吐瑾之白商藥房購取一試而試服之

散拿吐瑾

粉壽益年延瑾吐拿散

Fig. 5.3 Greek images in an advertisement for Sanatogen (SB 4.9.1912)

origins. Every advertisement mentions that the medicine was developed by doctors at the universities of Berlin and Vienna.

Many firms alternated Chinese and foreign images. Foster McClellan Company,²⁷ for instance, variously promoted its Doan's Kidney Pills with the image of a pain-stricken foreigner in tails (SB 5.9.1912); a Chinese in gown, *magua* 馬褂 (short vest), and skull cap (SB 19.9 and 22.9.1912); a mustachioed foreigner in a western-style suit (SB 13.10 and 17.10.1912); a Chinese in a dressing gown (SB 20.10.1912); and a Chinese in a long gown with a skull cap (SB 26.10.1912). The reader thus confronted multiple images on each advertising page,

5.3) has a Chinese woman in *shan* 衫. In SB 10.9.1912, some of the doctors, especially the fifth from the front, look Chinese.

27. For this company's advertising strategies, see Patrick Hess, *Anzeigen*, 38.

sometimes within a single advertisement, sometimes within the advertisements for the same product over the course of weeks.

Shanghai, as presented in the advertisements, is first and foremost a foreign city, a city of pleasures, too, but, most important, a city of contradictions. While providing foreign images, calendars, goods, and addresses to a Chinese audience both inside and outside Shanghai, advertisements negotiated the attraction and authority of foreign goods partly by intention (as in the advertisement for cloth and the alternating images of China and the West in medical advertisements) and partly by default (since advertisers could not determine the position of their announcement on the advertising page). This resulted in multiplicities of language, time, and even space.

The cross-cultural and interlingual dialogue of *Shenbao* advertisements thus engendered the Shanghai that came to stand for modernity.²⁸ The reader was offered a cornucopia of the customary and, even more, of the unusual. Advertising thus created an image of Shanghai and China as they could be, of a “brave new world” potentially surrounding the *Shanghairen* and eventually all Chinese, a world marked by foreign intrusions adapted to Chinese customers, a world of the new, the cheap, the hygienic, the scientific, the advanced, and, more and more, the “civilized” (*wenming* 文明). Advertisements provided advice on what to do and how to act: how to send a telegram, how to brush your teeth, how to kill bacteria, and how to use a sewing machine. Even as advertisements thus described and reflected the dilemmas and contradictions of the *Shanghairen*, torn between China’s heritage and a future represented by the West, they also created norms of behavior—they prescribed the new, hygienic, rational *Shanghairen*.

BAMBOO-RHYMES AND OTHER POETRY

Like advertisements, poems in Shanghai’s newspapers, especially the *zhuzhici* 竹枝詞, or “bamboo-rhymes,” also reflected the foreign atmosphere of the city.²⁹ One typical bamboo-rhyme of 1872 mentions

28. Here, I follow David Wang, *Fin-de-Siècle Splendor*, 4.

29. *Zhuzhici* date back at least to Tang times. They commonly deal with local customs and surroundings, no matter whether of a great city or a small hamlet. The number of verses is flexible. Each verse consists of two sets of two rhyming seven-word phrases (Gu, *Shanghai yangchang zhuzhici*, 1–3). Quite a few of the poems discussed here were submitted by readers of the *Shenbao*. They were one of

electric fans (verse 3), microscopes (verse 4), and a glass house, which is romantically called the "palace of crystals" 水晶宮 (verse 8). Elevators are "immortal's stairs" 仙梯 (verse 13)³⁰ that can take one into "buildings piled up high almost to the clouds" 層樓重疊接雲霄.³¹ Another bamboo-rhyme³² hints ironically at the striking of clocks, so efficient in "waking people from their dreams" 能喚醒人間夢 (verse 3).³³ It also mentions a "devilish fire" making Shanghai's night clear and bright 鬼火當年夜夜明 (verse 19). In general, however, it praises the city as "a mulberry tree field in the blue sea, where everything changes so quickly" 滄海桑田事易更 (verse 19)—an early occurrence of a phrase that would later become a hackneyed epitaph for Shanghai.³⁴ The city is "astonishing" 最心驚 (verse 19), a "most extravagant place" 最繁華處 (verse 19).³⁵ Shanghai is styled as a fascinating—enchanted and enchanted—ever-changing, exhilarating collection of foreign attractions, and the reader is guided through what must appear to be a fantasy world.³⁶

Four decades later, poetry on Shanghai, which now appears in a separate column entitled "Idle chatter about Shanghai" ("Haishang

the forms of writing that the *Shenbao* had called for in its inaugural statements. For a rich collection of bamboo-rhymes dealing with Shanghai and taken mostly from the *Shenbao*, see Gu, *Shanghai yangchang zhuzhici*. Vittinghoff, "Am Rande des Ruhms," chap. 6, pt. 2, gives a reading of some *zhuzhici* reprinted in Gu.

30. Immortals and ghosts are common motifs in *Zhuzhici* on Shanghai; see, e.g., *SB* 18.5.1872, 18.10.1872, 14.2.1877, and 4.7.1889.

31. "續滬上西人竹枝詞" (The bamboo-rhyme on Westerners in Shanghai continued), *SB* 30.5.1872.

32. "滬北竹枝詞" (Bamboo-rhyme on foreign Shanghai), *SB* 8.9.1872. In this poem, the "glass house" reappears (verse 15). The poem appears to have been sent in by a reader.

33. Clocks reappear frequently in *zhuzhici*; see, e.g., *SB* 18.5.1872, 28.5.1872, 27.4.1874, and also in some of the editorials, e.g., "徐園品蘭記" (A record of tasting orchids in the Xu Gardens), *SB* 4.4.1887, discussed in Chapter 1 (p. 80).

34. Li Xiaohua, "Bainian cangsanghua jianzhu." References to Shanghai as a fast-changing, fleeting world occur frequently in the *zhuzhici* (e.g., *SB* 18.5.1872). See the discussion below.

35. *Fanhua*, "extravagant," becomes a key word in these poems. See, e.g., *SB* 18.5.1872, 13.6.1872, 19.7.1872, 13.9.1872, 20.9.1872, 28.9.1872, 17.11.1872, 26.11.1872, 4.7.1874, and 1.1.1883.

36. Sometimes explanations are offered in the form of a commentary by the author of the poem (e.g., *SB* 30.5.1872). This and many other self-explanatory *zhuzhici* cited in Gu, *Shanghai yangchang zhuzhici*, thus become veritable predecessors to real city guides.

xiantan" 海上閒談), muses differently on the foreign presence. One writer even sighs: "Alas, the people of Shanghai live daily in an environment influenced by the foreigners. What their eyes see is foreign. What their ears hear is foreign." Shanghai seems to be superior to other Chinese cities because it is not Chinese, but it only seems so at first sight.³⁷

[Take] houses, for example: the old-style houses do not come up to the lavish style of foreign houses. [Take] clothes, for example: the silks and satins of our country do not come up to the fashionable styles of foreign goods. [Take] food and drink, for example: the banquets of our country do not come up to the pleasures of a foreign meal.

There is an evident sense of irony in these passages. Even in some earlier poems, predominantly concerned with presenting Shanghai as a city of *qi* 奇 (the catchall term for "strange" foreign knowledge and scientific achievements),³⁸ mystery, and the unusual, a city of extravagant palaces, of immortals and dreams, Shanghai is not depicted as the city of wonders alone. As we have seen, some of these poems are already spiced with satirical references to "devilish fires." In later years, however, Shanghai is depicted more and more frequently as a dubious cluster of foreign habits and objects, unjustly considered superior to Chinese alternatives.³⁹

These two increasingly irreconcilable layers, the admiring and the condemning, become most pronounced in depictions of Shanghai as a city of entertainment. Another 1911 poem mentions "the noisy hubbub of percussionists in the theaters" and the "pheasants [lower-class prostitutes] running around Fourth Avenue (Simalu)."⁴⁰ Here, the perception is noise rather than the music that dominated in earlier poetry dealing with the fascinations and merriments of Shanghai.⁴¹ The noble if ambiguous image of the courtesan that appears in earlier Shanghai poetry (to be discussed in more detail below) is reduced to

37. "海上閒談," *SB* 24.9.1911.

38. On the proliferation of *qishu* 奇書, books of knowledge about the West in the late Qing, see Ming, "Scholars in Wonderland," 27, 29–30.

39. For the increasing vitriolics in writings on Shanghai, see Yeh, "City, Courtesan, and Intellectual," chap. 7.

40. "海上閒談," *SB* 10.5.1911.

41. For other examples of music as a positive motive associated with Shanghai, see *SB* 18.5.1872, 12.6.1872, 5.7.1872, 19.7.1872, 18.9.1872, 20.9.1872, 18.10.1872, 11.12.1872, 16.10.1873, 5.2.1874, 4.1.1875, 15.5.1875, 14.2.1877, 11.3.1877, and 1.1.1883.

the perception of her most lowly sister, the streetwalker. This is the way that "those who have long lived in Shanghai" 久居上海者 perceive the city and its entertainments. Their view is very different from that of newcomers or occasional visitors: "I have heard that everyone in the hinterlands considers Shanghai a world of extreme happiness 極樂世界. Once they come to Shanghai, everything their ears hear and their eyes see is sufficient to make their hearts and minds happy." This writer both reflected and satirized this fascination with Shanghai. Those who, like himself, had lived in Shanghai long enough are aware that what "meets the ears and eyes [there] is very disagreeable" 甚多可厭. They look at Shanghai and realize, in a phrase from the *Zuozhuan* 左轉, how "low, small, noisy, and dusty" 湫隘囂塵 it is.⁴² Yanzi 晏子, in the *Zuozhuan*, would not leave his "low, small, noisy and dusty" house even when his ruler offered him a bright and lofty dwelling. His reason: convenience. Similarly, the longtime resident of Shanghai, despite his awareness of the true and vicious nature of Shanghai, has chosen to remain there. Is his ironic detachment from this wondrous city real, his seeming lack of involvement with this curious city honest? If he is so willing to condemn it, why does he not move away? Is his long attachment to the city a "marriage of convenience," too? Or does he, like Yanzi, use his closeness to Shanghai to serve the people?⁴³ Yanzi mentioned to his ruler that the price for shoes for those whose toes had been chopped off as a punishment is extremely high (he knows about this only because he lives in that dilapidated house situated near the marketplace). Yanzi's remark is said to have influenced the ruler to alleviate his code of punishments. Similarly, the authors of these later poems tell a cautionary tale to their government and the people.

42. This four-word phrase comes from the *Zuozhuan*, Duke Zhao, 3rd year. I have followed the translation in Legge, *Chinese Classics*, 10: 586, 589. Part of the phrase occurs in the 1880s in an otherwise rather positive editorial dealing with good government in Shanghai: "風氣日開說" (On daily advances toward enlightenment), *SB* 23.2.1882, l. 13. For a short paraphrase of this article, see Appendix A, pp. 427-28.

43. This is indeed the most plausible argument. I develop this point in my discussions of editorials below. In some of the self-fashioning by people such as Huang Xiexun—longtime editor of the *Shenbao*—who posed as a remonstrating official, or Liang Qichao, who wished to educate the people, this appears to have been one possible reason for living in Shanghai.

The ambiguities in depictions of Shanghai, which become more pronounced over time, show that even by 1911 it was not an easy and straightforward matter to live there. The marriage of convenience was based on a love-hate relationship that is visible in the earliest poems in the *Shenbao*. One of the bamboo-rhymes discussed above begins with the confession:⁴⁴

A landscape with no borders, one calls it Shanghai,
They laugh at me for traveling often to that country. (verse 1)

The author, a frequent visitor to Shanghai but not a resident, explains that the city is despicably eager to “imitate the foreigners” (verse 1). Nevertheless, he spends the next few lines describing some of the foreign attractions in Shanghai before stopping himself short: “It is not allowed to portray its voluptuous beauty” (verse 4). Obviously, the author is both fascinated by and critical of the city. It is significant that in the opening couplet, he calls Shanghai both a “landscape without borders” 無邊風景, a limitless space of dreams, and a “country” 邦, a finite, foreign state on Chinese soil. Shanghai is to be admired as a land of opportunity and despised for being under foreign jurisdiction.

In the bulk of the poem, the author sings of the courtesan, the most “voluptuous beauty” of Shanghai’s entertainment world. He describes her skills and virtues, her grace and beauty. The courtesan, a figure both admired for the freedom of her life-style and despised for her confinement in the most degrading of occupations, becomes a metaphor for Shanghai itself.⁴⁵ The author’s love-hate relationship with the courtesan stands for his feelings for Shanghai. “It is not allowed to portray the voluptuous beauty” of either, and yet he must; he knows that “they laugh at me for traveling often to that country,” and yet he does. He is mesmerized by Shanghai—almost to the state of madness—another frequent topos in bamboo-rhymes dealing with

44. “滬北竹枝詞,” *SB* 8.9.1872.

45. For the use of the courtesan as a metaphor, see Hershatter, “Courtesan and Streetwalkers,” 246. Catherine Yeh in her work (esp. “City, Courtesan, and Intellectual,” chap. 3, and “The Life-styles of Four Shanghai *Wenren* in Late Qing China”) has explored the use of the courtesan as a trope, its historical background, and its transformation during the late Qing to become a metonym for Shanghai and its intellectuals. For a similar view, see David Wang, *Fin-de-Siècle Splendor*, 86.

Shanghai.⁴⁶ If the poem wavers between complete amazement and happiness and sadness and self-disdain, it reflects the writer's self-indulgence as well as his doubts and his despair over his inability either to break with or to praise unambiguously the city.⁴⁷ Indeed, as Catherine Yeh put it: "The question whether the Shanghai courtesans are worth writing about begs the question whether Shanghai is worth living in."⁴⁸

The courtesan's life, her youth and beauty, is a fleeting dream, just as Shanghai, the world of pleasures, is a fleeting universe: "This residence of jade [Shanghai] will in another year, I fear, have changed greatly, and thus this poem is made to preserve it for the reading of [our] successors." This is how the bamboo-rhyme closes. It is "a song of one word and three sighs" (verse 20). The author is conscious of the ambivalent nature and subject of his writing. He is awoken, time and again, by the striking of Shanghai's clocks from his unencumbered dreams to a troubled awareness of limitations, in space as well as in time.

The use of the courtesan to describe Shanghai and its ambiguities was already a trope in the 1870s.⁴⁹ Another bamboo-rhyme of 1872 describing the skills, charms, and beauties of Shanghai courtesans is punctuated by pensive verses dealing with life in Shanghai.⁵⁰ The poem begins:

The ocean city has always been an illusion.
 Who is going to take warning from an overturned cart?
 In its extravagance, [a mixture] of old and new, it is all
 a dream.
 The faces of the courtesans [make you] resign your sense
 of shame: even jade does not come up to them.

46. For instances in which two of the most common terms for madness, *kuang* 狂 or *chi* 痴, appear in descriptions of reactions to Shanghai, see *SB* 18.9.1872, 18.10.1872, 5.2.1874, 4.7.1874, 26.11.1874, 15.5.1875, 14.2.1877, 11.3.1877, 28.1.1885.

47. Catherine Yeh, "City, Courtesan, Intellectual," chap. 3.

48. Catherine Yeh, "Creating a Shanghai Identity," III; and idem, "How to Become Shanghai," ms., 15.

49. Out of the unending number of *Zhuzhici* dealing with Shanghai through the courtesan, see *SB* 18.5.1872, 29.5.1872, 12.6.1872, 13.6.1872, 5.7.1872, 12.7.1872, 17.7.1872, 19.7.1872, 12.8.1872, 18.9.1872, 20.9.1872, 28.9.1872, 18.10.1872, 7.4.1873, 16.10.1873, 4.7.1874, 4.1.1875, 15.5.1875, 14.2.1877, 11.3.1877, 1.1.1883.

50. "上海竹枝詞" (Shanghai bamboo-rhyme), *SB* 20.9.1872. This is again a reader's contribution.

Whereas the first and third lines speak of Shanghai as a wonderful illusion, a dream, the second and fourth hint at the contrary: danger is invoked in the second line, and shame in the fourth. The poem continues with a description of how in the courtesan houses music can be heard all night; one can “drink to the moon, the deluding courtesans dancing with their tender waists.” And even though a man may have spent all his money, he is not “sorry for the night.” This pattern of alternating pleasures and cautions recurs in the next verses.

It is evident throughout this bamboo-rhyme, just as in the previous one, that the merry world of the courtesan (that is, Shanghai) is subject to sudden abrupt and brutal changes. This becomes most pronounced in verse 6:

Such cloudlike illusions easily have thorns,
[And] in these thickets of feminine beauty [i.e., the
brothels], there are weapons.

This train of thought continues in the last lines of verse 7:

Who would you rely on to borrow an immortal's pillow,
To wake up from a dream of Handan?

It reappears at the end of the poem:

Momentous scenes, how then could they be kept?
How can we manage to eradicate the trot of
human life?

To defend the beauties of life in Shanghai—in spite of their thorns—and to defend one's enjoyment of this life, one has to call it a dream and an illusion (verse 1),⁵¹ a paradise 桃源, a land of immortals *xianjing* 仙境 (verse 10),⁵² crazy, unreal. Since it is just a dream, why not enjoy one's life there? This way, one may praise Shanghai and love it—without shame. The beauty of the courtesan and the beauty of Shanghai are fleeting. Shanghai may be only a temporary paradise. It is not really a place where people live in peace, oblivious of what is going on

51. The dream motif occurs in quite a number of Shanghai *zhuzhici*, often coupled with an awakening to an unpleasant reality; see, e.g., *SB* 6.9.1872, 7.11.1872, 26.11.1874, 4.9.1875, and 12.2.1876.

52. The comparison with a paradise occurs time and again in Shanghai *zhuzhici*; e.g., *SB* 11.3.1877, 27.2.1888, 4.7.1889, 4.11.1891. See also Ming, “Scholars in Wonderland,” 16718.

around them. The authors of these poems acknowledge that they are running away from reality, that they are deluding themselves about the thorns found not only in the beauties of the brothels but also in the foreign presence in Shanghai. They know that this city, just like the courtesan, may not be worthy of their feelings. This is why they show that it is impossible to remain in this dream world. Just like the traveler to Handan, in the Tang dynasty story alluded to here (Shen Jiji's 沈既濟 [ca. 741-ca. 805] *Inside the Pillow* [Zhenzhongji 枕中記]), they will eventually wake up.⁵³

The poem's reference to Handan rather than to a "pillow dream" 枕夢, another term frequently used to refer to the same story, is significant.⁵⁴ In Handan, students would learn something new and immediately forget what they had known before: in adjusting to and imitating the ways of walking in Handan, students would forget how they had walked before and thus had to crawl home.⁵⁵ To study the gait of Handan 學(邯鄲)步,⁵⁶ or to be a student of Handan 邯鄲學徒, thus means "following others and losing one's own originality." And is this not exactly what happens to people in Shanghai? People frown at *Shanghairen* for succumbing to the allures of the foreign city, for losing their own original nature, which is precisely what they fear and feel shame about.

The equivocal nature of the courtesan in this early poetry is an allegory for the relationship of Chinese with the foreign heritage of Shanghai. While presenting and explaining the wonders of Shanghai, a world that indeed had had gaslights since 1865, telegraph and telephone lines since the 1870s, and running water and electricity since the 1880s,⁵⁷ to a reader who had never visited the city (or who was

53. For similar anxieties, see Ming, "Scholars in Wonderland," 21.

54. This title appears in an editorial on life as a dream or a stage again with references to Shanghai: "戲夢說" (On plays and dreams), *SB* 9.9.1887.

55. This story is related in the "Autumn Floods" ("Qiushui" 秋水) chapter of the *Zhuangzi* 莊子 and repeated in the *Hanshu* 漢書.

56. The term also appears in a *zhuzhici* in *SB* 28.5.1883.

57. Cochran, "Inventing Nanjing Road," 3; Leung, *The Shanghai Taotai*, 88. Other treaty ports did not have electricity until the turn of the twentieth century. There had been a heated debate between foreign residents and the Shanghai circuit intendant, Liu Ruifen 劉瑞芬, who served in that office from 1878 to 1882: the intendant did not want electricity for fear that it was unsafe and would cause fires. He ordered that even Chinese residents within the foreign settlements were not allowed to have electricity. Afraid of losing customers and profits, the manager of

not well acquainted with foreign life in the concessions, since even in Shanghai illumination did not fall equally on all residents)⁵⁸ and thus perceived the city as an attractive mixture of strangeness and *qi*,⁵⁹ these poems describe a world as it would be. But at the same time these poems warn against the horror, the danger, and the craziness that mesmerizing Shanghai could be. Living in Shanghai or even visiting it frequently was apparently an act that needed justification, an act that called for an apology for choosing convenience and appropriation over other, more Chinese, values. Thus the poets resorted to describing Shanghai either as a fairyland (in which they did not truly live) or as a living hell (in which they had not chosen to live). In these poems, foreign Shanghai is depicted simultaneously as a beautiful dream and an ugly reality.

EDITORIALS

Foreign Shanghai became a subject of heated discussion in editorials, too. Shanghai, the editorials argue, does not follow "the old rules" 不同舊日之規 (ll. 15-16).⁶⁰ It is the city of foreigners who have built

the Shanghai Electric Company urged the British minister to Peking to exert pressure on the Zongli yamen. The ban on electricity was then lifted (Leung, *The Shanghai Taotai*, 78).

58. Most Chinese in Shanghai were not in everyday contact with the commodities just mentioned. This is evident from a report, "自來水" (Running water), *SB* 17.9.1882, in which it is explained that running water is not magic: "不窮鬼斧神工乃有此。"

59. Hauser, *Shanghai*, 10-11, relates that when George Balfour, who served as the first British consul in Shanghai from 1843 to 1846, moved there and temporarily took up residence in the Chinese city, "the house of the foreigners soon became the major attraction of the town. For the first few days the Chinese came to see it as one goes to see a museum. . . . They went upstairs and watched the white men in the most intimate details of their daily life: eating, shaving, washing, reading, sleeping." In order to satisfy lovers of *qi* in and outside Shanghai, the Zhang Gardens in Shanghai, which opened to the public in 1885, had a "house called 'electric center' provided with electric lights, an electric stove, an electric fan, an electric bell . . . and an electric alarm bell which let off alarm as soon as the button was pushed. These electric installations were very attractive to visitors, because at that time no electric light was found in the homes of ordinary people" (*Anecdotes of Old Shanghai*, 159).

60. "上海洋場序—仿滕王閣序" (Preface to the Shanghai foreign concessions—In imitation of the "Preface to the Pavilion of Prince Teng"), *SB* 13.9.1872.

well-constructed churches and wooden bridges and who have brought with them clocks, music boxes, automats, telegraph wires, steamships, and machines that can talk in all languages.⁶¹ Shanghai is an exhilarating place in all its abundance and strangeness 怪怪奇奇無所不有亦足暢我心目 (l. 4).⁶² In many ways, this foreign Shanghai is a model city. An article of 1903 observes: "Looked at from the outside, with its straight and level roads, the brightness of its lights, the cleanliness of its living quarters, the strictness of its police management, it appears that its good government has no equal anywhere in China" (ll. 1-2).⁶³ From the beginnings of the Chinese newspaper, Shanghai is described in these terms. One 1882 article commends the city for being rich and well kept. It concludes with a question: If more cities in China were to adopt the style of Shanghai, "would that not be the greatest happiness" 豈不大快樂也乎?⁶⁴

Shanghai is a model for pleasure as well. One editorialist in the 1870s wrote: "I looked at Shanghai and realized: 'The place to have fun in life is in front of your eyes.'" One could easily, he continued, waste a fortune in this city. Every evening, one could hire a carriage, "take the whip, and race the horse along the Bund of the Huangpu."⁶⁵ Indeed, as depicted in editorials, Shanghai nightlife consisted to a large extent of "rambling and riding all over the place."⁶⁶ This activity ap-

61. Ibid.; "論機器能言" (On the machine that can talk), *SB* 24.5.1877; "房室當以時修葺說" (Discussing the fact that houses ought to be renovated regularly), *SB* 5.10.1887.

62. "上海樂事解" (Explaining the entertainments of Shanghai), *SB* 13.10.1877.

63. "論上海風俗" (On the customs and mores of Shanghai), *XWB* 27.8.1903. For a similar view from 1907, see Xiong, "Image and Identity," 100-101. Certainly, Westerners were convinced that Shanghai was such a model settlement (see, e.g., Lang, *Shanghai Considered Socially*, 58; and the discussion of foreign tour guides in Yeh, "City, Courtesan, and Intellectual," chap. 1).

64. "風氣日開說," *SB* 23.2.1882, l. 21. For a similar positive view of colonial powers not in Shanghai but in India, see "論印度法國二處傳來奇談" (Strange stories from India and France), *SB* 9.11.1877. Both articles are paraphrased in Appendix A, pp. 425-28.

65. "上海樂事解," *SB* 13.10.1877, l. 3. For a similar depiction, see "上海洋場序—仿滕王閣序," *SB* 13.9.1872.

66. "上海洋場序—仿滕王閣序," *SB* 13.9.1872, l. 3; see also the introductory and ending lines of "徐園品蘭記," *SB* 4.4.1887, discussed in Chapter 1, p. 80. The editorial "砭俗論" (On piercing vulgarity), *SB* 22.8.1887, also talks of youngsters who would race "carriages attempting to catch up with their companions" (ll. 19-20). See also "論夜遊之害" (On the harm of nightly roamings), *SB* 2.9.1887.

parently did not fall out of fashion for a long time. An editorial from 1903 challenged readers to verify this on their own: "Check all the carriages in use at 2:00 or 3:00 o'clock in the morning; more than half will not have returned home."⁶⁷

What do all these ramblers do? They may enter a teahouse or a wine bar to drink, sit together and chat, all the while looking out at the other idlers "swarming from east to west like bees"; they may go to the flower maidens and listen to music,⁶⁸ they may sleep with prostitutes or play billiards to while away the time or organize a huge banquet.⁶⁹ For those intent on further dissipation, "there are inevitably several" gambling houses and opium dens "in every street."⁷⁰

This short survey has illustrated that, like poetry and advertising, editorials created images of Shanghai as a city of pleasure and as a foreign enclave. Editorials also dealt with Shanghai's contradictions as well. But they add a new dimension to the discussion: they not only present ambivalences but discuss them in terms of morality.

An article from the late 1880s dealing with the foreign penchant for remodeling, for example, turns out to be a roundabout critique of the Chinese.⁷¹ The author begins: "When I first came to Shanghai and saw that houses in the foreign concessions were frequently rebuilt, I was rather suspicious 疑 of it. And to this very day, I had wondered why the foreigners so dislike the old and so delight in the new" (l. 1). To the new arrival, such foreign habits appear strange 奇怪. However, the author has become a longtime Shanghai resident. This is obvious from his reaction to the collapse of a three-story Chinese villa that caused a large number of injuries (l. 2): "So now I know why one prefers the new and does not appreciate the old in houses. When foreigners rebuild houses it is not because they so delight in the new and so dislike the old: there is far-sighted thinking 遠慮 behind it" (ll. 2-3). The house had collapsed because a crowd of people gathered in the villa had rushed to the windows on one side to watch the arrival of a steamship (l. 5). This tragic accident convinces the author to accept a

67. "論上海風俗," *XWB* 30.8.1903, l. 15.

68. "上海樂事解," *SB* 13.10.1877, ll. 3-4, 5-6. See also "上海洋場序," *SB* 13.9.1872.

69. "貶俗論," *SB* 22.8.1887, ll. 15-16.

70. "論上海風俗," *XWB* 30.8.1903, l. 11. See also "上海洋場序—仿滕王閣序," *SB* 13.9.1872.

71. "房室當以時修葺說," *SB* 5.10.1887.

foreign habit he had once deplored. He ends with an appeal for the thorough renovation of Shanghai's old and ramshackle houses.

The author, a *Shanghainen*, is willing to learn from the foreign model and accept it as "farsighted." Indeed, he adds a self-critical note: "The Chinese have seen little and marvel at much" 中國之人少見多怪 (l. 3). He, too, had been like that when he "first came to Shanghai." The implied self-criticism goes even deeper. The Chinese habit of "marveling at much" 多怪 translates into a taste for "enjoying a show" 看熱鬧, which is what caused the tragedy.⁷² Had not everyone rushed to see what was going on at the first sound of the steamship's whistle, the house would not have collapsed (ll. 3-4). The author calls instead for a rational and informed attitude toward foreign objects and ideas.⁷³ His own case illustrates a learning process from a wrong attitude toward the strange (*qi*) to the right one. He warns against a dangerous infatuation with the unfamiliar and calls for a rational appreciation of *qi* and what might be valuable to appropriate.

Many more such cautionary tales can be found in the Shanghai news media. Obviously, Shanghai journalists felt they had an important message to convey: *qi*, the strange, the unfamiliar, the foreign may be beneficial, but only if handled properly. One typical example of this attitude can be seen in an article dealing with a wondrous machine on display in the French concession. It can converse in any language in which it is spoken to.⁷⁴ The author is fascinated enough to describe this and similar machines in detail. Nevertheless, halfway through the article, he asks: "The fact that the ingenuity of the human mind can go this far can be called extreme. Is this not really what is habitually called 'stealing the works of heaven' 所謂巧奪天工者?" (l. 8). Nothing is more accomplished than the works of heaven. To try to prove, as foreign inventors had, that man could approach this apex of

72. Apart from Lu Xun in his famous preface to the short-story collection 吶喊 *Nahan* (Call to arms), many Chinese cultural critics (e.g., Liang Qichao in his 新民說 *Xinminshuo* [The new citizen] and Bo Yang in his 丑陋的中國人 *Choulou de Zhongguoren* [Ugly Chinaman]) have complained about this Chinese habit. For a foreign example, see Gilbert, *What's Wrong with China*, 193-94.

73. For a careful evaluation of Shanghai's function as the "enlightener" in Chinese culture, see Leo Lee, *Shanghai Modern*, chap. 2.

74. "論機器能言," *SB* 24.5.1877. My interpretation of this article profited greatly from the critical comments of the Chinese Culture Workshop at Harvard University (Spring 1996) and Leo Ou-fan Lee in particular.

excellence was an act of self-conceit and arrogance. "To steal the works of heaven" was to presume that human power could be on a par with heavenly power, a dangerous, "extreme" act of immoderate behavior and thus a great evil in the Confucian conception.

The author argues that whereas foreigners had always pursued such inventions, "since of old and until the present day China never praised strange skills and wild ingenuities" 奇技淫巧 (l. 11). Implicitly, then, the results of foreign technology are not just strange, but "wild" 淫⁷⁵—the very opposite of restraint 節, a prime virtue in the Confucian canon.⁷⁶

And although foreigners' "putting their energy and interest into machines" (l. 12) and thus creating products of "strange ingenuity" (here we are back to the use of the term 奇巧), such as striking clocks and music boxes, is not entirely wrong, all these devices "have certain limitations" (l. 13). This, the author argues, is true of the machine that can talk, too. He doubts that a stupid person could make himself understood by using this machine. He also questions whether the machine can do more than parrot what it had been told (ll. 14–17). He is incredulous at the suggestion that the machine is conscious.⁷⁷ He admits, quoting a proverb, that "the foreigners have many skills" and even asks himself: "Thus should we not believe them?" (l. 21). His answer is that we should—within limits: foreign ingenuity ought to be admired but with a critical eye as to whether it is of "real benefit" 大有利益 for China

75. 淫 also denotes excess, extremity in sexual matters, lewdness. This immoral quality was attributed to the foreigners (and thus by association, to foreign machines and products) quite frequently (see Wakeman, *Strangers at the Gate*, 55; and "申報館賦" [A prose-poem on the Shenbao Publishing House], *SB* 15.2.1873, l. 11). As mentioned in the preceding chapter (see note 172, p. 299), this was based partly on the practice of two conspicuous acts: handshaking and kissing as a means of exchanging greetings.

76. Chiang Monlin (*Tides from the West*, 32) reports similar reactions. His father was particularly interested in foreign education "which would some day enable them to learn the foreigners' 'tricks' in making wonderful things. . . . My teacher, on the other hand, was opposed to Father's ideas. 'The artifice in making clever things,' he would say, 'would have a degrading influence on morals. Haven't our sages told us so?'"

77. Here, the author had recourse to Chinese history. He argued that even if the great general Zhuge Liang 諸葛亮 (181–234) were alive again and could indeed create his famous wooden ox and flying horse, he would not be solely responsible for their functioning, for if the human spirit could indeed go as far as this, human invention would be able to battle heavenly creation (ll. 17–20).

(l. 21). As for the talking machine, "it would be better if it could be made into a useful object" (l. 22), like a steamship, for example.

This article argues rationally yet in a rather high-pitched moral tone.⁷⁸ Certain foreign machines are condemned explicitly not for malfunctioning but for exhibiting human hubris. The talking machine is condemned for its "wild" and unrestrained inventiveness. This is by no means an attack on all foreign machinery, however, or on ingenuity and inventiveness as such. Like the author of the editorial on housing discussed above, this writer argues for a careful approach to the foreign attractions of Shanghai. Once again, the reader is warned against being deluded. This time, however, his mistake is caused not so much by his own gullibility as by the intentional deceptions of foreigners and the mesmerizing allure of their admirable machines. The reader is cautioned of the dangers of too readily and indiscriminately subscribing to foreign technical achievements, a danger inevitable for those living in the world of extremes that is foreign Shanghai.⁷⁹

As in the poetry we examined above, the strange is never unequivocally eulogized in these editorials. But whereas the poems use satire to deal with the strange, both of these editorials are cautionary tales, describing it as both attractive and dangerous. Another such cautionary tale is an editorial that sets out to "explain the entertainments of Shanghai."⁸⁰ It begins with the observation, already quoted, that "the place to have fun in life is in front of your eyes" (l. 1). Yet, in the end, the article comes to a different conclusion. "Alas, I look again at

78. For a similar moralistic stance toward science and the pursuit of foreign knowledge in late Qing fiction, see Ming, "Scholars in Wonderland," 28, 30. Shanxi villager Liu Dapeng in his diary (discussed in Harrison, "Newspapers and Nationalism," 96) saw the carnage of World War I as retribution for the predilection of Europeans to seek "technical ingenuity and conspicuous consumption."

79. The article is rather prophetic in its aim to introduce proper standards for the acceptance of foreign goods. As late as the May Fourth and New Culture movements of 1919, the discussion of whether wholesale westernization (which included the acceptance of quite a number of inferior goods in a new version of cargo cult) was acceptable was debated feverishly (see Lin Yusheng, *Crisis of Chinese Consciousness*, III). Nevertheless, even in 1926, Gilbert concluded in *What's Wrong with China*, 240: "The Chinese showed an amazing faculty for borrowing and adopting a great deal from the West that was useless and superficial and for overlooking almost everything that would have been of solid worth to them."

80. "上海樂事解," *SB* 13.10.1877.

Shanghai and realize: "The place to have fun is no longer in front of your eyes" (l. 11). Like the longtime resident in some of the poems, who has lived "long enough in Shanghai," this editorialist realized that a first impression of Shanghai may not convey all its truth. Shanghai does not care for what he calls "the pleasures of the emotions"; rather, "it can be said that in Shanghai the pleasures of the body are thriving" (ll. 11-13).⁸¹ Can Shanghai's entertainment business, this writer asks, "still be called entertainment" (l. 25)? He concludes with an appeal to his readers: don't believe the fairytales about Shanghai; come to Shanghai and see for yourselves.⁸²

This editorial, too, is a clear warning. It was written by an editorialist who worked and lived in Shanghai and was worried about his and Shanghai's reputation. Shanghai is a dangerous place capable of corrupting everybody, even the writer. He has armed himself against Shanghai's allures, but he remains a lone prophet in a sea of immorality. Like the enticements of the new in Shanghai, the pleasures of Shanghai are both attractive and treacherous. The condemnation of Shanghai as the city of vice and perversion parallels the condemnation of Shanghai as a city of senseless westernization. The *Shanghaimer* devoted to the pursuit of pleasures is as bad as the *Shanghaimer* blindly devoted to foreign novelties. Like the writers of poetry on courtesans, this editorialist did not openly invoke the foreign presence as the source and origin of danger. And yet we may ask why Shanghai was so particularly prone to the wrong, corrupting types of entertainment?

This question recurs in "On piercing vulgarity" ("Bian su lun" 砭俗論, *SB* 22.8.1887). The editorial begins with a lengthy theoretical in-

81. According to the editorialist, this is not enough: Shanghai's inhabitants have managed to pervert the bodily pleasures to such an extent that they are reduced to their most amoral, their most primitive, brutal, and wasteful qualities. For a similar argument against the extreme nature of pleasures in Shanghai, see "論樂中苦境" (On bitterness within happiness), *SB* 11.2.1882. The complaint is a commonplace of city guides to Shanghai: a Chinese guide of 1913 (Wong, *Huven baojuan*) describes Shanghai's citizens as uninterested in enlightening (文明) entertainments: they think only of sex. Similarly Hu Yuan, in his *Haishang dengshi lu* of 1885, chastised those Chinese who learn only the bad habits of Westerners such as playing billiards, denounced the bad habit of opium smoking, and criticized wealthy young men who parade through town with courtesans in open carriages (Yeh, "City, Courtesan, and Intellectual," chap. 1).

82. For a rather similar argument, see "及時行樂說" (On enjoying entertainments at their proper time), *SB* 29.9.1877.

roduction on refinement and vulgarity. About halfway through the article, the author turns to a concrete example to illustrate his point. As in the editorial just cited, he does not immediately reveal himself as a *Shanghairen*. He styles himself a voyeur: "I look at the vulgar people of Shanghai" 滬上之俗人 (l. 15): not only youngsters and impostors but also successful officials. He hopes to teach them (l. 23) and explains his didactic mission as follows: "If one is living in a clear stream, is it not narrow-minded to dismiss the people who would bring mud to the stream? Narrow-mindedness goes hand in hand with vulgarity" (l. 24-25). The author would himself fall prey to the contagious effects of vulgarity if he did not preach his message, for "not to state what is right is to do wrong" 無言是而行非也 (l. 29). He ends with the ominous words: "This is what is called 'He alone is greatly refined, standing alone in pre-eminence.' But alas, who can achieve this?" (ll. 29-30).

Although describing himself as an onlooker, the author was clearly a resident of Shanghai who saw himself as the city's conscience. To live honorably in Shanghai, the foreign city of vice, was not easy. For this reason the editorialist felt the need to show that there were different types of *Shanghairen*. This need to defend oneself, to show that one was a moral person in a sea of vice, becomes ever more apparent as being the conscience of Shanghai becomes an oft-repeated trope in the Shanghai news media.

"On the Customs and Mores of Shanghai" ("Lun Shanghai fengsu" 論上海風俗), a series of editorials in the *Xinwenbao*, provides further evidence for this phenomenon.⁸³ Three vices are singled out for attack: gambling (27.8.1903, l. 12), loafing and carriage riding (30.8.1903, l. 10), and superstition (30.8.1903, l. 1). Gambling is condemned because it "hurts the spirit, devastates proper business," and leads to a loss of morals and virtue 德 (27.8.1903, ll. 14-15, 16). In order to eradicate this vice, the "enlightened government" of the model settlement has issued fierce restrictions.⁸⁴ It appears, however, that these are constantly

83. Here I discuss only the first two installments of this multipart series: *XWB* 27.8 and 30.8.1903.

84. *Anecdotes of Old Shanghai* (142) reports that there had at first been a "forest of gambling houses in the present Hongkou District." They "quickly spread to the centre of the city." Nevertheless, "under the pressure of public opinion, the concession's Municipal Council was forced to issue a formal decree on the prohibition of gambling. But, as a tactic, the gambling houses assumed the prettified

broken (ll. 12-13). Loafing is criticized because riding about in a carriage at night and not getting any sleep is dangerous: epidemics spread more easily among the fatigued (30.8.1903, ll. 15-16). Again, all attempts by the foreign government to stop this habit are shamelessly ignored by the Chinese (30.8.1903, ll. 16-17).

In discussing the vices of gambling and loafing, the author does not quite manage to give a clear answer to the questions posed at the beginning of his article:

Is Shanghai an enlightened place or is it a westernized place?

Is it the model for the hinterland or a den hurtful to people?

上海爲文明地方耶,抑爲化外地方耶,

爲內地之表率耶,抑爲害人之陷阱耶? (27.8.1903, l. 1)

In enforcing strict regulations, the foreigners appear to be the paradigms of virtue, their government "enlightened" 文明地方, a "model for the hinterland" 內地之表率, and yet at the same time it is clear that they created the environment that helped form a population of loafers and gamblers. Shanghai as a "westernized place" 化外地方 is a "den hurtful to people" 害人之陷阱 (27.8.1903, l. 1), too.⁸⁵

The critique of superstition contains similar ambiguities. It is wrong to believe in superstitious practices, the editorial argues: those who have "long lived in Shanghai" have seen for themselves that foreign firms thrive without resorting to superstitious practices (30.8.1903, ll. 5-6).⁸⁶ The Chinese officials, however, who serve in Shanghai—although

name 'club,' which after paying a high tax, could still obtain a 'legal license' and continue their business."

85. The *Shanghairen*, in a Chinese city guide of 1913 (Wong, *Huren baojuan*), are more depraved than the foreigners. The guide deals with all kinds of entertainment in chapters titled after the respective entertainment ("Teahouses," "Wine Bars," etc.). Only the last chapter, which deals with brothels and prostitution, differs; it is not "A Guide to Prostitution" but "A Guide to Virtue" 道德指南. It ends with a tirade urging Chinese to work hard instead of frequenting the brothels all the time. Even in the West, the author argues, only unmarried men from the lower echelons of society patronize these types of establishments. He calls brothel goers "dishonest, shameless, ignorant of the rites and manners, and lacking in righteousness" (105-6).

86. "Most people in the world do not believe in such things as astrology and divination, fortunetelling and physiognomy, geomancy, ghosts and spirits, witches and wizards [this phrase is repeated *ad nauseam* in the article, probably to remind the reader of their duplicitous nature], and yet their businesses are extremely successful."

they brag of their great understanding of world affairs—stubbornly hold on to superstitious beliefs while doing anything that profits them personally (27.8.1903, ll. 4–5). To prosper in business—as the foreigners do—is taken as a sign of enlightenment, of having overcome superstition. Chinese bureaucrats, on the other hand, are criticized for their pursuit of profit, which is deemed immoral.⁸⁷ Although it is wrong to be superstitious and right to follow the foreign example, it is obviously also wrong to violate the Confucian canon of virtues, with its abhorrence of profit. Living in Shanghai means to be living in a “westernized place,” to learn from western practices, and inevitably to be westernized oneself. To be westernized, however, means to be “enlightened” and to be corrupted at the same time.

Although the author attempted to mark the contradictions of life in Shanghai in clear dichotomies of right and wrong, his categories tend to involve further ambiguities. Thus, he ended up offering and supporting several contradictory definitions of Shanghai’s status and function in China. The presence of the foreigners is both positive and negative; Shanghai is both a model and a warning.⁸⁸ Shanghai is enlightened both because of and despite the foreign presence; it is a den hurtful to people both because of and despite being a model for the hinterland.

This wealth of descriptions is augmented by the large number of viewpoints the author presents. His article displays the voices of different types of Shanghai residents: visitors, temporary sojourners such as officials, or longtime inhabitants like himself. He also mentions the views of outsiders. According to him, people from the hinterland, for example, and reformers and students come to Shanghai because they consider it the “most developed place” 最開化之處 (27.8.1903, ll. 5–6) due to its excellent thoroughfares, bright lights, cleanliness, safe streets, and good government (27.8.1903, ll. 1–2).

“And yet,” the next line continues, “moral corruption in Shanghai has reached an extreme” 上海風俗之懷亦達於極點矣 (27.8.1903, l. 2). Moreover, this corruption is unique: “These are bad habits that the

87. I have not dealt with, in this chapter, Shanghai as the city of commercial culture in great detail. The additional stigma this left on the *Shanghai* is apparent from discussions on profit in Chapter 2.

88. A similarly perplexed stance is evident in “說嫖” (On visiting prostitutes), *SB* 6.3.1907, which begins with several pairs of contradictions: “Shanghai is neither old nor young, it is neither high nor low, it is neither respectable nor despicable.”

hinterland does not have. Will these bad habits of the inhabitants of Shanghai become a model for the hinterland?" (30.8.1903, l. 18). Only insiders know that Shanghai is a "den hurtful to people." Constantly shifting his angle of description and zooming in on different views that deconstruct one another, the author does not judge in absolute terms. He declares, for example: "All those who live in Shanghai 居上海者, when joking about the present situation, talk about how degenerate officialdom and politics are. And yet, why do they not recognize that they themselves are submerged in degenerate habits?" (27.8.1903, l. 8). After dismissing the viewpoint of "those who live in Shanghai," he later praises them for condemning the superstitious practices of native businessmen. Thus, by showing that both newcomers and long-time residents are wrong, by criticizing both officials and their critics, by praising the foreign presence and yet acknowledging that it has led to serious vice, the author presents a confusing wealth of incongruent and overlapping arguments that give contradictory answers to the questions he posed at the beginning of his article.

The situation becomes all the more puzzling when the author remarks that in fact he never set out to talk about the situation in Shanghai alone 吾爲上海惜, 吾不獨爲上海惜也 (27.8.1903, ll. 2-3). Indeed, he is concerned with all of China. In his view, "those who rule China" are wrong to insist on the need to "change the government." In his opinion, it would be better first "to change mores before changing the government" (27.8.1903, ll. 3-4). In a passage alluding to the beginning of the *Great Learning*, he argues: "If we cannot change mores, how can we change the government? If we cannot cultivate ourselves and order our families, how can the country be governed well?" 不能變俗, 何能變政. 不能身修家齊, 何能國治 (27.8.1903, l. 9). Shanghai, the city of changed mores, becomes a model in this argument. Only those who "do not live in Shanghai" believe that "if the country does not change, old habits will not change" 國家不變政, 故風俗不能變 (27.8.1903, l. 9). The author appears to be convinced that proper behavior is at the heart of good government and that Shanghai, with its everchanging customs, is a model for good government. However, he continues: "It seems that the government of Shanghai is better than that in the hinterland. And yet when it comes to checking bad habits, then the hinterland is not as extreme" (27.8.1903, l. 10). If so, how can Shanghai's government be a model for the rest of China? Do his complaints about Shanghai hint that

the foreign government of Shanghai, the very government that made Shanghai enlightened, needs to be eliminated? All his arguments, convincing at first sight, turn out to be contradictory upon closer analysis and thus betray his inner strife. His sense of right and wrong is shaken as it is constantly questioned.

This editorial with its numerous unanswered questions, inconsistencies, and discrepancies is perhaps exemplary of the mind-set of the *Shanghairen* (and more generally of the Chinese confronting the foreign presence). In describing Shanghai, the writer is illuminating his own plight. The shifting authorial voice, in addition to the shifting points of view presented in the text, are signs of stress. Distinctions between right and wrong are foggy; clearly stated values are immediately deconstructed by another of the multiple layers of the text. Through the contradictions of the text, the author himself is fragmented into different points of view. Rather than being a master of the language he uses, he is deconstructed, separated into multiple layers by it. The ambiguities of living in Shanghai are mirrored in ambiguities within the text. The different viewpoints, sometimes reconciled, sometimes not, show that—almost naturally—there are numerous ways to interpret Shanghai and the *Shanghairen* and that it is impossible to tell which one of them is the most accurate. Nevertheless, the author is convinced that he is dealing with a crucial matter. His attempts to find a proper definition for Shanghai, his criticisms of its immorality, are evidence of a sense of urgency. He somehow knows that he must speak as a prophet, from Shanghai, to all of China.

This sense of responsibility is a constant tenor in editorials dealing with Shanghai throughout the late Qing. Shanghai was obviously considered a "window culture" 窗口文化.⁸⁹ Through Shanghai one could glimpse and experience the West. Shanghai is presented as the epitome of modernity; life there points to the ways in which China can be modernized. In describing Shanghai and the experiences of those who have become *Shanghairen*, these editorials teach the reader how best to deal with and profit from the western presence, not just in Shanghai but in China.

To look out a window, one must be inside. All these editorials were written from the point of view of an insider, the expert qualified

89. The expression is taken from Lynn White and Li Cheng, "China Coast Identities," 173.

because of his experience to explain. Over time, this insider came to see Shanghai not only as the city of admirable wonders and enlightened institutions but also as a city of depravity and dissipation.⁹⁰ In these editorials, the foreign presence is both a blessing and a plague. Significantly, the editorialists never explicitly called themselves *Shanghairen*. Evidently, it was not possible to brag about living in Shanghai. And thus, one of the most clear-cut features of the *Shanghairen*'s writings about "his city" is that he does not admit to his affiliation even though it is recognized by everyone else.⁹¹ Many of these editorials hint at the *Shanghairen*'s bad conscience. He was indeed not an inhabitant of the "real China."⁹²

90. In the 1870s and early 1880s, most articles deal with Shanghai and the West as a positive force (see, e.g., the articles discussed above and "輪船論" (On steamships), *SB* 30.5.1872; "海外奇論" (On strange matters from abroad), *SB* 1.8.1873; "論欲效西法" (On imitating western methods), *SB* 8.9.1877; "再論欲效西法" (Once more on imitating western methods), *SB* 11.9.1877; and "風氣日開說," *SB* 23.2.1882, the last a rather elaborate reminder of the need to reform and to introduce foreign knowledge, machines, and appliances to China). But from the beginning, there are always doubtful voices such as "洋場求食論" (On begging for food in the foreign concessions), *SB* 4.9.1872 (and even in a news report such as "男遭婦辱" [A man shamed by a woman], *SB* 19.2.1873, which is discussed in Chapter 1, pp. 90–91), "嚴責碰頭風俗論" (On serious punishments for the habit of social intercourse), *SB* 21.1.1873; and "上海樂事解," *SB* 13.10.1877, discussed above. The critical tendency increases over time; see, e.g., "論樂中苦境," *SB* 11.2.1882; "論夜遊之害," *SB* 2.9.1887; "蒙養篇" (On primary teaching), *SB* 30.9.1887, in which the decline in morals not just among men but among women and children in Shanghai is discussed; "論臺基之難禁" (On the difficulty of banning brothels), *SB* 25.10.1887; "用財說" (On the use of capital), *SB* 10.3.1897, on the waste of money in Shanghai, discussed in detail in Chapter 2, pp. 146–49; "論敝俗" (On vile mores), *SB* 12.8.1897; "論居滬之不易" (On the difficulties of living in Shanghai), *SB* 28.6.1898, which deals with the exorbitant prices in Shanghai; "論滬上小錢店之可惡" (On the abhorrence of small money shops in Shanghai), *SB* 15.10.1902; and "說嫖," *SB* 6.3.1907. But even throughout the later period there are also some positive articles dealing with the foreign presence in Shanghai: e.g., "效法泰西以行善舉議" (Imitating the West in instigating good measures), *SB* 31.5.1897; and "論中國宜仿西俗設戒酒戒煙等會" (On the fact that China ought to imitate western mores and establish societies for the abstinence from alcohol and smoking), *SB* 30.8.1897.

91. For the view that the *Shanghairen* long refused to acknowledge being *Shanghairen*, see also Xiong, "Image and Identity"; and Liu Tao Tao and David Faure, "What Does the Chinese Person Identify With?," 7.

92. Pye, "How China's Nationalism Was Shanghaied," 114. I discuss the significance of Pye's historical observations about the treaty-port population, which were clearly reflected in the newspapers, in the next section.

The tenor in all these editorials is one of warning, whose subtext is the foreign presence in Shanghai. Thus, in speaking of the vulgar *Shanghairen*, the editorialist is talking of his own bad conscience, although he does not mention himself. He feels himself endangered by being in the city; he himself could be infected and become a vulgar person, demoralized by the simple fact that he lives on foreign ground. Therefore, the editorialist preaches the lore of a vulgar Shanghai not just to others but to himself as well. As Shanghai's conscience, the editorialist both describes and warns the inexperienced, vulgar, and superstitious citizens of Shanghai (and by implication of China). At the same time he prescribes a refined and rational inhabitant of Shanghai, one who is potentially "enlightened": he has learned from watching Western novelties and pleasures (the *qi* 奇 and the *le* 樂); he knows how to deal with them and discriminate among them. The reader is taught not to be too gullible, not to be too surprised. He is taught both not to adhere to "old" false convictions such as superstition or enjoying a show and not to acquire new bad habits such as excessive ingenuity or carriage riding. These editorials prescribe what a *Shanghairen*, and by implication all Chinese, should and should not be. And thus, on the pages of Shanghai newspapers, the *Shanghairen* emerged as the seductive yet dismaying, remote yet inevitable, model for Chinese in and outside the city.

Living Shanghai: The Voice of the Shanghairen

During the late nineteenth century, Shanghai became a place where people went to invent their lives, deposit their dreams.

—Catherine Vance Yeh⁹³

I began this chapter by saying that men, not just walls, make a city. Yet we can also say that a city also makes men. As we have seen, Shanghai consisted of multiple worlds in the discourse of the city's newspapers. Narrated Shanghai is a foreign city, a city of pleasures, and a city of many contradictory faces. The "narrative instabilities" in descriptions of Shanghai betray that, metaphorically speaking, the city is a multiple personality with many an alter.⁹⁴ It is this quality of

93. Catherine Yeh, "The Life-styles of Four Shanghai *Wenren* in Late Qing China," 450.

94. Ming, "Scholars in Wonderland," carefully explores such "narrative instabilities" in late Qing science fiction.

Shanghai that makes it difficult to identify a straightforward image of the *Shanghairen*. Multiple Shanghai created multiple *Shanghairen*.

Did the stock images of Shanghai and the *Shanghairen* mirror the realities of people living in the city, however? By giving voice to some historical *Shanghairen* who lived in the city during the period examined here, we can see whether and how the multiple Shanghai present in the city's newspapers reflected the "realities" of late Qing China.

Only a few thousand foreigners lived in Shanghai at any time in the late nineteenth century. In the early years of the treaty port, the Chinese population of the city, on the other hand, amounted to several tens of thousands; by the turn of the twentieth century, it had swollen to several hundreds of thousands. In 1876, for example, 95,662 Chinese were counted, but only 1,673 foreigners; by 1910, 488,005 Chinese lived next to 13,526 foreigners.⁹⁵ Yet the foreignness of Shanghai is an important trope in most narratives of the city. Like a "super-mirror," Shanghai's newspapers focused on this aspect of Shanghai: "the daily 'diet,' literally and figuratively, was constituted of foreign ingredients."⁹⁶ In the memories of one resident of the *fin-de-siècle* city, writer Zeng Pu 曾樸 (1872–1936), the streets and public places of Shanghai were filled with young men and women in foreign clothes "talking to foreigners in an alien tongue"; according to him, "even dignified officials, wearing their long gowns and official caps," could be found "dining in Western-style restaurants, eating with knives and forks, and drinking champagne and coffee."⁹⁷

These Chinese in foreign Shanghai were not there because they had been "shanghaied." Even refugees fleeing local rebellions or scholars seeking a job were not forced to go to Shanghai. Yet, as an early 1880s editorial put it: "Those who have to come do not leave, and those who have to leave come back" 必來者不去必去者復來 (l. 19).⁹⁸ This type of behavior, which occurred in reality as well as in the claims of the papers, had much to do with the foreign presence

95. Estimated figures are taken from Leung, *The Shanghai Taotai*, 195; see also Lang, *Shanghai Considered Socially*, 24–25; Pye, "How China's Nationalism Was Shanghaied," 118; and Xu and Xu, *Qingmo sishinian "Shenbao" shiliao*, 2.

96. Feuerwerker, *Foreign Establishment*, 5.

97. Peter Li, *Tseng Pu*, 69.

98. "風氣日開說," *SB* 23.2.1882. For a fuller paraphrase see Appendix A, pp. 427–28.

in Shanghai.⁹⁹ As Lucian Pye put it, the historic treaty-port population "voted with their feet in favour of foreign rule."¹⁰⁰ Admiration and respect for everything foreign were the clues to living in the city. A 1911 poem begins:¹⁰¹

There are some who call Shanghai 上海 ["above the sea"]
 "Shangyang" 上洋 ["above the Western Ocean"].
 I will explain this on their behalf:
 Those who are from "above the Western Ocean" [i.e.,
 Shanghai] consider Western [things] to be above
 [i.e., superior] 上洋者以洋爲上.

Nevertheless, despite their deliberate choice of this foreign abode, the Chinese in Shanghai did not always feel they were in the most desirable position. Wang Tao 王韜 (1828-97), who had come to live in Shanghai in 1849, recorded in his diary many a description of how *Shanghailleurs*, dependent in many ways on foreigners for their livelihood, were treated.

When you look at the foreigners with their high noses and deep-set eyes, you can sense how crafty they are. They treat all Chinese very shabbily, and they make their house servants work like animals without the slightest pity. They despise people of education like ourselves and never bother to show us the least courtesy. That they can find Chinese to work for them at all (and of course we only do it when we have no other way of getting a living) just goes to show how desperately poor the country is. And for this, of course, the foreigners despise China even more, while Chinese gentlemen find they have no alternative to putting up with this contempt.¹⁰²

This experience is corroborated by a foreign Shanghailander, Ernest Hauser (1910-97), who remarked that in Shanghai "the simple human axiom that guests have to comply with the manners practiced at the home of their host was set aside consciously, because the Chinese

99. As Ye Xiaoqing puts it ("Popular Culture," 323): "The Shanghainese were interested in the West, and would not have migrated to Shanghai in the first place if they had been particularly anti-foreign."

100. Pye, "How China's Nationalism Was Shanghaied," 121, 114.

101. "海上閒談," *SB* 24.9.1911. The poem is mentioned briefly above, p. 324.

102. Cited in McAleavy, *Wang Tao*, 6.

were 'not civilized.'"¹⁰³ This situation is mentioned in the newspapers, too. The 1911 poem explains: "On the top deck of the steamships are the larger and more comfortable cabins [primarily frequented by foreigners], / the [regular, i.e. Chinese] cabins are below them. / In the bathhouses there are foreign tubs, / regular tubs are half the price" (l. 5). For a Chinese, living in Shanghai and enjoying some of its convenience meant living according to the rules of the foreign minority.¹⁰⁴ There was no solution for the Chinese other than to behave like foreigners rather than like Chinese. The poem continues:

When a foreigner buys goods, the shop assistants are
extremely flattering.

When a foreigner hires a driver, the driver cruelly
insult others. (ll. 6-7)

Another foreign observer, Charles Dyce, noticed in 1906 that such second-rate treatment of Chinese by Chinese was common: "There is no doubt that your own servants often take advantage of their country men under the shield of the foreigners' prestige."¹⁰⁵ As part of living in Shanghai, the *Shanghaiiren* had to behave in a way that would not have been acceptable elsewhere in China. Obsequiousness to the foreign was considered quite despicable, however, as the 1911 poem illustrates:

103. Hauser, *Shanghai*, 27-28. His perceptive analysis of the effects of the foreign presence in China continues (29): "They spread the thin layer of their rights and privileges over the Chinese mud, and built their houses upon it. That their coming had deeply upset the inner balance of China . . . did not occur to them." This attitude is evident in a condescending editorial on the lack of interest in continuing to practice foreign military drills in the Chinese armies ("海外奇論," *SB* 1.8.1873). The article was written by an Englishman (probably not Ernest Major) who constantly refers to himself as "I, a Westerner" 我西人 and to "my England" 我英國.

104. In Chiang Monlin's (*Tides from the West*, 43) memory, "Shanghai by 1899 was a small city with a few thousand arrogant foreigners. But the city was well-governed, with clean, wide streets and electric or gas lights." For contemporary evidence of such arrogance, see Dyce, *Personal Reminiscences*; for later evidence, see Gilbert, *What's Wrong with China*.

105. Dyce, *Personal Reminiscences*, 158. *The Chinese Students Monthly* of 1910 declares it an "intolerable state of affairs in the Shanghai settlement" that Chinese are being abused even by some of the Indian policemen (see Chu, "Shanghai Foreign Settlement," 307-9). Similar evidence is given by Ye Xiaoqing, "Shanghai Before Nationalism," 41: "Employees in foreign firms, and even servants in foreign households, considered themselves a cut above the rest."

Alas,

The people of Shanghai live daily in an environment influenced by
the foreigners.

What [their] eyes see is foreign. What [their] ears hear is foreign.

Add to this the thought of getting rich the foreign way,

Which rumbles restless daily in their brains,

It is no wonder that they consider foreign [things] important and
make light of the self. (ll. 7-9)

The poem expresses a widespread contempt for those *Shanghairen* who imitate the foreigners. Obviously, the scorn of their fellow countrymen affected the *Shanghairen*. As Wang Tao found soon after he started working for the London Missionary Press in Shanghai, "very few visitors . . . were calling on him. . . . The reason he guessed at once. By consenting to work for the foreigners he was being degraded as a sort of social outcast."¹⁰⁶ Since becoming a treaty port in 1842, Shanghai had been a symbol of national shame; living there was not something one bragged about.¹⁰⁷ Accordingly, in *Record of Visits to the Courtesan Houses in a Distant Corner at the Sea* (*Haizou yeyou lu* 海陬冶遊錄),

106. McAleavy, *Wang Tao*, 5. For further evidence, see Leong, "Wang T'ao," esp. 103. See also Fairbank, *Trade and Diplomacy*, 176-77: "The new specialists . . . appear to have been tolerated by their colleagues: they did an odious and distasteful job, like sewer-inspectors." A similar case is that of Guo Songtao: when he left for Britain to serve as minister in 1876, the literati made fun of him, because he was to leave "the land of the sages to serve the foreign devils." His townsmen, in great shame over his conduct, even attempted to destroy his house, and he was repeatedly impeached as a betrayer of both the dynasty and the Chinese cultural heritage (Hao and Wang, "Changing Chinese Views," 187; Hu, *Tales of Translation*, 31).

107. Frühauf, "Urban Exoticism in Modern Chinese Literature," 69, observes of Shanghai: "China's most important window to the West strongly reminded the Chinese of the humiliating situation created by the unequal treaties. During the first quarter of the 20th century, Shanghai was predominantly a sore reminder of national disgrace rather than a catalyst for exotic excitement" (see also Leo Lee, *Shanghai Modern*, chap. 3). As this discussion shows, their observations on Republican China apply to the late Qing as well. See also Catherine Yeh, "City, Courtesan, and Intellectual," chap. 3: "The fact that the new Shanghai was created by foreign intervention and was largely governed by foreigners was the underlying issue for all inhabitants, Chinese and foreigners alike. For the Chinese intelligentsia, how to assess the city became vitally important for their self-identity and legitimacy as a social class. How could they justify living in this symbol of China's national humiliation?"

published in 1879 but with a preface dated 1860, Wang Tao described Shanghai as a city that is “self-confident, full of energy and vitality, and at the same time firmly grounded in Chinese traditions.” In his reinterpretation, it was a city in which “no foreigners seem to exist except the few Western prostitutes on the river boats.”¹⁰⁸ Erasing the well-known foreign presence in Shanghai was in itself a spectacular apology. The *Shanghairen* may have been a symbol of modern Chinese, but he viewed himself not so much with pride as with self-loathing.

This attitude found blatant expression in a series of vicious caricatures from 1912, depicting “traitors to Chinese purity” who imitate the foreigners—*Shanghairen* by implication.¹⁰⁹ One ridicules the desire for a larger nose by depicting a man trying to get a high nose by pulling on it (see Fig. 5.4); another makes fun of the fad of wearing glasses by showing a man who attaches a pig’s snout to his face to support a pince-nez (*SB* 22.4 and 27.4.1912). The captions ask: Would one really want to hang for hours with a heavy weight attached to one’s feet to become an inch taller (*SB* 23.4.1912)? Would one really burn one’s hair in order to become a curly blond (*SB* 24.4.1912)? And was it worth having someone hammer at one’s eyes to make them a little more deep-set (Fig. 5.5)? The caricaturist did not neglect women: the pains of wearing high-heeled shoes are ridiculed (*SB* 30.4.1912),¹¹⁰ as is the desire for an hourglass figure (Fig. 5.6). In the second example, two people tug on a rope around the waist of a women with enormous breasts (*SB* 29.4.1912). A previous cartoon explained the nature of these huge breasts: they are cooking pots. The caption lauds the practicality of this expedient, especially when traveling. The pots can be used to prepare a meal (*SB* 28.4.1912).¹¹¹

108. Catherine Yeh, “Creating a Shanghai Identity,” 110, 114; and idem, “City, Courtesan, and Intellectual,” chap. 3.

109. “摹倣西人” (Imitating Westerners), *SB* 22–30.4.1912. See also “箴志士” (A warning to “determined men”), *SB* 1.1.1907, which openly condemns the westernized Shanghaiese.

110. Cf. Harrison, “Republican Citizen,” 25–26: “The young women who adopted the customs of citizenship in the new republic had natural feet, they walked solidly and steadily. The loud sound of ‘modern young women’ as they walk in their high-heeled leather shoes is constantly commented on by male authors.”

111. For a humorous description of the *Shanghairen*’s dressing style, see Lin Yutang, *Importance of Living*, 261: “All the scholars, thinkers, bankers and people



Fig. 5.4 What to do with a Chinese nose (SB 22.4.1912)

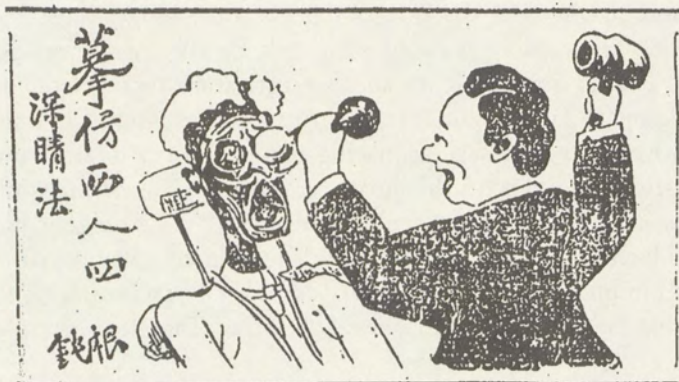


Fig. 5.5 Deepening the eyes (SB 26.4.1912)

who made good in China either have never worn foreign dress, or have swiftly come back to their native dress . . . because they are sure of themselves and no longer feel the need for a coat of foreign appearance to hide their bad English or their inferior mental outfit." He continues (263) that those who dress up are just pretenders: "They are not the real citizens of a real new and self-confident China. . . . No sane-minded man can pretend that the collar . . . is conducive to health, and all thinking men in the West have repeatedly protested against it. The clever foreigner who can invent Neonlights and Diesel engines has not enough common sense to see that the only part of his body which is free is his head."

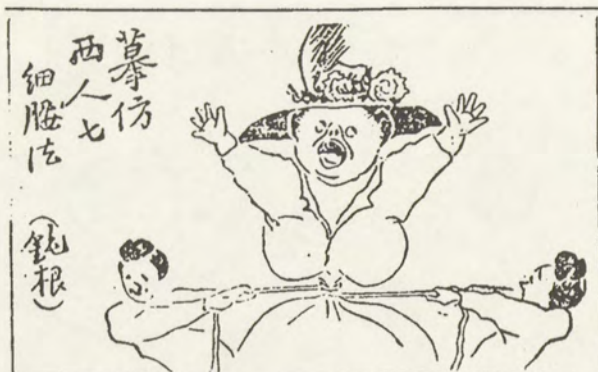


Fig. 5.6 Thinning the waist (*SB* 29.4.1912)

Caricatures like these illustrate the moral dimensions of fashion.¹¹² The sheer nastiness of the images reflects something Lucien Pye has called the “inescapable sense of guilt” felt by the treaty-port population.¹¹³ This is obvious from another caricature dating from 1912: a man dressed in fashionable foreign attire looks at himself in a mirror; he sees a monstrous image grimacing at him (*SB* 15.4.1912). A number of historical studies echo this imagery: the late Qing *Shanghairen* is a member of a “resented and feeble minority,”¹¹⁴ “a foreigner himself, isolated from his own group,”¹¹⁵ who “exemplified social deviation,”¹¹⁶ a person imbued with an “inferiority-complex”¹¹⁷ and suffering from a disturbing “crisis of consciousness.”¹¹⁸ Wang Tao, for example, has

112. According to Veblen (*Theorie der feinen Leute*), to act tastefully is to act according to a norm. Thus good taste has something to do with morality. See also Lynes, *Tastemakers*, 3–4; Bourdieu, *La Distinction*; and Lin, *Importance of Living*, 363.

113. Pye, “How China’s Nationalism Was Shanghaied,” 121, 114.

114. Murphey, “Treaty Ports,” 65.

115. Hauser, *Shanghai*, 28, referring to the comprador in particular. For similar views, see Hao, *The Comprador*; and Murphey, *Outsiders*, 145: “The cosmopolites of treaty port land were alienated, those figures and their tiny world of unreality . . . they were creatures of the fringe like the treaty ports which had spawned, inspired, and sheltered them.”

116. Hao, *The Comprador*, 221.

117. Levenson, *Confucian China and Its Modern Fate*.

118. Lin Yusheng, *Crisis of Chinese Consciousness*, esp. 6. His book in fact sets out to describe a number of “multiple personalities” during the late Qing and early Republican period.

been described as a "displaced person":¹¹⁹ the "two halves of his life [that as a Chinese intellectual and that as a wage-earner working for foreigners] seem so unconnected that he records each in a different literary genre."¹²⁰ A similar case is that of the diplomat and longtime Shanghai resident Chen Jitong 陳季同 (1851-1907).¹²¹ He, too, played a "double role" and had two personalities, one as a "spokesman for China" and the other as an honorary Westerner and "defender of Western civilization."¹²²

The peculiar condition of the *Shanghai* is depicted in a *Shenbao* caricature of 1907 (see Fig. 5.7, top panel). It shows a scholar whose inner rupture is marked by a small barrier running between his feet. He is split into a foreign half in a foreign suit holding a book of "science" 科學 in his hand, and a Chinese half wearing a Chinese shirt, typically buttoned at the side, holding a book entitled *Selections from the Five Classics* 大體文府 in his other hand.¹²³ A caricature published the day before explains how this "split man" is engendered: here he appears—whole as yet—in a foreign suit and marine hat, completely Westernized (Fig. 5.7, bottom panel). Reluctantly, he stands in front of a fat Chinese official who tugs at his sleeve and gestures toward an old, bald-headed Chinese scholar in a long gown. When the man reappears the next day, he has lost his hat and is now wearing his split suit of indecision.¹²⁴

119. Cf. McAleavy, *Wang Tao*. See also Cohen, *Between Tradition and Modernity*.

120. Catherine Yeh, "Life-styles of Four Shanghai *Wenren* in Late Qing China," 430.

121. *Ibid.*, 435-449. Another example would be Huang Xiexun, who is the subject of Janku, "An Intellectual Between Modern Urban Society and Local County Community."

122. Catherine Yeh, "Life-styles of Four Shanghai *Wenren* in Late Qing China," 436.

123. In the Ming and Qing civil service examinations, the Five Classics were the 大體 and the Four Books the 小體. The emphasis on the different dress codes is interesting. Harrison, "Republican Citizen," 8, argues that the abolition of the examination system and the adoption of a system of "modern" foreign-style academies were accompanied by the adoption of modern dress as a visible "marker of status."

124. Such motley is the costume of madmen in depictions from the European Middle Ages. See Barthes, *Sprache der Mode*, 154: "During the Middle Ages madmen, just like later clowns in Elizabethan theater, wore two-colored two-piece costumes. The duality symbolized their split minds."



Fig. 5.7 A westernized Chinese before (bottom) and after (top) treatment (SB 13.9 and 12.9.1907)

These caricatures tell us that complete westernization (as practiced in Shanghai) was shameful and unacceptable. They also tell us that to hover between China and the West trying to negotiate between the two was difficult. This man's split in identity was caused by a very real contemporary difficulty, encountered not just in Shanghai but throughout China. These two caricatures allude to the controversial discussions caused by the abolition of the state examination system in late 1905. Education underwent a radical diversification after this date, and new schools offering a mix of old and new knowledge mushroomed not only in the treaty ports and cities but also in the countryside. Since "a man's education . . . confers his identity on him,"¹²⁵ a great number of Chinese scholars undergoing this "treatment"

125. Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 36.

groomed a split identity.¹²⁶ The "split man" in the caricature epitomizes the question of how best to confront the challenge posed by the West; he illustrates what David Wang recently called the "tortuous path" to modernity in China.¹²⁷ It was a shattering experience, as Chiang Monlin attests:

All the conflicting ideas, as between new and old, constitutions, reforms, and revolution buzzing around in this topsy-turvy world of mine, were more than an immature mind could endure. I became restless and often had a fantasy in which, by a sort of somersault, I rocketed high into the air and then whirled down rapidly to the ground, where I burst to bits and was gone forever.¹²⁸

To be broken into pieces that defy reassembling resonates with the self-images of multiple personalities.¹²⁹ In the definition used by therapists, a person suffering from multiple personality disorder has several personalities, each with a distinct sense of self.¹³⁰ Each of these "alters" tends to display "distinctive sets of mannerisms, values, lifestyles, and abilities."¹³¹ The worlds the *Shanghairen*—or the modern Chinese—

126. Chiang Monlin (*Tides from the West*, 58) left this description of his feelings at the celebrations that followed his passing of the first degree (*xiucai* 秀才) examination: "I was puzzled. I was torn between two opposing forces, one pulling toward the old and the other toward the new."

127. David Wang, *Fin-de-Siècle Splendor*, 6. In Saari's words (*Legacies of Childhood*, 215): "The inner experience of imperialist domination, or what I would call 'inner imperialism,' and the constellations of emotions attached to it—fear, humiliation, resentment, shame, envy, dependence, hatred—drew heavily on the psychological resources of this generation." For a similar view of the intensity of the foreign impact, see Hao and Wang, "Changing Chinese Views"; Tu Weiming, "Cultural China," 4; and Elvin, "Inner World," 44.

128. Chiang, *Tides from the West*, 59.

129. Saari (*Legacies of Childhood*, 202) remarks that Chiang surmised that "his feeling manifested a streak of insanity in the family."

130. See, e.g., Braude, *First Person Plural*, 5; Hawthorn, *Multiple Personality*, ix; and Hacking, *Rewriting the Soul*, 3; multiples "talk about themselves in several ways that bear no mark of association with each other."

131. Braude, *First Person Plural*, 40. Although in most cases the trauma that leads to the personality split is physical and sexual abuse, this need not be the case, (Hacking, *Rewriting the Soul*, 70, 82). The disorder may also appear because of larger, social pressures on the individual (Hawthorn *Multiple Personality*, 35; Hacking, *Rewriting the Soul*, 93). Although the status, origins, and pathological development of multiple personality disorder are still debated, it is described as a

confronted were radically distinct, mutually exclusive, irreconcilable.¹³² In order to survive, the *Shanghairen* needed alters.¹³³ Jon Saari, in his study of collective childhood experiences in the late Qing, found that “the encounter with Western ideas was a complicating, often crippling experience. While it liberated one out of the confines, however broad, of a single cultural standard, it initiated one into a state of confusion and uncertainty.”¹³⁴

Saari emphasizes the painful tensions between several irreconcilable alters, but he notes as well the sense of “liberation” afforded by the presence of alternative visions and selves. As Lucien Pye observes, the most “fundamental and lasting effect of the treaty-port system was that it provided vivid and all-too-concrete evidence of the weaknesses of Chinese political rule and the apparent merits of foreign rule.”¹³⁵ The exotic city was a stimulant. It ensnared the ego of a country and its people: this was the “emancipatory force” of foreign expansion.¹³⁶ It created, in the words of Prasenjit Duara, an “enabling hybridity.”¹³⁷

In order to account for this paradox, my metaphorical use of the term “multiple personality” is informed equally by definitions from

painful and shattering experience, which often makes mere existence difficult for those suffering from it.

132. This is the stuff that multiple personalities are made of in the clinical sense. According to Hawthorn, *Multiple Personality*, 135: “If an individual is brought up, and has to survive, in an environment constituted by contradictory systems of value, then he or she will become internally divided.”

133. For a similar interpretation analyzing multiple identities through textual evidence in French autobiography, see Lidle, *Das multiple Subjekt*.

134. Saari, *Legacies of Childhood*, 198.

135. Pye, “How China’s Nationalism Was Shanghaied,” 114. See also Hunt, “Chinese National Identity,” 79. Cf. Murphey, “Treaty Ports,” 21: “To all Chinese concerned about their country’s weakness, the treaty ports offered a powerful goad, and to many it provided an attractive model”; and Hutters, “Appropriations,” 3: “How was loyalty to the nation to be balanced off against the need to import ideas from precisely those other countries that were perceived as posing the greatest threat to China’s continued existence as a sovereign entity, both politically and culturally?”

136. In places like Shanghai, “the disruption of the old system . . . was coupled with the proposal of alternatives, which were out of question in the old society. In this lay the emancipatory force of Western expansion” (Zürcher, “Western Expansion and Chinese Reaction,” 65).

137. Duara, *Rescuing History from the Nation*, 158.

therapy and postmodern theory. The Barthian *jouissance* of decentering the self (which thus becomes playful and adaptable to social realities),¹³⁸ the liberation of the self in multiplicity, and thus the desirability of such fragmentation were important experiences of the *Shanghairen*. The *Shanghairen* as he appeared in Shanghai's newspapers (like his counterpart in reality) was fascinated by the adventures that foreign Shanghai offered. He was indeed liberated (in personal as well as in very practical matters) by living with "extrality" on his doorstep. He was able to practice "reflective or critical internalization" by combing the foreign heritage for good and bad.¹³⁹ By making use of foreign alternatives and modifying them, the *Shanghairen* would eventually create a "new cultural design" and redefine what it meant to "be Chinese."¹⁴⁰ Thus, *Shanghairen* profited from their multiple identities. This is how they became the "ushers of progress."¹⁴¹ The *Shanghairen* was aware of being a catalyst in the transformation of Chinese civilization.¹⁴² And—in spite of everything—he was admired for that.¹⁴³ And

138. Barthes, *Le Plaisir du texte*.

139. Kerma, "Concept of Progress," 533.

140. Cohen, "Being Chinese," 101.

141. See Kerma, "Concept of Progress," 533. For a contemporary view of Shanghai as the city of hope and the model of a new China, see the quotation from the *Minlibao* in Xiong, "Image and Identity," 103.

142. Saari, *Legacies of Childhood*, 47, remarks on the transformation of education: "The role of the treaty ports in this transformation was catalytic, and hence their marginality was deceptive." Murphey, *Outsiders*, 105, calls the treaty-port Chinese "a new kind of Chinese," the "indigenous agent . . . for the remaking of China along Western lines."

143. See the example given by Saari, *Legacies of Childhood*, 175: "It did not matter whether your studies in Shanghai were good or bad or what school you entered, when you returned home to your local place during winter and summer vacation, it would always draw out the admiration and envy of others." Li Boyuan 李伯元 (1867–1932) gave fictional evidence for this phenomenon in his novel *Modern Times* 文明小史, serialized between 1903 and 1906. In chapter 14, the Jia brothers embark on a trip to Shanghai: "Despite their conservative family and educational background, they are admirers of new trends and determined to keep up to date. They subscribe to Shanghai newspapers and magazines, study books on modern thought, and make the acquaintance of enlightened literati. They are also loyal consumers of imported goods and all new products, from clothes to electric lamps. Since their desire to keep up with the times has become ever greater, they decide to make a pilgrimage to Shanghai, the mecca of modern culture" (David Wang, *Fin-de-Siècle Splendor*, 221–22).

And therefore, Shanghai's editorialists could both write cautionary tales and preach with the voice of a prophet.

The *Shanghairen* whose image we have recovered from newspapers and whose voice we have heard through reminiscences and historical narratives was never called such. He was more of a pattern than a specific inhabitant of a specific city (indeed, it need not even be in China).¹⁴⁴ In his depravity, his foreign ways, his enlightenment, and his yearnings to be modern, the *Shanghairen* can be considered a stock figure in a narrative of (Chinese) modernity. Displaced in time and space, he was a guinea pig, forecasting the future of China. Shanghai was a virtual laboratory, a "proposed world," that hardly existed.¹⁴⁵ During the transformation of Chinese civilization, the *Shanghairen*, an experimental animal, willingly shanghaied, underwent many different and sometimes painful manipulations, some of them successful, others abortive.¹⁴⁶

144. The image of a shattered, fragmented personality is not unlike that of "modern city inhabitants" all over the world. The difference between the *Shanghairen's* fragmentation and that of the inhabitant in other cities, both colonial and noncolonial, is only one of degree. See, e.g., Handlin, "The Modern City," 17-18; Schorske, "Idea of the City," 110; and Fritzsche, *Reading Berlin*. Halliday (*Language as Social Semiotic*, 154-55) expands the concept to cover linguistic insecurities and variations as typical of cities.

145. Harrison ("Republican Citizen," 32) suggests adaptation of a concept of the anthropologist Charles F. Keyes to Republican Shanghai, which I have found useful in talking about the late Qing as well. Keyes "has argued that schools in rural Thailand present their pupils with knowledge and models appropriate not to those pupils' everyday lives but to the 'proposed world' of the Thai state." In Harrison's interpretation, "In early Republican China, too, teachers were preparing children not merely for a world they had not experienced, but for a world that hardly existed. In this situation the creation of the proposed world was also the creation of the real world; the learned dispositions influenced not only ideas about the state but the construction of the state itself."

146. Shanghai and the *Shanghairen* "set the style of the foreign presence in China" (Feuerwerker, "Foreign Presence," 137).

Conclusion

The late Qing, as a *fin-de-siècle* period, is both decadent and de-cadent, engaged in cacophonous retuning of traditional harmonies. Ages of decadence are known to be the inventive predecessors of the harmonious ages that follow, ages in which the discordant practices of the *fin-de-siècle* have become the familiar tunes of the present.

—David Wang¹⁴⁷

This entire chapter has dealt with the *Shanghairen* yet never said who he is. On the pages of Shanghai's newspapers, the *Shanghairen* never appears by that name; he is hidden behind locutions such as "those who have long lived in Shanghai" 久居上海者, "resident of Shanghai" 居上海者, "someone living in Shanghai" 上海居人, or "someone from Shangyang" 上洋者.¹⁴⁸ The *Shanghairen* has many names and many faces. He may be described as a loafer and patron of courtesans, as a profiteer or a sycophant. The preaching editorialist, too, who never openly identifies with Shanghai, is a *Shanghairen*, one of the "better sort," an "enlightened" paradigm of modern virtue, a *wenmingzhe* 文明者. The many names and faces of the *Shanghairen* are evidence of an ongoing but never-ending search for his "real identity."

If "recipes for identities require concrete as well as normative ingredients,"¹⁴⁹ Shanghai newspapers offered a range of both. Late Qing advertisements showed what life in Shanghai could be, adapting foreign objects for Chinese customers; poetry illustrated what life in Shanghai would be if the city were a paradise; editorials, while prescribing what it should be, gave evidence of how disturbing it could be in reality. Both the concrete and the normative ingredients of the prescribed Shanghai identity have several possible meanings; distinctions between right and wrong are never irrevocably drawn. Shanghai was at once the city of virtue, the city of vice, and the city beyond good and evil.¹⁵⁰ Accordingly, Shanghai identity became a

147. David Wang, *Fin-de-Siècle Splendor*, 4.

148. See also Catherine Yeh, "Deciphering the Entertainment Press." She argues that the habit of Chinese intellectuals of calling themselves guests 客 in this city "is indicative of the troubled state of the intellectuals in dealing with their existence in Shanghai."

149. Lynn White and Li Cheng, "China Coast Identities," 191.

150. These are the three evaluations of the European city that appeared in temporal succession in European thought between the eighteenth and the twentieth

blurred notion of ambiguity: to be a *Shanghairen* was to be a multiple. The *Shanghairen* might take refuge in a world of dreams, or he might give vent to his own fears by abusing and criticizing everybody and everything around him. His troubles as well as his joys were deeply felt, and his textualized emotions reflected those of the "real" *Shanghairen*: they mirrored his realities of mind.

Shanghai's newspapers trumpeted, on every other page, the wonders of the city as well as its sorrows. The exaggerated insistence on self-reflection in the city's newspapers was the expression of an identity in crisis.¹⁵¹ The obsessive and often contradictory descriptions of Shanghai as a place of wonderment and of dissipation, as a dream world and a living hell, betray some of the difficulties Chinese living under foreign pressure experienced as well as some of the exhilaration. The *Shanghairen* who—in V. S. Naipaul's characterization of colonial citizens—was condemned only to use a telephone, never to invent it,¹⁵² was simultaneously attracted to and repulsed by the foreign. Although multiple Shanghai was a catalyst that enabled many developments, it is impossible to deny the stress of life in Shanghai and the anomie it caused, textually and historically: in both senses, the "psychological significance of the presence of Western power cannot be denied."¹⁵³ As Saari summarizes:

Late Ching China, dislodged from its ancient moorings, had been pushed out into the turbulent stream of worldwide change. What was needed was the ability to keep a footing in the turbulence, to discern the shallows and

century (cf. Schorske, "Idea of the City," 96); they were present in Shanghai at the same time.

151. Trauzettel, "Exotismus als intellektuelle Haltung," 9. The common assumption voiced by Wang ("Among Non-Chinese," 128)—"To look different, to speak differently, to be regarded as Chinese by others, leads naturally to an awareness of what is or what is not Chinese," and thus to a clear-cut formation of a self-identity—did not come true in the early years of Shanghai's experience. Recent studies of Shanghai during the Republican period suggest that this impossibility may still hold for later decades (cf. Lee, "Coping with Shanghai.")

152. See Said, "Representing the Colonized," 207. For the rather late development of "indigenous" Chinese machinery and appliances, see Reed, "Sooty Sons of Vulcan."

153. Pye, "How China's Nationalism Was Shanghaied," 119. Although there is perhaps general agreement on this point, Saari (*Legacies of Childhood*, 219) remarks that "the story of the psychological impact of imperialism in China has been little studied."

depths, the twists and turns of the current, and to find the faith and courage to act and to create in this era of great uncertainty.¹⁵⁴

This, the *Shanghairen* attempted to do, and, yet, the *Shanghairen's* dilemma—both in the newspapers and in reality—was the fact that although he realized that the ideas and institutions of cosmopolitan Shanghai, however foreign in nature, needed to be applied to China, this need was simultaneously an ideological imperative and a practical impossibility.¹⁵⁵

Shanghai's newspapers, although they circulated on a national scale, were—outspokenly and decidedly—newspapers of Shanghai. But they were not newspapers for Shanghai alone. Their very obsession with multiple Shanghai was the reason why these newspapers were read and enjoyed by Chinese throughout the country. Although the perplexed and multiple *Shanghairen* depicted in the newspapers was not a mirror-image of the average citizen in modern China, much less a figure of identification for him, his ambivalences and equivocations—not quite unlike those of the new women depicted in the Shanghai news media—reflected and illustrated the psychological impact of the foreign presence in China. Throughout the last decades of the nineteenth century, the fortunes and misfortunes of the *Shanghairen* became more and more tangible or at least imaginable and disturbing for readers all over China; they became tropes for the collective psyche of a modernizing China confronting the foreign presence. This explains why Shanghai's newspapers, although writing almost obsessively about one particular city, Shanghai, were able to cater to a national readership. The newspapers' discussion of Shanghai in its multiplicity incited a national reading public, which, living far from Shanghai in the "real" China, both learned from the treaty port and admired it, on the one hand, and complained about it and despised it, on the other.

As in the case of discussions on women, discussions of the *Shanghairen* were paramount to discussions of modernity and the nation. But did they play a part in the formation of a modern Chinese national identity? Some characterizations of *Shanghairen* as those who

154. Saari, *Legacies of Childhood*, xiii.

155. Hutters, "Appropriations." In Saari's own words (*Legacies of Childhood*, 198–99), "the initial step beyond tradition had become a condition of life, not contingent upon individual will and choice."

had learned nothing but the worst from the foreigners surrounding them accused them of selling out the nation. Some of the images of women, on the other hand, were created as proof of China's willingness to change and modernize according to international standards: these women became signs of China's aspirations to modernity. Yet other portrayals of women could be understood as symbols for China the subdued nation; some of the depictions of *Shanghairen*, on the other hand, were read as signs and models for how the nation could rise and modernize. It was difficult, at best, to identify with either of these multiple personalities, the new women or the *Shanghairen*.

In a seminal study on the genesis of nationalism, Gellner suggests that the presence of a multiplicity of identities would, as a natural consequence, create a need for homogeneity.¹⁵⁶ With multiplicities manifold and apparent on the pages of the Shanghai news media, in depictions of both women and men, high and low, throughout the period investigated here, it remains to be asked whether Shanghai's newspapers eventually became such a unified voice of China as a nation and of Chinese nationalism. This is the question to be addressed now.

156. Cf. Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 46: "It is not the case that nationalism imposes homogeneity out of a wilful cultural *Machtbedürfnis*, it is the objective need for homogeneity which is reflected in nationalism."

CHAPTER 6

The Nature of Chinese Nationalism

Reading Shanghai Newspapers, 1900–1925

Foreign-ruled Shanghai was allegedly the hotbed of Chinese nationalism and the most nationalistic city in China. One of the reasons why is that Shanghai was China's news capital. Newspapers are often considered to have singular powers to generate nationalism because of their ability to create an awareness of the world and a distinction between self and other. Newspapers form a sense of unity and common interest: readers of the newspaper, no matter how far apart they live, join, in their imaginations, the same place, the same time, and the same language.¹

The preceding chapters have shown that throughout the late Qing, certainly during the period 1872–1912, newspapers in Shanghai and the *Shenbao* in particular are—more often than not—concerned with the nation and national affairs: they propagate “nationalist discourse,” constituted of sophisticated negotiations both with China's own past and with the challenges from China's others. Rational thinking as exemplified by the foreign-influenced *Shanghai* was advocated “to

1. The idea that the Gutenberg revolution, and with it the printing press products with mass circulation such as the newspapers, were agents of change and promoters of nationalism goes back to Lucien Febvre and Henri Martin's *L'apparition du livre* (1958) and Marshall McLuhan and Quentin Fiore's *The Medium Is the Massage* (1967). The idea was further developed by Elisabeth Eisenstein in *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change* (1979). It was recently readdressed in Benedict Anderson's influential *Imagined Communities*. See also Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*; Kedourie, *Nationalism*, esp. 115; and Anthony Smith, *The Newspaper*, 71.

save the nation from oblivion" and used to justify women's education, to remonstrate against court announcements, to criticize the Chinese love of private profit, or to argue for a change in China's trading system. On the other hand, concerns for Chinese national taste and cultural preferences determined the makeup and the contents of the foreign-style Chinese newspaper, and negotiations between Chinese and foreign authority are ever-present both in terms of form and in terms of content. The general trend toward the turn of the century of accepting the foreign model as equal or even superior (if with increasing bitterness and ironic exasperation, as the preceding chapter in particular shows) was accompanied by the willingness to find fault with China's government and the Chinese people. Although inspired by external models, Chinese nationalism as it appears in late Qing newspapers such as the *Shenbao* was a particular sort of nationalism: it was rather introverted and directed against the self more than against the other.

This chapter extends the time frame to the early years of the Republic. It analyzes newspaper reports at sensitive historical moments of contact and conflict between East and West on Chinese soil: the Boxer Rebellion of 1900, the 1905 boycott of American goods, the Revolution of 1911, the May Fourth movement in 1919, and the May Thirtieth movement of 1925. Each of these incidents has been singled out by historians as the "birth of Chinese nationalism." It is not my intention to add earlier dates to this series and thus to emphasize, as these historians do, a rupture between what was before and what came after. Instead, my focus is on continuity: I hope to show that one particular type of nationalist discourse in Shanghai's newspapers from the late Qing was perpetuated into the early years of the Republic. The historical moments examined here are to serve as test cases for this continuity. By comparing "what happened" with "what is being described," during these pivotal junctures in modern Chinese history, I attempt to analyze the influence of the newspapers in forming and transforming Chinese nationalism.² I will argue that the nationalist discourse found in the Chinese-language newspapers was rarely anti-

2. In *Nation and Narration*, Homi K. Bhaba ("Introduction," 2) argues that the formation of a nation and its nationalism is rarely single-voiced; rather, it is a multiple construct. He suggests we "encounter the nation as it is written" in order to display the polyphony of nationalism. This chapter is an attempt to follow this suggestion.

imperialist or anti-foreign and xenophobic.³ Rather, it was, to construct a parallel term, “idiophobic”: it was directed primarily not against “the other” but against “the self.” Thus, there was an important difference between nationalism inside and outside the newspapers: Shanghai’s nationalist newspapers did not stir up or create the particular type of nationalism found on the streets, which was largely anti-imperialist and xenophobic. Thus, I contend that—looking back at Chinese history through newspapers—what is at stake is not the birthdate of Chinese nationalism but its very nature.

Narrating National Events

1900

According to standard histories, the Boxer Rebellion marked the “first emergence” of genuinely nationalist—in this case, specifically xenophobic and anti-imperialist—feelings among the Chinese.⁴ And yet, despite the considerable powers attributed to newspapers in the formation of nationalist movements, the Boxer movement arose and was fought *without* the participation of the newspapers. Roswell Britton, in his 1933 history of the Chinese press, noted that “the press was not a partisan of the Boxers.”⁵ The Boxers exploited traditional means of propaganda: they “staged” their messages in antiforeign and anti-

3. “Xenophobia” is here used more or less interchangeably with “antiforeignism” or “anti-imperialism” in the sense of “fear and hatred of the foreigner.” The assumption that xenophobia is a late perversion of nationalism not evident at its birth has been disproved in Herrmann et al., *Machtphantasie Deutschland*. In the view of many of the historians cited below, xenophobia was a central element in the making of Chinese nationalism.

4. Esherick, *Origins*, xiii: “The Boxers . . . stood as a dramatic example of ordinary Chinese peasants rising up to rid China of the hated foreign presence.” Hsueh, *Huang Hsing*, 94: “The Boxer Catastrophe had aroused the country and signaled a shift in Chinese attitude toward the alien regime.” Ding, “Some Questions,” 35: The Boxers “understood the increased role of imperialist forces.” See also Paul A. Cohen, *History in Three Keys*; and Jeffrey Wasserstrom, “‘Civilization’ and its Discontents.”

5. Britton, *The Chinese Periodical Press*, III. According to Britton, this is due to the fact that “the cities where the new press was well established were little infected by Boxerism.” This view is supported for Shanghai by Ye Xiaoqing, “Shanghai Before Nationalism,” 34, but it flies in the face of the idea of cities and particularly Shanghai as hotbeds of nationalism.

Christian plays and puppet shows,⁶ and they posted handbills and placards such as the following:

Rip up the railroad tracks
 Pull down the telegraph lines!
 Quickly! Hurry up! Smash them—
 The boats and the steamship combines

When at last all the Foreign Devils
 Are expelled to the very last man
 The Great Qing, united, together,
 Will bring peace to this, our land.⁷

This is an inflammatory text, intended to be read and enacted on the streets. In a direct appeal to the reader (“Quickly! Hurry up!”), it advocates the immediate destruction of all the material emblems of the foreign presence in China and the elimination of all foreigners. The literal meaning of the Chinese term for xenophobia, *paiwai* 排外 (to get rid of the foreign), is theatrically enacted here. The destructive urgency at the beginning of the poem dissolves at the end into an idyllic picture of peace in “our land” 吾國, fittingly the last two words of this nationalist text.

What were newspapers like the *Shenbao* writing during the Boxer movement? A series of editorials in the *Shenbao* (17.6, 1.7, and 19.8.1900), entitled “Angry Words” (“Fenyan” 憤言), leveled heavy criticism against the Manchu government for supporting the Boxers.⁸

6. Doar, “Boxers and Chinese Drama,” 97, 99.

7. For this wall poster, see Esherick, *Origins*, 300.

8. This critical attitude against policies instigated by the Empress Dowager is especially interesting in view of the fact that only a few years earlier, in 1898, the *Shenbao* had supported her and her conservative officials without question (Janku, “Der Leitartikel der *Shenbao*”). The lameness of direct criticisms of her supports the general perception that the *Shenbao* backed the Empress Dowager during this time. A later article made her responsible for endorsing the Boxers, an act that, according to the writer, would certainly bring about a calamity 恐必致禍 (l. 17), but again the sentence begins with a polite “I fear” 恐; see “紀客述京師亂耗” (Recording news of the chaos in the capital as related by a guest), *SB* 24.6.1900. The article also points out that the Empress Dowager had been deluded by corrupt officials (the expression to denounce them is the same as in an earlier article discussed below [*SB* 17.6.1900: 昏庸謬妄]: “muddleheaded, common, false, and reckless”) into believing that the Boxers could be righteous citizens 義民 (ibid., l. 21). See also the next “憤言” editorial (*SB* 1.7.1900) discussed in note 11.

Princes and ministers were accused of being “muddleheaded, common, false, and reckless” 昏庸謬妄 (*SB* 17.6.1900, l. 1), because they are unaware of the true state of things in the country, because they are timid and passive, and, perhaps worst of all, because they “look at countries outside with enmity without measuring their own power” 仇視外邦, 不量勢力 (l. 2). The article thus openly accused the officials of being xenophobic.⁹ In contrast to the wall poster, these editorials warn against attacking foreigners.¹⁰ The first article in the series ends (l. 23):

I know 吾知 that if the Boxer rebels are not taken to task, all these [foreign] countries will bring out their military in great numbers 大 and enter China, and within the twinkling of an eye, a scene of total destruction will be seen. This is why Jia Sheng could not overcome his wailing. Indignant and sad, I worry about this 憂之 for our China 吾中國.

Quite clearly, nationalist sentiments were behind the editorials appearing throughout the summer of the Boxer disturbances, the “Angry Word” series foremost among them. The theatrical quality of the writing is reminiscent of Boxer rhetoric: the article cited above was not alone in ending in an emotionalized nationalist gesture (wailing like Jia Yi 賈誼 [200–168 BCE] for “our China”). In this regard it was also not unlike Boxer wall posters.¹¹ The *Shenbao* editorialists resemble the writers of the placards in another way: they, too, invoke a sense of crisis.¹² They “cry out in a loud and urgent voice”

9. The article calls the officials’ xenophobia reckless and argues: “With a heart that usually watches the foreigners enviously, they use the Boxer rebels as a tool and recklessly wish to exterminate all countries, [a fact] which [in turn] causes all [these] countries to move their troops to enter the capital. The disaster is thus truly unfathomable” (ll. 8–9).

10. Warnings against foreign intrusions and territorial gains are also given in “憤言,” *SB* 19.8.1900, l. 18; and “剿拳匪宜調外兵說” (Taking the boxers to task should move foreign troops), *SB* 23.6.1900.

11. A similar argument can be found in the next “憤言” editorial in *SB* 1.7.1900. Again, the article accuses the officials of delusion for considering the Boxers “good people” 良民; it charges that their misconceptions have misled even the Empress Dowager (l. 15). The editorial warns of “making enemies of the foreigners,” and it ends rather emotionally—“worry” 憂 for “our country” 吾國家 being some of the last words (ll. 23–24).

12. See, e.g., “紀客述京師亂耗,” *SB* 24.6.1900, l. 28, which mentions the editor’s feelings of sadness, anger, shock, and crisis 歎憤驚危. “論義和拳匪萬無可撫之理” (On the reasons why the Boxers must by no means be cherished), *SB* 21.6.1900, talks and sighs over the difficulty of the situation and the country bor-

大聲疾呼;¹³ they write down their information “in a hurry” and put it on the “first page of the paper for everyone to read.”¹⁴ Their writing is breathless, imperative, emotional. And yet, the emotion being voiced differs from that found in Boxer writings. The authors of these articles saw the consequences of xenophobia. They did not criticize the foreigners but took to task—in unflattering terms—even the highest authorities in their own government.¹⁵ They cited authoritative sources to back up their arguments. The editorialist quoted at length above, for example, underlined his righteous grief by the allusion to Jia Yi, a loyal advisor to Han Emperor Wen (r. 179–157 BCE),¹⁶ thus legitimizing his own feelings and contrasting them with the recklessness and stupidity of those in government.¹⁷

Thus, these nationalist editorials are a far cry from the nationalism of the Boxers on the streets. The *Shenbao* was both critical of China’s government and supportive of the foreigners. Many *Shenbao* articles describe the sufferings of the missionaries vividly.¹⁸ Thus, the *Shenbao* did not demonize the other or trumpet anti-imperialism. At least during the Boxer Rebellion, the Chinese press products such as the *Shenbao* played no role in the emergence of the xenophobic nationalist movements evident on China’s streets around 1900.

dering a crisis (l. 15: 危之際; ll. 19–20: 嗚呼, 事急矣). The rather self-confident title of this editorial is indicative of the critical perspective that the *Shenbao* was willing to take in matters even of highest policy.

13. “論義和拳匪萬無可撫之理,” *SB* 21.6.1900, l. 21.

14. “紀客述京師亂耗,” *SB* 24.6.1900, l. 28.

15. Stock phrases are used time and again for the officials (see note 8). Both “憤言,” *SB* 17.6.1900, l. 1, and “論義和拳匪萬無可撫之理確,” *SB* 21.6.1900, l. 20, for example, talk of the officials as being passive “as if drunk or in a dream.” For further criticisms, see also “剿拳匪官調外兵說,” *SB* 23.6.1900; and “與客講京師匪(亂? character illegible)事(character illegible)而書此”(Written after talking to the guest about the rebels’ chaos in the capital), *SB* 17.8.1900.

16. The expression to “worry for the country” 憂國 that Jia Yi coined during that time of dynastic decline became a topos in literary writings, especially in Tang poetry.

17. These articles abound in claims by journalists asserting their duty of offering the public all the news they can get that is not based on rumor but truth. See remarks in “剿拳匪官調外兵說,” *SB* 23.6.1900, l. 1; “補紀客述大沽(交? character illegible)戰情形”(A few additions to the record of the situation at the battle in Dagou as related by a guest), *SB* 26.6.1900, l. 1; and esp. “憤言,” *SB* 19.8.1900, l. 12.

18. E.g., “論義和拳匪萬無可撫之理確,” *SB* 21.6.1900, l. 11; “剿拳匪官調外兵說,” *SB* 23.6.1900, l. 4.

One obvious reason for this discrepancy between street and newspaper nationalism was that the Chinese-language newspapers existed only because of the foreign presence in the treaty ports. It would have been suicidal for the newspapers to attack their benefactors. Not surprisingly, the *Shenbao* commentary on the Boxers was much closer to foreign reporting on the event than to Boxer propaganda. Not only did the British press acknowledge the critical perspective in many Chinese-language papers,¹⁹ it also mirrored it in its own reporting. The *North China Herald*, for example, criticized Chinese officials harshly: "a pack of ignorant fossilised literati in their blind hatred of change rushing off an ancient empire to destruction; men as unable to turn a crack as to guide a great country."²⁰

The *North China Herald* even captured some of the territorial fears that Chinese editorialists were voicing in the *Shenbao*: "If we could but for a moment see ourselves as the Chinese see us, we should recognise at once that our unblushing despoilment . . . thinly veiled under the phrase "Spheres of influence," was sufficient to arouse the deepest animosity in the heart of every patriotic native."²¹ This article also ended with a note familiar from the *Shenbao* editorials cited above: "One duty, however, is at the moment the sole object of us all—the pacification of the country."

PRELUDE: 1902

China was not easily pacified, however, and the foreign community in China experienced a number of nationalist clashes within the next few years. One such confrontation culminated in the anti-American boycott in 1905, an answer to discrimination against Chinese emigrants in the United States and the Exclusion Acts that barred Chinese from entering the United States, as well as a shocking series of arson, mur-

19. The *Shanghai Mercury* wrote that "papers in the ports and native newspapers under foreign control are forbidden to the Chinese, and reading them is made a crime, yet it is a sign that there exists an undercurrent of progress that . . . native newspapers . . . have larger circulations than ever before, and they are very outspoken on forbidden subjects, throwing light on the worst acts of the officials and criticising daily the conduct of the Empress-Dowager. Hundreds of these papers go daily to Peking itself, and they must have influence for the good" (from *Boxer Rising*, xvi).

20. "The Crisis," *NCH* 20.6.1900.

21. "Who Is to Blame for the Boxer Movement?" *NCH* 4.7.1900.

ders, and other criminal acts against Chinese in the United States.²² The *Shenbao* regularly reminded its readers in editorials and news reports of the implications of the agreements between China and the United States restricting immigration.²³ In 1902, many reports and editorials on the Exclusion Act appeared, and the *Shenbao* publishing house issued the novel *Bitter Society* (*Ku shehui* 苦社會), an indictment of the mistreatment of Chinese emigrants in America.²⁴ These writings offer an interesting prelude to the rhetoric of the anti-American boycott three years later. This is one of the rare instances when the newspapers voiced a critical, if rational and polite, antiforeign attitude, and yet at this juncture this attitude was not translated into street action. Once more, we can see a clear-cut division between newspaper discourse and street reality.

One particularly outspoken editorial, published on 14 January 1902, illustrates this point.²⁵ It argues that since trade connections had been established with countries from all over the world, it was only natural that the number of foreign residents in China should increase. The author contended that he knew of no example of his country 我國 stopping anyone from entering China. Indeed the treaties acknowledged that the signatories would be peaceful and recognize each other as one family. Thus, in China, foreign travelers were treated with respect, even reverence, as guests deserve. The author admitted that, unfortunately, situations had occurred in recent times in which Chinese had vilified foreigners, but he stressed that the Boxer incident, for example, could not be used to show that the Chinese in general nourished

22. The Exclusion Act had first been drafted in 1882 and revised in 1884 to be in effect for ten years; it was extended for another ten years in 1894. The renewed revision of the treaty in 1904 sparked the discussions that led to the boycott in 1905 (Remer and Palmer, *Chinese Boycotts*, 29). For the succession and content of the different exclusion treaties in 1882, 1888, 1892, and 1894, see Fields, "The Chinese Boycott of 1905," 64–65.

23. In 1892, too, ten years after the conclusion of the first treaty and the year of its extension, there were a number of rather critical editorials dealing with the topic; see *SB* 5.4 and 12.4.1892. From reading the *Shenbao* alone, one cannot agree with Liao Kuang-sheng's (*Antiforeignism and Modernization*, 58) contentions that in the 1880s and 1890s little public protest was voiced against these treaties in China.

24. Xu and Xu, *Qingmo sishinian "Shenbao" shiliao*, 139, 142.

25. "論美國議禁華人事" (On American discussions of Chinese exclusion), *SB* 14.1.1902.

feelings of vengeance against the foreigners. Ruffians, like the Boxers, might do so, but the general public certainly did not. The editorialist concluded: "Because of this honesty with which the Chinese treat foreigners, the Chinese ought to be treated no different by them" (ll. 1-9).

In openly admitting some mistakes but calling antiforeign incidents the exception rather than the rule, the acts of rowdies, the editorialist forestalled a counterattack. In a rather hackneyed but nevertheless effective rhetorical move, he set China up as a positive model, a country that has honored its international obligations. Surely, then, China should be treated the same in return.

And yet, the article continues, there have been reports of Chinese merchants being barred from entering the United States, even though they only wanted to travel through America en route to other countries. Accordingly, the editorialist asked: "Can America still rightly be called a country that is peacefully disposed to trade connections?" (l. 13). In this paragraph, the author created a counter-image to the positive picture of China: in enumerating more and more evidence of American misbehavior, the editorialist instilled doubts in his readers. The question at the end openly voices these doubts. The editorialist concluded by prescribing the proper reaction: few Chinese could hear of this without feeling depressed (ll. 14-15).

Having captured both the minds and the hearts of readers, the editorialist noted that foreigners, claiming to be enlightened and civilized 文明, have always said that their intention was to change and improve China. And yet, even though they say this in public, in private Americans want China to be weak. "Is this," the editorialist asks, "what enlightened countries are really like?" 文明之國果如是乎 (l. 16). Having undermined the Americans' claim to be interested in peaceful trade, he now undercut their reputation as a civilized country.

After this attack on the United States, the editorial quotes at length the apologetic speech of an American missionary:

The reason why we bar the Chinese is not because we hate and despise them, but because we wish to preserve our American customs 我美風俗 and wish to prevent our children from being contaminated 染 by the vulgar manners of the Chinese 華人陋俗. That is why we cannot but continue this restriction. . . . Yet restricted are only those that ought to be, those who ought not to be will not be. All [Chinese] missionaries, scholars, or merchants traveling through will be treated with politeness. (ll. 16-19)

In allowing an American voice, the editorialist marked his own position as fair and objective. He even concedes that the missionary's argument is not without merit (l. 19). And yet, he complained, the situation described by the missionary clearly does not tally with reality. The Chinese are barred from stepping on American soil, they are not allowed to travel through the United States, they might even be shot on the spot for doing so (ll. 19–20). Deftly turning the argument presented by the missionary against him, the editorialist concludes that since Americans in China never contaminated Chinese customs, why could one assume that the Chinese in the United States would contaminate American customs (l. 20–21)? Support for this argument can be found in the *Mencius* (3B6): Mencius explains how important it is to influence a sovereign by being a good example and surrounding him with proper associates. Mencius argues that any effort to teach the language of Qi to someone surrounded by men from Chu must end in failure. According to the editorialist, “That the babbling of a horde of men of Chu should not be able to defeat the teachings of a single man of Qi, is utterly unreasonable” (ll. 21–22).²⁶

In communion with the reader, the editorialist sneers at Americans, not only equating them with the “babblers of Chu” but also mocking their argument that a few Chinese emigrants would have a bad influence on their culture. The missionary's first argument is false, his second “utterly unreasonable.”

Even as it ridicules the United States and its spokesman, the article keeps a polite distance, however. The editorial was written not to offend; indeed, it carefully distances itself from the xenophobic Boxers. The argument is rational, not emotional. The writer presented evidence for both sides and weighed them; he repeatedly called on moral and legal obligations such as treaties and proper reciprocal behavior—things usually cited by foreigners against the “uncivilized” and “lawless” Chinese.

Similar observations can be made of many other articles that appeared on this topic that same year.²⁷ In these appeals to its readers,

26. The original passage is “一齊人傳之，眾楚人咻之，雖日遠而求其齊也，不可得矣。” The editorial version reads: “眾楚人之咻，不敵一齊人之傳，此必無之理。”

27. See “記美人虐待華人事” (Record of a case of Americans mistreating Chinese), *SB* 28.9.1902, a report on the difficulty encountered by Chinese students seeking to enter American territories: they may have to pay outrageous sums or may be mistaken for workers if their passport is not immediately recognized; they

the *Shenbao* did not call for violent action against the United States; rather, it warned, threatened, and ridiculed the country and advised Chinese and the Chinese government not to be fooled by the Americans. This polite—but certainly self-confident—indignation at the other, voiced in newspapers such as the *Shenbao*, formed the backdrop to American preparations in 1904 to revise the ten-year Exclusion Act of 1894, a project that eventually instigated the boycott of 1905.²⁸

1905

The 1905 Boycott is usually regarded as an important early step in the development of Chinese nationalism,²⁹ as the first time “genuine” nationalistic feelings arose among the Chinese.³⁰ As a foreign contemporary would later reminisce, 1905 was the year in which the Chinese showed that “they were no longer willing to submit passively to what they regarded as an infringement of their rights.”³¹ The merchant-initiated boycott, vigorously promoted by students and joined by a variety of treaty-port residents from dock laborers to petty shopkeep-

may even be thrown into jail. It also describes the terrible situation in the custom jails. This report was taken up a day later in an editorial (“論美國虐待華人事” [On a case of Americans mistreating Chinese], *SB* 29.9.1902, esp. ll. 16–17) which asked why suddenly, after decades of peaceful emigration by Chinese to America, problems and discrimination were now arising. Again, it made a point of being rather astonished that the Americans of all people, who took pride in being so civilized and enlightened 文明 (l. 8), would do such things. And here, the Chinese government is admonished to press its own rights in a conflict with a country that—for all other purposes—stresses the importance of a common and fair law 公法. This argument returns in some of the reports on the Boycott of 1905; see, e.g., the letters to the editor in *SB* 18.7 and 28.7.1905.

28. Remer and Palmer, *Chinese Boycotts*, 29.

29. For this view, see Iriye, “Public Opinion and Foreign Policy,” 223; Liao, *Antiforeignism and Modernization*, 58, and Fields, “The Chinese Boycott of 1905,”

88. Fields (90) calls the boycott a prelude to the rise of “mature nationalism” in the next two decades.

30. Bergère, *Bourgeoisie chinoise*, 50. See also Goodman, *Native Place*, 183–84; and Remer and Palmer, *Chinese Boycotts*, 35: “Scattered estimates . . . indicated . . . that boycotting involves expenses to the group using this weapon. They reveal a willingness which marks a growing spirit of Chinese nationalism.”

31. Pott, *Short History*, 164. Rhoads Murphey (*The Outsiders*, 224) argues that “the West was far more a target for them than a cause or shaper of their vision. The foreign threat united them, created in effect a new nationalism.”

ers, is said to have been "supported by a popular press campaign."³² Its chief weapon, so one study contends, "was the pen."³³ Newspapers in general and the *Shenbao* in particular, are seen as having played a crucial role in creating this nationalistic consciousness.³⁴ Foreigners, such as the American envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary in China between 1905 and 1909, William Rockhill, and foreign-language papers, such as the *North China Herald*, "put the blame for the . . . boycott on the inflammatory press in Shanghai."³⁵

Yet, during the height of the anti-American boycott in June–August 1905, the reports in the *Shenbao* were rather matter-of-fact. The newspaper reprinted and translated different versions of the treaty, without much comment.³⁶ It quoted reports from American and English newspapers, some of which attempted to justify American behavior, others of which were critical, again without real comment.³⁷

32. Furth, "May Fourth in History," 60. For a similar view, see Fields, "The Chinese Boycott of 1905," 64.

33. Fields, "The Chinese Boycott of 1905," 71. The problem with Fields's account is that she does not quote directly from the Chinese press at all but only from secondary sources such as Lin Yutang (who makes no explicit statement about 1905) when she talks of the Chinese press. She mentions a number of rather xenophobic press cartoons, showing Americans abusing Chinese. Such cartoons, however, are not to be found in newspapers like the *Shenbao*, for example.

34. E.g., *ibid.*, 71: "The new power of the native press is apparent in the boycott movement" (Fields argues, however, that the Shanghai press was less influential than the press in Canton); and Kim Heun-Chun, *Aufmachung*, 46. Xu Zaiping and Xu Ruifang (*Qingmo sishinian "Shenbao" shiliao*, 139–42) argue that the *Shenbao* was the most important organ in publicizing the boycott throughout the country and call for a re-evaluation of its role in the boycott. A similar view is voiced in Liao, *Antiforeignism and Modernization*, 59.

35. Wei, *Shanghai—Crucible*, 191. The *North China Herald* ("An Educational Peril," 30.6.1905) wrote: "With the growing consciousness of their own power, the students scattered throughout China tend to become increasingly unified in thought and feeling." This spirit of unity is said to be voiced in Chinese-language newspapers where, allegedly, "one finds intense passion under very little control and an ill-regulated or quite unregulated expression of crude opinions." The article continues: "The cultivation of the talent for talk and for destructive criticism, while the talent for prudent action is yet an embryo, is a serious danger."

36. E.g., *SB* 23.6.1905.

37. E.g., *SB* 4.7.1905 (from the *London Times*), *SB* 8.7.1905 (from a "New York trade paper"; this article calls for an adjustment of the act to accommodate some of the Chinese demands), *SB* 16.7.1905 (from an American paper that also sympathizes with Chinese views, even though it says that they create a number of obsta-

In a hackneyed phrase that occurs throughout, the American treatment of Chinese is termed "brutal and harsh," 苛待 or 虐待, but the fault for the continuation of the treaty inevitably "lies with the Chinese government."³⁸ A slight tone of irony, but certainly no xenophobic anger, can be detected in a news report of early July 1905: Rockhill had arrived in Beijing to take up his job, but "surprise, surprise" 詎, the American government had not given him the right to negotiate the treaty.³⁹ This would have to be done in Washington.⁴⁰

The sheer number of news reports explaining the need to boycott and the methods for putting it into practice that appeared daily in the *Shenbao* and other newspapers and the obvious interests of many different groups of the population (overseas Chinese, women, guilds, gentry, and native-place organizations among others),⁴¹ all openly participating in the boycott and placing advertisements in or submitting accounts of their activities to the *Shenbao*,⁴² suggest a rather threatening, vigorous, and widespread boycott. Certainly American and British fears were justified. And yet, a real threat was

cles for the conclusion of the treaty), and *SB* 11.8.1905 (which quotes from different foreign newspapers critical of the restrictions). This practice (already apparent in the third number of the *Shenbao* in which a Chinese-Japanese treaty is translated and explained) of quoting from different sources without commenting on them differs decidedly from the practice of the *North China Herald*. There, extracts from Chinese newspapers are given but usually with explanatory comments that reveal heavy editorial streamlining (cf. e.g. *NCH* 10.5.1919).

38. For these quotations, see the exemplary report of an interview with Wu Tingfang, *SB* 21.6.1905, ll. 3-5.

39. "華工禁約須在美磋商" (The Exclusion Act must be negotiated in America), *SB* 4.7.1905.

40. A similar note of sarcasm can be found in an article of late June ("駐美梁使電陳籌抵華工禁約辦法六款" [Six methods for boycotting the Exclusion Act, as telegraphed by envoy Liang in America], *SB* 23.6.1905) that claims that the willingness of the Chinese to boycott has already made an impression among Americans (an overly optimistic view as it turned out). It offers the suggestions of a group called the "Chinese citizens' traveling to America" 旅美華民聯會 for changing the treaty. The writer expressed the polite hope that these suggestions might make the talks at least "slightly fairer" 頗公.

41. For guilds and professional organizations, see, e.g., *SB* 28.6, 29.7, and 11.8.1905; for overseas Chinese, *SB* 29.6.1905; for women, *SB* 19.7.1905; and for gentry organizations from different provinces, *SB* 23.6, 20.7, and 11.8.1905.

42. See the letters collected in *SB* 18.7.1905. There are also a couple of articles of support by foreigners, e.g., *SB* 28.7 and 11.8.1905.

never vocalized in the newspapers. One typical report from June 1905 reads:⁴³

Because America maltreats Chinese and [wishes to] continue the Exclusion Act, we Chinese have discussed not buying American goods any more and putting all our energies into a boycott in the hope that [the Act] will soon be revoked. On the 23rd of the 5th month, students and representatives of trade and industry . . . gathered in the Red Plum Pavilion 紅梅閣 inside the city, in order to plan and discuss methods of resistance. Everyone's feelings were quite resolute and a date was fixed after which no American products would be sold.

This report is matter-of-fact and businesslike. America "maltreats" the Chinese, but the reporter uses the hackneyed phrase 苛待, commonplace and thus rhetorically rather meaningless vocabulary.⁴⁴ Even though everybody feels "quite resolute" 眾情甚固, the tone of the report is far from emotional and certainly not openly xenophobic.

Similar observations can be made about a report published a few days earlier⁴⁵ that reprinted a flyer giving clear instructions on how to recognize American goods by their markings, such as "United States, United States of America, United States of North America, U.S.A." The reporter explained that some people had decided to post these instructional flyers in marketplaces and ask people to boycott American goods. He commented rather sardonically that "one can see that the public spirit 公心 has not completely died out, that people still have solidarity and that therefore the future of our people is not necessarily completely hopeless" 可見公心未死, 人有同情, 國民前途未必無望也. The use of negative instead of positive expressions (for example, "not dead" rather than "still alive") or of doubled negatives instead of a single positive expression ("not necessarily completely" 未必無) underlines the jaundiced tone. Rather than criticizing the Americans, this article lashes out against the passivity and tardiness of the Chinese. In the same spirit, the reprinted flyer begins

43. "鎮郡抵制華工禁約" (Zhen Prefecture boycotts against Exclusion Act), *SB* 28.6.1905.

44. Another key phrase that occurs constantly and thus loses emotional impact is "strong feelings" 熱心 about the maltreatment of the Chinese (e.g., *SB* 29.7.1905).

45. "松郡抵制華工禁約傳單" (Song Prefecture flyer against Exclusion Act), *SB* 23.6.1905.

with a direct appeal: "Hey, all you brothers" 眾位弟兄們啊,⁴⁶ thrice repeated for better effect. But even this flyer does not abuse the Americans; it simply states the facts.

Where, then, is the "intense passion" ascribed to Chinese newspapers, where is the "expression of crude opinions"? One could argue that news reports are expected to be objective and matter-of-fact. However, as we have seen, the early Chinese newspaper, like the foreign newspapers of the time, did not always observe this rule, and some of the sarcastic phrases in these articles cannot be called "purely objective." Nor do the editorials of the period strike a xenophobic note, either.⁴⁷ In fact, some of them called for moderation: one editorialist in July began with the question: "The boycott is out to destroy the Americans' profit, isn't it?" (ll. 28-29). He argued that if goods were bought from the Americans before the boycott, not to sell them would hurt only the Chinese merchants. Finally he grumbled indignantly: "To be angry at others and to shift that anger on your own things, who has ever heard of such a thing" 天下豈有是理乎?! (ll. 34-35).⁴⁸

Obviously the boycott was anti-American,⁴⁹ but the newspapers did not promote anti-American xenophobia.⁵⁰ Nationalist, antiforeign

46. Even though women were deeply involved in the organization and the execution of the 1905 boycott (for a discussion, see Chapter 4; and Fields, "The Chinese Boycott in 1905," 80), this flyer was evidently addressed only to men.

47. Some editorials ignored the debate; see, e.g., *SB* 23.6., 30.6.1905. It remains to be studied to what an extent the tame and rather passive editorial line during the boycott reflects the passivity shown by the court, which refused to take a stance. Only as late as 31 August, after renewed pressure from the American government and Rockhill, did the Chinese government issue an edict forbidding the boycott, at a time when the movement was already on the wane, however. For reflections of the boycott in the *jingbao*, see the manuscript edition in the British Library (box 173, eighth month, second day, section 奉).

48. "正美貨之名以定實行抵制辦法說" (On verifying the names of American products and thus settling methods of carrying out the boycott), *SB* 24.7.1905. Another editorial, which mentioned the unified effort 萬眾一心 being made in the boycott, exhausted itself in the technical details of how to recognize true American goods and how best to avoid them, but it did not attack the object of the boycott; see "杜絕美貨實行抵(制) 議" (Discussion on how to cut off American products and thus to carry out the boycott), *SB* 15.8.1905.

49. Cf. Remer and Palmer, *Chinese Boycotts*, v-vi.

50. Remer and Palmer (*ibid.*, 173) relate that, as in later boycotts, anti-Americanism was advocated through short dramas and plays. One letter to the



Fig. 6.1 (left) Metaphoric trade card, ca. 1880
 Fig. 6.2 (right) The anti-Chinese wall (*Puck* 1882)

acts did take place⁵¹—destruction of foreign homes and goods as well as massacres⁵²—and these were reported in the papers,⁵³ but this activism was not initiated by the newspapers. At most, the newspapers re-kindled the boycott secondhand, by reporting on boycott activities. Rather than criticize the Americans, they tended to take to task their own countrymen and government. Anti-American propaganda in China's newspapers was tame (even tamer than it had been only a few

Shenbao also mentions that boycott pictures and songs were being sold (*SB* 18.7.1905); another article mentions pictures (*SB* 28.7.1905).

51. It remains to be studied to what extent the 1905 boycott was in fact more xenophobic than later boycotts, since it included elaborate campaigns to stop foreign goods. Reading advertisements of this period suggests differences between the attempt to block foreign goods and the later emphasis on buying Chinese goods (see Remer and Palmer, *Chinese Boycotts*, 46; the advertisements in the *SB* 17.5.1919 for "Taishan Cigarettes," "Daji Cigarettes," and "Yellow Crane Cigarettes"; and "哭南京路被害的學生" [Bewailing the students hurt on Nanjinglu], *SB* 1.6.1925, discussed below on p. 394).

52. On 28 October 1905, for example, five members of a mission were killed and a number of buildings were burned after the mission head attempted to stop a festival from spilling over onto the grounds of a mission hospital in Canton. For the significance of this so-called "Lianzhou massacre," see Fields, "The Chinese Boycott of 1905," 87–89.

53. For a very accurate week-to-week report about the activities, see Fields, "The Chinese Boycott of 1905." She mentions some xenophobic placards but judges that they were on the whole moderate, although they, too, were referred to as "inflammatory" by consular officials (*ibid.*, 73).

years before). It was certainly not as hysterical as anti-Chinese propaganda in the United States, where numerous ways of xenophobic action were imagined: ingenious methods of excluding or eliminating the Chinese such as a machine called the "peerless wringer" (Fig. 6.1.); or the anti-Chinese wall, made up of—self-ironical—bricks such as "jealousy," "non-reciprocity," or "competition" (Fig. 6.2.).⁵⁴ And yet, even though the "inflammatory" potential of the *Shenbao* was low, it was perceived as a dangerous nationalist agent by the foreign powers.

INTERLUDE: 1911

Less noted by foreigners at the time, another version of Chinese nationalism was brewing. The summer of 1905 witnessed not only the anti-American boycott but also the foundation in Tokyo of the Revolutionary Alliance, the *Tongmenghui* 同盟會, an organization dedicated to overthrowing the Qing dynasty, an aim that became reality—not solely because of the Alliance—in October 1911.

Marie-Claire Bergère describes the Revolution of 1911 as "nationalist, first and foremost" (*avant tout nationaliste*), a view shared by most scholars.⁵⁵ In this nationalist movement, anti-imperialism was joined (and in many ways overshadowed) by anti-Manchuism.⁵⁶ And in this—yet another—hour of birth of Chinese nationalism,⁵⁷ newspapers

54. For a study of the phenomenon, see Appel and Appel, "Sino-Phobic Advertising Slogans" (Figs. 6.1 and 6.2 are taken from this article); and Hardin, "American Press and Public Opinion," 57.

55. Bergère (*Bourgeoisie chinoise*, 12) argues that the national motivation came out of the semicolonial context in which China lived and was thus anti-imperialist. For similar views, see Gasster, *Chinese Intellectuals and the 1911 Revolution*, 231–33; Mary C. Wright, "Introduction," 60, 63; and Rankin, *Early Chinese Revolutionaries*, 227–28.

56. Bergère, "Issue of Imperialism," 270: "Although foreign imperialists were identified as the most dangerous enemies, the Manchus were the ones who were attacked because they represented an easier target. Anti-Manchu struggle could thus be seen as an escape, a non-rational solution to the fundamental contradiction between the violent anti-imperialist feelings and an impossible anti-imperialist struggle." For the development of anti-Manchuism, see Zhang Kaiyuan, "The Slogan 'Expel the Manchus' and the Nationalist Movement in Modern Chinese History"; and Dikötter, *Discourse of Race*, esp. 97–125.

57. See, e.g., Chang Yu-Fa, "Nature and Significance of the Revolution of 1911," 9; and Gasster, *China's Struggle to Modernize*, 29.

are again considered the “main revolutionary organs.”⁵⁸ As Liang Qichao put it, the “establishment of the Republic of China was the result of a revolution of ink, not a revolution of blood.”⁵⁹ Accordingly, Joan Judge contends that the “late Qing public which supported and participated in the overthrow of the dynasty was largely a reading public.”⁶⁰ The question remains, however, whether the ideas this public developed from reading newspapers were the kinds of ideas that incited revolution in the streets. Were newspapers the sparks that set off the fire?

The *Shenbao*, for its part, was certainly not an incendiary: not until 12 October, two days after the outbreak of the revolution, do we find telegraphed reports (filling an entire page, however) relating the bomb explosions, the flight of the Hankou viceroy, and the revolutionary activities under Huang Xing 黃興 (1873–1916). Some of these telegraphed reports characterize the revolutionaries as “bold and fearless” and “not even begrudging death” 猛勇力前雖死弗卻.⁶¹ The first longer news report on the 10 October rebellion in Wuhan, “Recording Our Port’s Most Astonishing News: The Fall of Wuchang” (“Ji benfu jingwen Wuchang shishou qingxing” 記本埠驚聞武昌失守情形, *SB* 12.10.1911), is rather cautious not to say too much—indeed, it is careful to explain that the *Shenbao* had refrained from reporting any news from Wuchang in the past few days since it was based only on rumor. The report points out the difficulties of obtaining reliable information in the present circumstances and mentions the sources of the information now being reported: a foreign telegraph, a correspondent’s phone

58. Rankin, *Early Chinese Revolutionaries*, 97, mentions a number of rather short-lived revolutionary papers such as the *Subao* 蘇報, its successor, the *Guomin riribao* 國民日日報, the *Jingzhong ribao* 警鐘日報 (Alarm bell), and the longer-lived *Shibao* 時報. Rankin contrasts these newspapers with the *Shenbao* in political direction, a view that I question below. See also MacKinnon, “Toward a History of the Chinese Press,” 18.

59. Cited from the *Shibao* in Judge, “Public Opinion,” 70.

60. Judge, “Print and Politics,” 57. For a similar view, see Zhang Kaiyuan, “Characteristics of the Trend of Patriotism,” 1: “Leafing through books and magazines from the period of the 1911 Revolution, we are still moved by the fervent patriotic spirit, the sense of urgency and the feeling of the historical mission contained within the prose and verses written in the blood and lives of the people with lofty ideals of that time.”

61. “專電：武昌失守” (Special telegraph messages: the fall of Wuchang), *SB* 12.10.1911.

call, a special correspondent's report, etc. The article calls the revolutionaries the "chaos party" 亂黨. It explains that the New Army has rebelled, occupied the city, and burned the viceroy's official residence. It then takes an emotional turn, sighs "alas" 嗚呼, and asks why, recently, the number of rebellious uprisings has increased almost daily. The situation is assessed as extremely dangerous because of the growing strength of the revolutionaries (now more neutrally called the "revolutionary party" 革黨). The reporter ends with the fervent hopes that the country will soon be tranquil again.

Although the telegrams and this news report in particular suggest a rather fearful, even critical, attitude toward the revolutionaries, a short "critical commentary" (*pinglun* 評論) of the same day tells a different story.⁶² It ponders an earlier report (*SB* 9.10.1911) that related the discovery of 30 boxes of explosives in Wuchang and the arrest of a large number of revolutionaries, some of whom had been summarily executed. The commentator sighs: "Alas, yet again the people from the revolutionary party have met with failure" 嗚呼, 革命黨人又遭失敗矣 (ll. 13-14). This first paragraph sets the scene. The author included many vivid details to capture the interest of his readers. He described the revolutionaries, giving their names, and mentioned that some of those arrested were women—all for a purpose: he wanted the reader to sympathize with the revolutionaries and their cause.

The journalist next reminds the reader of the terrible massacre in Guangzhou that followed the revolutionaries' storming of the governor's palace on 29 March of the same year. Even after this disappointment, the revolutionaries continued to plot: "In fulfilling their tasks, they cannot but be called valiant in courage and progressive in spirit. And yet, every time just before an uprising, they are found out by the authorities, . . . and then all these daring and hopeful youths are decapitated and die" (ll. 19-22). The commentator here poses a paradox: the revolutionaries are admirable, but they are never victorious. "What is the reason for this?" he asks. Why are officials more successful at detecting than the revolutionaries are at keeping their secrets? Could it be that the revolutionary party is prone to leaks? In loosing this tirade of questions, the author intimates the hopelessness of the situation and transfers his own (and the revolutionaries') anxie-

62. "革命黨又事洩" (Once more the revolutionary party's plans have leaked), *SB* 12.10.1911.

ties to his readers. "The fact is that every time the revolutionaries are caught and killed, it not only harms their own life-force 元氣 but, indeed, inflicts great harm on the life-force of China" (ll. 26-28). Why? The revolutionaries are a very special kind of people, people who are not afraid to be killed, who do not fear difficulties and pursue their course with vigor. Thus, they are a rare and precious breed in China. The journalist concludes by advising officials not to "kill mindlessly, in order to avoid a violent explosion another day. This would be happiness for China!"

Unlike the cautious reports published on the same day that hope for a return to peace and quiet and the status quo, this commentary openly calls for revolutionary activity in the name of China. Instead of attributing atrocities to the revolutionaries, its final warning shifts the responsibility for these violent outbreaks to the officials fighting against them. And yet, the next day, the *Shenbao* published a short essay (in the *qingtan* 清談—pure deliberations—column) that begins: "Today the revolutionaries rebel in the east, they rebel in the west. If the matter remains small, the revolutionaries will be caught and killed. If it becomes big, even if they do not slay the rulers and plunder and destroy, blood will cover the ground without stop."⁶³ With an "alas," the chaos precipitated by the revolutionaries is bewailed. Obviously, the editorial board of the *Shenbao* was rather ambivalent, and this situation continued for a few days.

After the arrival of more telegraphic messages reporting victories for the revolutionaries, the same pro-revolutionary journalist cited earlier⁶⁴ wrote another commentary (*pinglun* 評論) on 13 October (both commentaries are signed "Anonymous" 無名, but the writer refers back to his earlier commentary, ll. 1-3). The commentary proper begins with the triumphant sentence: "The Revolution of Wuchang has been accomplished" 武昌之革命已成 (ll. 3-4).⁶⁵ The journalist asserted that the revolutionaries were interested not in rebellion 叛亂 but in enlightenment 文明 and that only repeated brutal massacres by government officials had instigated their rage. After the success in Wuchang, their courage would certainly rise again, and they would continue to fight for revenge (ll. 13-18), for can a fire break out with-

63. "清談" (Pure deliberations), *SB* 13.10.1911.

64. "革命黨又事洩," *SB* 12.10.1911.

65. "武昌革命" (The Wuchang revolution), *SB* 13.10.1911.

out being ignited 安有不受燃而火發者 (ll. 30-31)? As a whole, the article is apologetic. It faults not the revolutionaries for their violent acts but those who attempted to stop them. The revolutionaries, for their part, are not only courageous but enlightened.

This is confirmed by another report⁶⁶ that mentions the care the revolutionaries exercised not to antagonize foreigners and not to disturb business 不仇外人不擾商務 (ll. 16-17). It cites a notice published by the revolutionaries that everyone creating trouble with foreigners would be beheaded. This is considered an "enlightened" move (l. 19). Indeed, the report states, missionaries within the closed city of Wuchang have been left in peace. The emphasis on this behavior shows that the *Shenbao* did not support anti-imperialism nor did it carry anti-imperialist propaganda.⁶⁷ In apparent fear of a repetition of the Boxer fiasco,⁶⁸ this conscious attempt to avoid anti-imperialism could be found both in the newspapers and on the streets: harsh punishments were threatened to anyone doing harm to foreigners or their belongings, as, for instance, in a proclamation to the people of Wuchang by Li Yuanhong 黎元洪 (1864-1928), who had been elected military governor of Hubei by the revolutionaries.⁶⁹ The genuine sympathy voiced for the revolutionaries in some articles in the British

66. "續記本埠驚聞武昌失守情形" (Continuing to record our port's most astonishing news: the fall of Wuchang), *SB* 13.10.1911.

67. The newspaper thus reflected (and in its commentaries also supported) the self-perception of the revolutionaries, who "believed that they were not engaged in 'barbarous xenophobic activities' but were carrying out a civilized and orderly revolution in emulation of the foreign bourgeois revolution for freedom and independence" (Hu Sheng, "The Issues of Anti-Imperialism, Democracy, and Industrialization," 22-23). They did so because they were convinced that only thus would the Great Powers sympathize with the Chinese revolution instead of interfering in it.

68. Don C. Price ("Anti-Imperialism," 61) argues that the "revolutionaries . . . understood that direct anti-imperialist resistance would require mobilization of the 'popular masses' but were deeply suspicious of them, fearing a repetition of the Boxer fiasco."

69. The first rule prohibits the hiding of officials, the second doing harm to foreigners, the third interference with business, the fourth attacks on foreign military, the fifth the killing of compatriots. The penalty for disobedience was death; in contrast, all those helping and protecting Westerners and their goods would be rewarded. The text appears, reprinted from a newspaper, but without providing the source, in Mateer, *New Terms for New Ideas*, 87.

press in Shanghai shows that such attempts to avoid xenophobic outbreaks had been successful.⁷⁰

But although the revolution on the streets was not anti-imperialist, it was definitely anti-Manchu. This, too, is evident from the proclamation issued by Li Yuanhong—"To Reassure the People of Wuchang"—posted throughout that city and reprinted in the Shanghai newspapers. It begins:

We rose up in order to save the people and not because we were coveting personal benefit. We hope to pull you out of water and fire and soothe your wounds. You have suffered terribly in the past, even worse than if you had drowned in the waters of the bitter sea, because you have lived under the tyranny of another race. . . . You must know that the Manchu slaves 滿奴 of today are not of our Han family. And even though we cried to heaven in just anger, there was no possibility of carrying out revenge. We could not bear it any longer and that is why, outraged, we now hold up the flag of justice.

The proclamation starts with an assurance that takes into account the expectations of the readers: the insurrection was undertaken for the common good. Rather emphatically, the Manchus, pejoratively called "Manchu slaves" 滿奴, are made responsible for the people's suffering: taking revenge on them is righteous and just. The proclamation continues even more radically: "None of these traitors of the Han and people's enemies may live and breathe, these criminals have once eaten our own flesh, and thus we will now sleep on their skins." Cleverly, after this drastic declaration, which makes use of a citation from the *Zuo-zhuan* ("eating their flesh and sleeping on their skins" 食肉寢皮), unifying its readers in common disgust, the proclamation calls for solidarity and action, again in anti-Manchu tones: "The rise of the Han people is imminent. We will establish the Chinese republic, and there will be nothing untoward happening to our compatriots any more. The scholars, the peasants, the workers, and merchants, all must unite to drive out the savages 蠻夷." The language of this proclamation differs considerably from that found in newspapers such as the *Shenbao*. There, support for the revolutionaries is accompanied not by denunciations of the Manchus but by emotional outbursts of disillusionment with the people of China. If at all, language such as this enters the newspaper at second hand in the form of reprinted proclamations.

70. See the reports in *NCH*, 14.10 and 21.10.1911 (esp. "A Visit to Wuchang").

The consensus is that nationalism played an “increasingly important part in the political, economic and intellectual development of China from the latter part of the nineteenth century.”⁷¹ The period around the turn of the century also “witnessed a boom of newly-established journals and newspapers in Shanghai” and allegedly, “most of them were filled with nationalistic articles and comments and some even advocated outright revolution.”⁷² Accordingly, the history of the press has been called a “history of political mobilization.”⁷³ Nationalist rhetoric can be found in Shanghai’s newspapers around the Revolution of 1911, and *Shenbao* journalism was, quite obviously, “intimately involved with the politics of the day,”⁷⁴ but it did not *make* those politics. The Wuchang rebellion was a “sheer accident.” Three days after the event, the *Shenbao* reported roughly what was happening, but, uncertain about the truthfulness of the reports it had received, it still published a rather contradictory commentary bemoaning the constant failures of the revolutionaries.⁷⁵ Similarly, if even more belatedly, the *Shibao* 時報 reacted to the revolution on 14 October, in an editorial expressing support for the forces of political change that this uprising represented. Clearly, neither the *Shenbao* nor many of the other newspapers in Shanghai could be held responsible for the events in Wuchang or the anti-Manchu proclamations that followed: they were never quite on the spot to make the revolution.

To the contrary, I would argue not that newspapers make revolutions but that revolutions make newspapers. After the uprising, the pages of the *Shenbao* were dominated by news of the revolution. Telegraphed messages, news reports, commentaries, editorials—all talk of the revolution. This is true of the *Shibao*, as well. From 15 October, that paper even introduced a new column, “News of the Chinese Revolution,” in recognition of the historic importance of recent events.⁷⁶ And,

71. See, e.g., Lee En-Han, “China’s Response to the Foreign Scramble for Railway Concessions,” 1.

72. *Ibid.*, II. Lee (13) gives examples from the *Dongfang zazhi*.

73. Nathan, “The Late Ch’ing Press,” 1285. His statement applies to the years 1895 to 1909.

74. Narramore, “Making the News in Shanghai,” 2.

75. Cf. a similar incident of belated newspaper reporting (Stephens, *A History of News*, 121): “The *New York Times* reported one Bolshevik defeat after another in Russia in 1919, only to have to concede, eventually, that those reported defeats had added up to a Bolshevik victory.”

76. Cf. Judge, *Print and Politics*, 194.

in fact, the Wuchang uprising "sprouted many tabloid-sized newspapers in Shanghai, all unanimously dedicated to promoting the revolutionary cause and the need for republican government."⁷⁷

This reading of the reception of the revolution in the *Shenbao* further suggests that the big commercial newspapers were in fact much more sympathetic to the revolution than is commonly assumed.⁷⁸ The newspapers' comments on the revolution may be full of ambiguities and contradictions, but the general tenor is critical acceptance of the "enlightened" revolutionaries.⁷⁹ Although the newspapers did not necessarily create popular revolutionary feelings, these newspapers echoed them and, through their mass publication, aggrandized some aspects. Thus, although the *Shenbao* and other Shanghai newspapers did not spark the revolution and never openly became the voice of violent anti-Manchuism or anti-imperialism, they did stoke the revolutionary fire.

1919

This fire was sparked again, violently, eight years later, on 4 May 1919. Specialists on the May Fourth movement agree that "modern Chinese nationalism came of age on May 4, 1919."⁸⁰ Contemporary British pa-

77. Narramore, "Making the News in Shanghai," 83. Similar observations have been made of newspapers during the French Revolution: see *Französische Revolution und deutsche Öffentlichkeit*.

78. For the general view, see Rankin, *Early Chinese Revolutionaries*, 101.

79. For a detailed account of sympathetic reporting before 1911 on revolutionaries such as Xu Xilin 徐錫麟 (1873-1907) and Qiu Jin 秋瑾 (1875?-1907), both executed for attempting to incite the revolution in Zhejiang, see Xu and Xu, *Qingmo sishinian "Shenbao" shiliao*, 185-201. Some of the commemorative texts published a year after the 1911 Revolution echo this critically sympathetic view (e.g., *SB* 10.10.1912, which carried two editorials "民國創造一周年之紀念" [Commemorating the one-year jubilee of the founding of the Republic] and "今日之日" [The day of today]) as well as a series of essays 時評 (timely criticisms) stressing the importance of this hard-fought day for the founding of the Republic and the peace and quiet of the people (five races living together) and their happiness. The entire "Free Talk" 自由談 section was also filled with somewhat more ambiguous poetry, caricatures, and other writings about this day of remembrance 紀念. See especially a caricature ironically introducing some of the enlightened achievements of the 1911 Revolution, such as dead heroes, female armies, and babbling parliamentarians ("紀念會中之紀念品," [Souvenirs of the jubilee], *SB* 10.10.1912).

80. Foreword to *Reflections on the May Fourth Movement*, vii. See also, Ch'en, *The May Fourth Movement in Shanghai*, 26, 198-99; and Chesneaux et al., *China from the 1911 Revolution to Liberation*.

pers such as the *North China Herald* spoke of an “outburst of national indignation”⁸¹ and remarked on the antiforeign nature of the demonstrations.⁸² And again, scholars have ascribed to the press a critical role in this movement.⁸³ What part did the *Shenbao* play in the making and maintaining of nationalist and anti-imperialist attitudes?

The voice of Chinese nationalism in the newspapers is urgent and intimate: the news of Versailles is “unbearable,” a “soul-stirring shock.” Shandong, the birthplace of many of China’s sages, Mencius and Confucius among them, is about to be lost to the Japanese!⁸⁴ “Whoever hears of this news without feeling anger is heartless.”⁸⁵ The *Shenbao* is outraged:

At the outset of the European Peace Conference, we heard a lot of . . . “the triumph of right and justice,” . . . “The upholding of the rights . . . of small and weak nations.” . . . Now that the draft of the Peace Treaty has been disclosed, what has become of [those ideals]?

81. *NCH* 10.5.1919. In fact, the *North China Herald* called it a “first outburst.” Similarly, other historians have termed the movement the birth of modern Chinese nationalism (see, e.g., Clubb, *20th Century China*, 81).

82. The *North China Herald* called the demonstrations “riots” and acts of “rowdiness” (“The Peking Riot,” *NCH* 10.5.1919) and an attempt to emulate the Korean independence movement (“The Shantung Question,” *NCH* 17.5.1919). For a close description of this relationship, see Wagner, “Canonization of May Fourth.” Students reportedly carried flags with slogans such as “The Traitors of Our Country” and “We Will Reclaim Tsingtao unto Death” (*NCH* 10.5.1919). For a lucid description of the May Fourth movement and its political characteristics, see Chesneaux et al., *From the 1911 Revolution to Liberation*, 68–72. I disagree strongly, from the evidence of the newspapers, that the May Fourth movement differed from previous nationalist movements in its combination of antiforeignism and criticism of the government. Their argument that antiforeign movements such as the Boxers or the 1905 boycott were movements “loyal to the imperial dynasty or at least neutral on domestic matters” may have been true of what was happening in the streets but certainly not of what was published in newspapers.

83. MacKinnon, “Toward a History of the Chinese Press,” 18; Ch’en, *The May Fourth Movement in Shanghai*, 29–30, 98, more skeptically 61–63, 73.

84. See “外交協會之最近宣言” (The most recent proclamation by the diplomatic delegation), *SB* 10.5.1919.

85. Quoted from the *China Times* in a report from the “Native Press” entitled “Let Our Countrymen Die for Humanity,” *NCH* 17.5.1919. For similar emotional outbreaks, see “外交協會之最近宣言,” *SB* 10.5.1919. This indignation was not the preserve of the *Shenbao*; see a translation from the *Shibao*, “China’s Disappointment,” in the “Native Press” section of *NCH* 17.5.1919.

Whoever expects help from others is doomed to be disappointed. . . . Let our countrymen understand today that their only course is to seek help among themselves. Had our countrymen not abandoned their own interests, who could have infringed them? Had our countrymen been determined to get them back, who could have prevented them?⁸⁶

Although this article openly attacks the foreign countries for a breach of promise, the questions that form the core of the article are much more critical of the pusillanimity of the Chinese and their gullibility in believing foreign promises of support.

This is the general tenor of the reports on the "Shandong question" that filled the pages of the *Shenbao* on 5 May. One article remarked on the great expectations that this conference would reinstate something like right and justice 正義公道 for China.⁸⁷ The return of Shandong to Chinese control is a matter of "life and death."⁸⁸ Accordingly, the failure of negotiations is tantamount to the "death penalty for our country" 是為吾國死刑之宣 (ll. 41-42), a guarantee of further war and unrest.⁸⁹ The author ends with a memorable phrase, addressed to the Chinese diplomats in Versailles: "How, after this horrible piece of news . . . has reached us, can you gentlemen face our country's people?" 失敗之消息則已至矣，諸公其何以對吾國民乎。 This dramatic sense of urgency and life-and-death importance was echoed in many other articles.⁹⁰ Most of these also agreed that the crux of the problem lay not with other countries but with China itself. A commentary ("various criticisms" 雜評) on the "alarming news concerning the Shandong

86. See the report from the "Native Press" entitled "The Leopard Shows its Spots" in *NCH* 17.5.1919.

87. "歐會山東問題之經過" (What happened to the Shandong question at the European conference), *SB* 5.5.1919, l. 43. This idealist conception was repeated in a student proclamation published the next day in "京中各界對山東問題之奮起" (All the different circles in Beijing rise over the Shandong question), *SB* 6.5.1919.

88. "歐會山東問題之經過," *SB* 5.5.1919, ll. 4-5.

89. A similar warning can be found in "外交協會之最近宣言," *SB* 10.5.1919.

90. See, e.g., "外交協會陳述山東問題" (The diplomatic delegation explains the Shandong question), *SB* 5.5.1919. Here, the Shandong question is said to involve not just a single province but the existence of China itself (實中國存亡之關係 and later 黨國家生存關係) since, it is argued, Japan would take advantage of the situation and soon take all of China. Similar arguments were used in a student proclamation cited the next day in "京中各界對山東問題之奮起," *SB* 6.5.1919.

problem"⁹¹ argues that for this reason the outcome should not have come as a surprise: "Most people in this country gather all their power in order to fight for their own personal profit 自利. Every time some bad news arrives, they cry out in shock and suppress their egoistic hearts 私心 for a while. Yet the minute the matter has passed, they return to their former attitudes" (ll. 7-9). China's citizens are shortsighted, selfish, and moneygrubbing. Even in crises like the present one, their egoism makes unified action impossible. In despair, the author calls for "resolve" 決心 among his fellow citizens, for otherwise China would sink, "not to rise again for 10,000 kalpas" (ll. 12-16). In drastic and graphic language, vividly describing the horrible future to come, this article sets the citizens' lack of resolve (a modern virtue) against self-interest 私 and profit-seeking 利 (traditional vices).⁹² These failings are responsible for the trouble the country finds itself in.

This moralizing tone reappeared in advertisements for national goods that ask readers to "sacrifice their selfish gains and unite in their use of national goods" 犧牲私利以致用國貨 (SB 10.5.1919). It also found its way into *Shenbao* commentaries and news reports.⁹³ One commentary argued that it was only natural for people to wish to demonstrate 表示 their outrage at the Versailles "solution" to the Qingdao question.⁹⁴ The author underlined this "naturalness" rhetorically by the use of a doubled negative ("people cannot not have an inclination to demonstrate" 國人不能無一種表示之態度, ll. 1-2). Moreover, such behavior, embedded in human nature, can be found everywhere. Therefore, it is natural and cannot be stopped 各國常有之事, 亦人類共有之性, 無可遏也 (ll. 2-3).

The government, however, treated these "natural demonstrations of outrage" too rigorously by roughing up the demonstrators, closing the universities, and imposing martial law.⁹⁵ Those who demonstrate

91. "山東問題驚耗" (Alarming news concerning the Shandong question), SB 5.5.1919.

92. See the discussion of profit in Chapter 2.

93. The Qingdao question is called a problem that is "watched carefully by everybody's eyes and shouted out loudly by everybody's mouth" ("北京通信二" [Regular Beijing correspondence, no. 2], SB 6.5.1919, l. 1). The loss of Shandong is something that "the entire Chinese public will never until death be able to bear" ("北京通信一" [Regular Beijing correspondence, no. 1], SB 6.5.1919, ll. 2-3).

94. "表示" (Demonstrations), SB 6.5.1919.

95. The argument recurs in a commentary, "解散大學之無識" (The ignorance in closing the universities), SB 7.5.1919.

“ought to be considered useful 益 for the country.” The author warned—in traditional metaphors reminiscent of those found in some early editorials in the *Shenbao*—that what is unnaturally obstructed will eventually leak out, just as a river that is blocked will overflow all the more dangerously (ll. 6–11).⁹⁶

This line of argument reappeared the next day, in a commentary on resolve 決心.⁹⁷ It calls resolve the precondition for a true demonstration. A true demonstration is an expression of real feelings, or, as the author put it in a Confucian moral dictum: “Heart and mouth tally” 心口相符. This contrasts with a hypocritical 虛 demonstration, another traditional vice. Thus, the article appeals to the Chinese citizen of the present, who is accused of hovering in the past by holding to traditional vices instead of approaching the crises with the modern virtues offered him.

Resolve is the frame of mind, demonstrations are the actions of the virtuous, self-confident, modern citizen of China, a citizen imbued with “citizen’s spirit” 民氣, according to another commentary.⁹⁸ And yet, according to these journalists, not many Chinese have this “citizen’s spirit,”⁹⁹ and those that do are hindered by a foolish govern-

96. “解散大學之無識,” *SB* 7.5.1919, also uses the water analogy for the rise of public opinion. The government is accused of foolishly stopping the students and thus provoking even greater disasters. For this analogy and its use in *Shenbao* and other writings, see Chapter 1, pp. 62–63.

97. “決心” (Resolve), *SB* 7.5.1919.

98. “民氣,” *SB* 6.5.1919, begins: “Where does the citizen’s spirit, *mingqi* 民氣, come from?” The answer is: “It is based on public principles” (*gongli* 公理). If public principles are suppressed, the citizen’s spirit rises. If they are suppressed for too long, *mingqi* becomes smaller, indeed melts away like snow in the sun. Accordingly, if *gongli* are suppressed, the effects of *mingqi* are there, if small. If *gongli* thrive, on the other hand, the effects of *mingqi* are enormous. The rhetorical question “Is this indeed not a time when a victory for the public principles could be won if we were to use citizen’s spirit in the Qingdao question?” is answered in the negative: the crisis has not been used for benefit. This ending is rather effective in its ambiguity. One could read it, on the one hand, as an attack on the Chinese government, which, although talking of keeping up and supporting public principles, really suppressed them. On the other hand, this ending can also be interpreted as a criticism of the Chinese citizen who does not develop his citizen’s spirit.

99. There is evidence for quite a bit of real “citizen’s spirit” on the streets in some of the articles by women’s groups, educational associations, guilds, and *tongxianghui*, however, advocating the abrogation of the Versailles treaty in the *Shenbao*: see, e.g., “山東旅滬商人電爭青島” (A telegraph message by Shandong

ment. In all these articles, the authors bemoan the situation. They do so, not through attacks on foreign governments, especially the Japanese one, but through self-lacerating criticisms of both China's government (which cruelly suppresses public opinion)¹⁰⁰ and China's citizens (who fail to develop "citizen's spirit"¹⁰¹ and put self-interest above the public good).

In these commentaries, the students are the only Chinese worthy of praise. This tendency is also evident in news reports, which laud the students for their "orderly demonstrations"¹⁰² and their "extremely enlightened behavior." Indeed, it was not the students but the police who were responsible for the burning of Minister of Communications Cao Rulin's 曹汝霖 (1876-1966) house (he had been responsible for negotiating huge loans with Japan). According to one report, the repressive behavior of the police was answered by the "just and public anger" 公憤 of the students.¹⁰³ The students are cited as calling themselves patriotic, in speeches and posters, and they are admired for their education, evident from posters in English and French (ll. 10-11).¹⁰⁴ By praising the students out on the streets (in much less ambiguous terms than they had the revolutionaries some years before) while criticizing the people and the government, the newspapers were

merchants in Shanghai: fight for Qingdao), *SB* 6.5.1919; a notice in the section "專電" (Special telegraph messages), *SB* 7.5.1919; and "都人對青島問題之奮起" (People from the capital rise over the Qingdao question), *SB* 7.5.1919. See also Wasserstrom, *Student Protests in Twentieth Century China*, chap. 2.

100. This line of argument is continued in a commentary some ten days later. "傳聞誤會" (Misunderstood rumors), *SB* 17.5.1919, begins with a torrent of questions: "Does the government still consider this matter a misunderstood rumor? And if so, if it is not what the misunderstood rumor [says], then what is the correct news? Has the Chinese suggestion at the European peace conference not been defeated, has Qingdao been received back by China after all? No. So why is what has been said and known, a misunderstanding by the people?" The article continues that the real mistake lies with the government who misunderstood the students' actions and overreacted to them.

101. Earlier calls for "citizen's spirit," not by name but in concept, and popular nationalism in the *Shenbao* are discussed in Goodman, *Native Place*, e.g. 170-71.

102. "京中各界對山東問題之奮起," *SB* 6.5.1919.

103. E.g., the first item in the section "專電," *SB* 6.5.1919, l. 4-5. A similar argument is implied in a report cited from the *Chenbao* 晨報 in "北京學生示威行動之別報" (Other reports from the Beijing student demonstrations), *SB* 7.5.1919.

104. See, e.g., the report cited from the *Chenbao* in "北京學生示威行動之別報," *SB* 7.5.1919.

rallying support for the students and their cause. Thus, newspapers such as the *Shenbao* may not have sparked radical student nationalism during the May Fourth movement but again they certainly stoked it. Throughout the entire period, however, the newspapers remained quite moderate in tone and refrained from xenophobic reporting.¹⁰⁵

May Fourth nationalism was ambiguous in its aims: it combined anti-imperialism with wholesale westernization and cosmopolitanism;¹⁰⁶ it was often iconoclastic in its actions and yet traditionalistic in its words (and vice versa);¹⁰⁷ and it advocated a national language but tainted (or ornamented) it with phrases from other languages.¹⁰⁸ My reading of the *Shenbao* further complicates this picture. Clearly, nationalistic reporting in the *Shenbao* was not anti-imperialist but anti-Chinese: the Chinese and their government are accused of gullibility, and they are attacked for not practicing modern virtues and instead indulging in traditional vices. Once more, nationalism in the newspapers worked on a different level from nationalism on the streets: it neither embraced nor attacked the other. Rather, it engaged in brutal acts of self-laceration.

1925

Did this change during the May Thirtieth movement in 1925, which is considered a crucial turning point for Chinese nationalist sentiment? That movement is supposed to have instigated a general awareness of

105. This is particularly evident in the advertisements for "national goods." They do not condemn foreign wares but advocate Chinese goods. Readers are called on to support 提倡 or to take notice of 注意 national products 國貨 in order to strengthen 強國 or even save the country 救國. See, e.g., the advertisements in *SB* 17.5.1919 for Taishan, Daji (in rhymes!), and Huanghepai cigarettes. An advertisement in the same issue for a medication to stop opium addiction uses the ingenious title "Save the Country, Save the People" 救國救民.

106. Cf. Chesneaux et al., *From the 1911 Revolution to Liberation*, 71.

107. Maurice Meisner ("Cultural Iconoclasm," 22) talks of an "unstable combination of nationalism and internationalism." See also Chesneaux et al., *From the 1911 Revolution to Liberation*, 70; and especially Wagner, "Canonization of May Fourth."

108. On the importance of language for the formation of nationalism, Kedourie, *Nationalism*, 6r; and Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*. On the ambiguous use of language by the May Fourth nationalists, see De Francis, *Nationalism and Language Reform*, esp. chaps. 13-15. For a linguistic analysis of the phenomenon, see Gunn, *Rewriting Chinese*.

the evils of imperialism.¹⁰⁹ It was a time when the slogan “Shanghai for the Shanghainese”¹¹⁰ would ring through the streets, and “‘Civis Britannicus sum’ was no longer a phrase that Britons in China could use with any pride.”¹¹¹ One, admittedly rather notorious, contemporary observer, Rodney Gilbert (1889–?), longtime Beijing correspondent for the *North China Daily News*, judged that “the Chinese in this generation . . . are so violently antiforeign that they lose all perspective on their own situation.”¹¹² And indeed, nationalists in Shanghai engaged in activities such as “factory wrecking” 打廠, almost exclusively directed against foreign enterprises and reminiscent of the destruction of machinery once practiced by the Boxers.¹¹³

As in the case of the Boxers, this frenzied xenophobic nationalism was not supported in the newspapers. Indeed “it was widely felt at the time that the Shanghai newspapers were not sufficiently patriotic.”¹¹⁴ This may be explained by the fact that the Municipal Council had warned Chinese newspapers not to publish news that “might stir up bad feeling” on pain of expulsion from the settlement.¹¹⁵ Accordingly, the newspapers could hardly have been the cause or even set the agenda for antiforeign actions except perhaps through their conspicuous absence and quiescence.¹¹⁶ For paradoxically, with this ban, students were incited even more to “adopt the tactic of public speaking in

109. Richard Rigby (*The May 30 Movement*, 113) argues that “one of the results of the May 30 movement . . . [was that] this hitherto unfamiliar word [“imperialism”] became known all over China.” See also Jeffrey Wasserstrom, *Student Protests in Twentieth Century China*, 121–22.

110. Rigby, *The May 30 Movement*, 35. See also the anecdotal account by Pott, *Short History*, 288, who mentions slogans such as “Abolish extraterritoriality,” “Cancel unequal treaties,” and “Restore all foreign settlements.”

111. Rigby, *May 30 Movement*, 70.

112. Gilbert, *What’s Wrong with China*, 22; see also *ibid.*, 20.

113. Rigby, *May 30 Movement*, 14.

114. *Ibid.*, 238. See also Dulioust, “Quelques aspects de la press parallèle chinoise pendant le mouvement du 30 mai 1925.”

115. Newspapers were threatened, and some were even closed, for example, the *Minguo ribao* 民國日報. See *ibid.*, 25. See also *Zhongguo xiandai chuban shiliao*, vol. 1, 259.

116. Stephens (*A History of News*, 193) makes a similar point about the American revolution: “Indeed the absence of an aggressive, above-ground press to cover events and channel dissent itself contributed to the revolution.”

the streets," which in itself became a "significant factor leading to the eventual outbreak of violence."¹¹⁷

Even though the emotional response in the newspapers was again one of indignation at the behavior of the Chinese, the newspapers were—once again—patriotic. Reporting is both emotional and matter-of-fact.¹¹⁸ The *Shenbao* labeled the demonstrations and their bloody outcome a "tragedy" 慘劇. At the same time, it simply listed the name, age, occupation, address, and attire of the students, passers-by, and other victims and briefly explained the nature of their injuries.¹¹⁹ The reports do mention that it was a foreign policeman who had opened fire, but they also mention that the students were carrying placards such as "Down with imperialism" and that their demonstrations were causing an impossible traffic jam. Although sympathetic to the victims of the incident,¹²⁰ the reports and commentaries in the

117. Rigby, *May 30 Movement*, 29–30. See also Wasserstrom, *Student Protests in Twentieth Century China*, esp. chaps. 3 and 4. He does mention street lecturing activities in the earlier May Fourth movement, too.

118. This type of matter-of-fact-reporting is similar to the way a shooting in the French concession (which left several dead and many injured) in 1874 was described. The *Shenbao* reported on the matter several times, but it never actually expressed outrage at the Westerners (*SB* 4.5 and 5.5.1874). On this incident, see Goodman, *Native Place*, 158–62; and Xu and Xu, *Qingmo sishinian "Shenbao" shiliao*, 176–78. The comparison of these events awaits closer study, especially when it comes to the nature of the "nationalist" sentiments apparent in each. Rigby (*May 30th Movement*, 19) argues against such comparisons: in his view, these early incidents did not reflect a general feeling among the Chinese population; rather, they were quarrels over "particular matters, with no deep seated causes of wider significance."

119. See the report in the section "本埠新聞" (News from our port), *SB* 31.5.1925. Similar reports appeared, in the same section, in the following days. On 1.6.1925, the articles report on student demands to the foreign governments, including compensation for the workers' deaths that had occurred earlier, especially in Japanese factories, and give the names and medical situation of some of the victims of the demonstrations. *SB* 2.6.1925 includes reports on the beginning of the general strike and commemorates the dead.

120. The reports on the May Thirtieth incident in the *Shishi xinbao* 時事新報 (1907–27), a newspaper favored in intellectual circles, especially after 1911 (*Shanghai difangshi ziliao*, 17–19), were similar. The *Shishi xinbao* commiserated with the relatives of students who had not been identified yet. It mentions a student meeting and remarks that these "patriotic students" would sometimes lose their voice and cry when making speeches. The atmosphere during the strike following the demonstrations is described as "rather moving" since it underlined the

Shenbao and other commercial dailies are concerned less with the actions of the foreigners and more with those of their own countrymen.¹²¹ These patriotic articles deal with a Chinese tragedy, but not with those non-Chinese who created it.¹²² One such commentary reads:¹²³

Traces of blood on the ground, washed away by a night's rain. Yet, it is to be hoped that the impressions of the tragedy, imprinted in our hearts, will not become faint just like those traces of blood.

A dog in a neighbor's family has died. The owner, who loved the dog, is stroking its corpse and sobbing. I say: "Today a man's life is no longer cherished, why feel sorry for this dog?"

A young person badly wounded all over his body is crying out: "It hurts, it hurts, why do you humiliate me so?" A by-stander hoots at him: "Who told you to be a citizen under this five-colored flag?"

Although the emotional impact of this piece is strong, it is not an open attack on foreigners. Its meanings are far too multivalent to be taken as such. In its sardonic tone, the piece is implicitly critical of the Chinese who cry about a dog rather than about the students killed around them, who forget about the bloodshed as soon as the blood is washed away, and who do not support their country.¹²⁴ Not

solidarity between students and shopholders, who are said to have put up signs such as "Showing grief for the students tragically killed" (see the local news section in *SSXB* 1.6 and 2.6.1925). Again, although the killings and their aftermath had a clear emotional impact, those who caused the tragedy are seldom rigorously taken to task.

121. The commentaries in the *Shishi xinbao* are dominated by a critical attitude toward the students, who are blamed in part for the deaths of innocent bystanders. For short paraphrases of several of these articles, see Appendix C, pp. 431-32.

122. This is particularly evident in a short article in the *Shishi xinbao*, "Shooting on the Avenue" ("大馬路的槍聲," *SSXB* 31.5.1925), which is written from the point of view of the avenue on which the shootings occurred: it never mentions who was responsible for them; for a paraphrase, see Appendix C, p. 431.

123. "三言兩語" (In just a few words), *SB* 1.6.1925.

124. A commentary on the general strike, "罷市" (The general strike), *SB* 2.6.1925, is similarly ambivalent. It alludes to the fact that previous general strikes (the last had taken place as part of the May Fourth movement; see Wasserstrom, *Student Protests in Twentieth Century China*, 60-65) were always related to foreign humiliations of China, but it does not mention this explicitly. On the other hand, it calls a strike a "passive demonstration" 消極之表示 and wonders about its effectiveness and whether such tragedies must be expected again and again in the future. Its bleak outlook leaves little room for hope, nor does it call for activism.

the other who caused the tragedy but the self who sustains its impact is attacked here.

Similar observations can be made about contemporary advertisements in the *Shenbao*. Most of them do not mention the reason for their renewed advocacy of national products.¹²⁵ An advertisement for Great Wall Cigarettes, for example, calls on “patriotic compatriots” 愛國同胞 with the familiar argument that there is “only one method to save the country and that is to promote national products.” And even an emotional and fairly explicit advertisement entitled “Bewailing the Students Hurt on Nanjing Road” (“Ku Nanjinglu bei hai de xuesheng” 哭南京路被害的學生, *SB* 1.6.1925)—illustrated with a face that is a cross between the shape of a heart and the rough outlines of China shedding tears—does not immediately address the real target of its attack (see Fig. 6.3). “Alas!” 嗚呼 it begins, and this sigh returns many times throughout the advertisement. With the deaths of these students, “future rulers and saviors of China” 中華將來之主人亦中華前途之救主也, China has lost yet another chance of being saved (l. 1). The event is described in globalizing terms: it is called—and these words are marked in boldface and bigger print—“the end of morality and justice, a catastrophe for humankind” (l. 3). The fact that the event is also a “tragedy for the 400 million [Chinese] people” and, moreover, “a shame for the Chinese republic” appears in smaller print (l. 2). It is the Chinese themselves, however, who are to blame because they were unable to avert yet another humiliation and have still not managed to “awaken the sleeping lion [China] and seek revenge”—the latter in boldface again (ll. 7–8). Although the advertisement thus openly calls for revenge, it does not mention a target but complains instead in the abstract about “heaven’s lack of sympathy” and “the bullets’ lack of feeling” (ll. 1–2). In asking the reader, “After this would you rather buy foreign products or Chinese products? . . . Do you want to be a cold-blooded animal 冷血之動物 or a warm-blooded human being 熱血之人類?” (ll. 11–15), it approaches the intended target in a round-about manner. It refrains from saying explicitly that foreigners are cold-blooded; instead, it puts the Chinese into this category: it is they who are being asked the question.

125. See, e.g., the advertisements for Double and Great Wall cigarettes in *SB* 3.6.1925.

嗚呼！諸君！身如白晝，心若明燈，中華將來之主人翁，中華前途之救主也，胡蒼天之不
 憐何子彈之乏情，而竟使諸君死耶！此中華民國之恥辱，而亦四萬萬人所深憤也，嗚
 呼！道德公理之淪亡，世界人類之浩劫！乾甚淚亦
 無以況此際痛矣！嗚呼！諸君！學方將成，卒至未成，國方有救，卒至無救，頭顱可斷，
 國家難忘，熱血可流，良心常紅，是諸君之軀體雖一既不起，而諸君愛國之忠當與日月
 爭光，永照千秋矣，嗚呼！諸君死矣，國家何堪！挽救狂瀾，責惟後
 死，喜願未死之中國同胞，一醒睡獅之夢，三省戴天之
 仇，努力奮起，以雪是恥，則諸君之在九泉亦可瞑目矣。
 嗚呼！諸君之死可謂慘極！當子彈橫流諸君肌體之時！諸君曾有一念之感想乎！
 嗚！老弱中國之國民將以何物作抵抗耶！是以吾知諸君之死，死不瞑目，嗚呼！未死之
 中國國民乎！南京路之名彈有限，合中國之子彈無窮，此後爾願着外
 貨之毛絲綸乎，抑願着國貨之自由布乎，爾
 願用外貨之珠羅紗乎，抑願用國貨之透涼
 羅乎，爾願作冷血之動物乎，抑願作熱血之
 人類乎，當爾覺情國貨可以作一子彈無形之抵抗時，則今日學生諸君雖死，亦
 可作挽救中國民氣之動點矣，想諸君亦當含笑於地下也，嗚呼！愛國諸君為國犧牲，
 死而有知，其發爾仇，吾亦將大呼，提唱國貨，喚起民衆，努力奮闘，
 爾輩安乎，嗚呼！痛哉！！

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 公司
三友實業社 啟
 南京路
 石路四

Fig. 6.3 Patriotic advertisement (SB 1.6.1925)

Even though antiforeign reporting was rare in Shanghai's commercial press during the May Thirtieth movement, the *North China Herald* unleashed a heavy fusillade against what it claimed was Chinese xenophobia.¹²⁶ A short comparison of the English with Chinese reporting illustrates the different approaches to nationalistic rhetoric. The *North China Herald* appeals "To the Peaceable Chinese of Shanghai";¹²⁷ it raves against the "agitators" and warns that if the citizens of Shanghai support them, "the poor in particular will suffer." In a clever move, the paper asks its Chinese audience: "Who are the men to blame for this? They are not Shanghai men, but come from distant provinces. . . . They care nothing for what becomes of Shanghai Chinese." By calling on Shanghai's Chinese citizens as a community, by excluding the demonstrators from it, and by reminding these citizens that if they do not comply with British wishes, they will hurt not

126. The May Thirtieth movement is one of the many instances in which the *North China Herald*, "one of the foreign community's commanding features" (Clifford, *Spoilt Children*, 66), proved embarrassing to the British government at home.

127. "To the Peaceable Chinese of Shanghai: Will You Side with Rebellion?" *NCH* 6.6.1925.

only themselves but those who can least defend themselves—the poor—the article makes a strong moral appeal. It continues: “The police are responsible for the safety of all of you. What would have happened if the mob had overcome the police and broken out, looting and burning? At such moments no one knows what a mob will do, except that it will always do the worst.” Having induced group solidarity by calling the demonstrators “not from Shanghai,” the article continues to distance them from their readers by calling them a “mob” and describing them as highly dangerous. It advises people to return to work: “If the Council shows you . . . that it can put down *rebellion* and protect you in your work, will not you in return show that you appreciate the years of just and peaceful administration you have enjoyed?”¹²⁸ The newspaper’s clever reminder of the benefits of living under an enlightened government is followed by a warning: “How long this threat to your peace, your welfare and your safety lasts depends largely on you.” In another manifesto printed in the same issue of the paper, the Chinese are warned against committing “acts of violence” (as if they had been the ones who had been violent first), and the British newspaper quotes shopkeepers as calling the students “troublemakers.”¹²⁹

In its description of the demonstrations and their bloody ending, the *North China Herald* of 6 June further distanced the “enemy” from the ordinary Shanghairen. “Saturday’s *frenzied* outburst” was marked by “inflammatory banners” and “a wildly excited mob.”¹³⁰ On the other hand, headlines and inserted captions read “The Nanking Road Shooting—Inquest on Dead Chinese: *Testimony of Patience* Used by Police Force,” “Three Minutes Warning to Crowd Before Police Gave the Order to Fire,” or “Firing Inevitable.” The last article praised the British police commander, who, “cool throughout, at last gave the or-

128. Italics added.

129. “In Chapei and the Native City: All Quiet Shopkeepers Forced to Close but Doing so with Reluctance,” *NCH* 6.6.1925. They are also quoted as saying “that it was wrong for such responsible organizations as the Chinese general chamber of commerce and the Chinese ratepayers’ association to associate themselves in an affair which was so lawless.” Workers were said to be taking part in the general strike under compulsion (see “A More Reassuring Outlook,” *NCH* 6.6.1925).

130. “Student Outbreak in Nanking Road: Several Chinese Killed,” *NCH* 6.6.1925.

der to shoot."¹³¹ It argued that the slogan "Kill the foreigners" shouted by the crowds was the reason why, eventually, the police were forced to open fire. The students are described as a murderous mob: "They shouted in thin, raucous tones their favourite slogan . . . 'Kill, strike, down with him,' etc. It seemed like a mass drill of murder, for as they shouted, they moved their hands in a wild rhythm as though they were striking with a knife." In contrast, the police displayed incredible forbearance and held out to the last moment "when the firing became *inevitable*."

It was a critical but heroic moment when the five foreign officers with batons and fists, not a pistol in sight, drove back the mob from the station gates . . . the *valiant five* could not withstand the pressure. . . . One of the men went down and it seemed as though he would be trampled to death by the students, but he bobbed up again . . . and *determined as ever, urged for peace*.¹³²

If anything, this is xenophobic reporting: the nationalist foreign press was drawing a clear dividing line between self and other, between black and white, between good and bad. Perhaps for this reason, they assumed Chinese newspapers would do the same.

The Nature of Newspaper Nationalism

In the accounts of the historians cited above, Chinese nationalism is born and reborn several times. Each of the events discussed in this chapter has been hailed as marking its birth.¹³³ It is my contention that from its very beginnings, that is, several decades earlier than these events, Shanghai newspapers such as *Shenbao* were nationalist. But far more important than matters of chronology are matters of quality. Using newspaper reports, I have described the particular nature of newspaper nationalism. Even though the "most easily identifiable ex-

131. "Vivid Story by an Eyewitness—Forbearance of Police to Last Moment: When the Firing Became Inevitable," *NCH* 6.6.1925.

132. Similarly, in another article a "plucky Japanese constable" is able to shoot a student even after he had been thrown into the water. See "Plucky Japanese Constable: Thrown Into Creek by Rioters But Hanging to Boat and Shooting Them Down," *NCH* 6.6.1925.

133. Joseph Fass ("A Few Notes on the Birth of Nationalism," 376) calls the question of the date of birth of nationalism "one of the most difficult questions in the study of Chinese history."

pressions of nationalism" may be "anti-imperialist movements,"¹³⁴ the early Chinese newspapers did not partake in those. And even though "antiforeign resistance and a growing nationalism" may have "characterized Shanghai in the first decade of the twentieth century,"¹³⁵ they did so without help from the city's papers. Although it is often argued that, "as in many other nations," China's newspapers "became the leading factors in arousing the public," that the press was an "instrument for mobilizing citizens to action,"¹³⁶ it appears from the reading of *Shenbao* and other Shanghai papers in this chapter that, although supporters of China, even patriots, they were not leaders in the fight against foreigners. In fact, they were critical of xenophobic nationalism during the Boxer Rebellion and the May Thirtieth movement, and they were not jingoistic even in 1905, 1911, or 1919. Chinese nationalism in the newspapers was thus divorced from Chinese nationalism on the streets. The newspapers presented alternative narratives of the nation: those who demonstrated their nationalism in actions were not those who recorded nationalistic thoughts in the papers.¹³⁷ Inevitably, "political reality lies beyond the printed word."¹³⁸

And political reality was undoubtedly xenophobic, from the Boxers in 1900, who were out to "destroy the foreigners" 滅洋, to the rickshaw pullers in 1925 who posted signs reading "No English or Japanese."¹³⁹ One could even argue that the newspapers themselves demonstrated more antiforeignism in their actions than in their writings: in mid-May 1919, the *Shenbao* and a number of other Shanghai newspapers proclaimed that they would no longer print Japanese advertisements, apparently a not "insignificant gesture" since much of

134. Duara, *Rescuing History from the Nation*, 15.

135. Cf. Goodman, *Native Place*, 174.

136. Tseng, "China Prior to 1949," 34; Andrew Nathan, *Chinese Democracy*, xiii. See also idem, "Late Ch'ing Press" (1397), in which he argues that "despite popular cynicism, the press did mobilize the people."

137. Joan Judge ("Print and Politics," 293) finds a closer relationship between newspaper contents and street action: "As moral uprisings were increasingly discussed at length in newspaper editorials and reports, the press provided the reformists with a form for translating the common people's inarticulate and often violent claims into expressions of public opinion that demanded serious consideration."

138. Friedman, "Oppositional Decoding," 130.

139. Vishnyakova-Akemova, *Two Years in Revolutionary China*, 62; Rigby, *May 30 Movement*, 68.

their advertising revenue came from Japanese sources.¹⁴⁰ Yet these same newspapers focused their indignation much more on their own citizens and rulers than on foreigners and their governments. This is reflected in newspaper caricatures after the turn of the century. The foreigners holding the railroads they have monopolized, for example, are not depicted as ugly, frightening, or horrible creatures—not even in more radical papers such as the *Minbu ribao* 民呼日報 (see Fig. 6.4).¹⁴¹ Chinese officials, on the other hand, are depicted as ugly, frightening, despicable, and, even more important, stupid creatures. A series of caricatures in the *Minbu ribao* depicts the different parts of the body of a Chinese official: his enormous hand prevents the sun from shining on China's citizens; with his feet, he tramples them; and he willfully covers his eyes (see Fig. 6.5). Chinese newspaper nationalism, then, is not a nationalism that fights against the other but one that fights against the self. It is a highly charged, emotional nationalism, never aggressive against those who are impinging on China's sovereignty from without; rather, following the tradition of the remonstrating official, it was indignant at those who were not fighting for Chinese sovereignty from within. Newspaper nationalism was idiophobic not xenophobic.¹⁴²

140. Narramore, "Making the News in Shanghai," 259. Narramore (*ibid.*, 263) argues that even then, "the behaviour of *Shen Bao* and the other big dailies in banning Japanese advertisements and lending support to the demands of the student demonstrators hardly reflected a radical anti-imperialism. At most it was a selective anti-imperialism with an eye always focussed on advancing the interest of Chinese commerce and industry."

141. The *Minbu ribao* (founded 1909), one of the "Three *Min*" (these papers were extremely short-lived and were often censored), was edited by Yu Youren 于右任 (1879–1964), a member of the Revolutionary Alliance and a Guomindang veteran.

142. This view of the Shanghai press is supported in Britton, *The Chinese Periodical Press*, III: "The press printed much about the grabbing tactics of the powers and the prospect of a general dismemberment of China, and displayed considerable bitterness and anti-Christian sentiment but on the whole surprisingly little venom against the foreigner. Progressive Chinese tended rather to blame their own government for inadequacies of diplomacy and defense." See also Duara, *Rescuing History from the Nation*, 53; Duara argues that accordingly, it was "not only, or perhaps even primarily, the print media that enabled . . . [the] Chinese to develop a sharp sense of the other." Evidence from the Straits Chinese newspapers in the early twentieth century suggests that idiophobia was not restricted to the Shanghai newspapers under foreign auspices (Godley, *Mandarin-Capitalists*, 13, mentions the "almost wholly negative picture" that newspapers such as the *Straits*



Fig. 6.4 "The Chinese Railway, an International Affair"
(*Minbu ribao* 5.7.1909)

The rather tame attitude of the Shanghai press vis-à-vis the foreigners up to 1925 might be explained, first, by the particular nature of the *Shanghairen*, who—as seen in the last chapter—had chosen to live with foreigners and who was, accordingly, seldom outwardly xenophobic. Indeed, he tended to be more critical of the Chinese and the Chinese government since he was in a position to see and judge the many advantages of foreign-style institutions and government.¹⁴³ A second important reason for the lack of xenophobia in Shanghai's press was, as

Times and the *Malay Mail* painted of Qing China in the early years of the twentieth century).

143. Paul Cohen ("Wang T'ao and Incipient Chinese Nationalism," 573) argues: "Chinese living away from the treaty ports may have shared some of Wang [Tao]'s more radical thoughts. But they could not, like him, express them publicly." Cohen is convinced that there was a need to be well acquainted with the "ways of the West" in order to see the borders and inadequacies of China: "Wang T'ao's criticism of the court and bureaucracy was an integral part of his nationalism. Yet it was precisely this sort of fundamental political criticism that the average Chinese bureaucrat was in no position to engage in even if he were so inclined."



Fig. 6.5 (left to right) The official's hand, feet, and eyes
(*Minbu ribao*, 20.5, 28.5, and 22.5.1909)

mentioned, censorship, imposed both by the concession authorities and by the press itself. Many Shanghai newspapers were published in the foreign concessions so that they could enjoy the security offered by the foreign presence. The tradeoff was, at least at certain times, that they had to observe foreign rules.¹⁴⁴ Chinese newspapers were regularly warned by the Shanghai Municipal Council, on pain of expulsion from the settlement, not to publish anything that might stir up Chinese enmity.¹⁴⁵ Many newspapers were fined, sued, and threatened with closure or indeed closed during the period covered in this book for publishing allegedly “antiforeign propaganda.”¹⁴⁶ We cannot, however, assume that the newspapers did write all the things the paranoid treaty port council said they had.

144. Narramore (“Making the News in Shanghai,” 257) writes: “Such a schizophrenic existence compelled newspapers which were published for a Chinese audience to omit news of important local affairs for fear of attracting the censure of the foreign trustees.” Similarly, Chen Leng 陳冷 (1877–1965), one of the most prominent journalists working for the *Shenbao*, remarked on the difficulties of making a paper in Shanghai in an article written on the occasion of the 20,000th issue of the *Shenbao* (“申報二萬號紀念感言” [A few grateful words commemorating the 20,000 issue of the *Shenbao*], *SB* 19.11.1928). He charged that the newspaper had been misused as a means of propaganda, especially in recent years.

145. Rigby, *May 30 Movement*, 29.

146. See Pott, *Short History*, 180; and Vittinghoff, “Am Rande des Ruhms,” on the *Huibao*, which was closed, in this case with reason, for antiforeign reporting.

For despite the manifest lack of anteforeignism in the Chinese-language press, foreign governments in China repeatedly manifested their fear of xenophobic Chinese newspaper nationalism. It appears that what was actually said mattered little.¹⁴⁷ This was perhaps so, because the foreign press, most obviously in 1925 but also during earlier events, was itself xenophobic. Accordingly it was prone to assume that Chinese papers were as well. Even though the Shanghai press quite evidently wielded "neither stick nor stone,"¹⁴⁸ it was perceived as a threat. The interpretive community surrounding newspapers in China had decided that they were powerful.¹⁴⁹ Power, too, is in the eye of the beholder.¹⁵⁰

Epilogue

In recent years, the perception of nationalism as a monolithic entity has come under increasing attack.¹⁵¹ Nationalism is no longer considered a unitary consciousness or identity;¹⁵² it can be many things to many different people. The newspaper is only one site of one particular type of nationalism.¹⁵³ This chapter has emphasized the complementary and contradictory nature of Chinese nationalism on the streets and in the papers. Newspapers such as the *Shenbao* did not call on people to wreck railroads or factories. Contrary to the assertions of many historians, they did not foment anti-imperialist sentiments or instigate anteforeign actions.¹⁵⁴ If effective at all, the *Shenbao* may have

147. On this attitude toward the press, see Mattelart, *L'Invention de la communication*, 148: he describes the press as "a site around which the fear of the other manifests itself."

148. Stephens, *A History of News*, 190.

149. For the dynamics and the constitution of the interpretive community, see the arguments in Fish, *Is There a Text in This Class?*

150. G. A. Cranfield (*Development of the Provincial Newspaper*, 141) makes a similar case: "If modern historians have tended to assume that the political influence of the provincial newspaper was negligible, that view was not shared by Authority in the eighteenth century."

151. See, e.g., Duara, *Rescuing History from the Nation*; or the essays in *Nation and Narration*.

152. Duara, *Rescuing History from the Nation*, 7.

153. *Ibid.*, 7-8. See also Kedourie, *Nationalism*, 76.

154. James Curran and Angus Whamel ("Human-Interest Story," 315) take this argument further and generalize: "Most of what is published and read in newspapers has very little to do with what they are generally considered to be significant

served as a censor, not as an agitator of anti-foreignism. This chapter illustrates once again the difficult relation between the newspaper as a text and historical context.

There are, of course, a number of inherent weaknesses in my argument. First, I have reduced nationalism to street nationalism and ignored a considerable body of nationalist writings by reformers, revolutionaries, literati, and gentry that would present many more different varieties of contemporary nationalisms.¹⁵⁵ I have done so because I was interested in measuring the influence the newspaper had across the popular-elite divide and on the street as an *acteur social*.¹⁵⁶ Second, I have reduced street nationalism to xenophobia and anti-imperialism. I have done so because these are prevalent traits of popular nationalism according to mainstream historical writing. Many scholars have called the anti-imperialist movement the most important factor in Chinese popular nationalism: modern Chinese nationalism is considered basically antiforeign.¹⁵⁷ Third, and perhaps most important, I have reduced the scope of the "newspaper" to a very specific type of publication, the commercial press. Even the first students of the Shanghai press saw in this segment of the industry "little or no tendency to meddle in public affairs or to try to move public opin-

for by historians, sociologists, and policy makers concerned with the press." Owen Johnson ("Mass Media and the Velvet Revolution," 220) makes this argument for the Velvet Revolution of 1989, too: "Media did not significantly change the terms of the debate, bring crowds into the street, or destabilize the government." Jeffrey Wasserstrom ("Mass Media and Mass Actions," 189) makes a more general argument: "Although media revolutions and political revolutions may indeed go hand in hand, it is dangerous to assume that technological innovations inevitably alter the basic dynamics of street politics."

155. Louis Sigel ("The Treaty Port Community," 82) gives multiple descriptions of nationalism: the government he calls pragmatic, the *qingyi* intellectuals he terms conservative and xenophobic, and the treaty-port community he says embraced foreign values.

156. Farge, *Dire et mal dire*, 23.

157. For this view, see the works cited at the beginning of each subsection; and also in particular Don Price, *Russia and the Roots of the Chinese Revolution*, 164; Rhoads, *China's Republican Revolution*, 267; Schiffrin, "The Enigma of Sun Yat-sen," 442; Bergère, "Issue of Imperialism," 270; Ch'en, *The May Fourth Movement in Shanghai*, 28, 196. There are, of course, differing views on this question, most prominently in Duara, *Rescuing History from the Nation*. He (*ibid.*, 116) argues that xenophobia was imprinted on the popular movements from above.

ion."¹⁵⁸ Among these acknowledged non-opinionmakers, I have concentrated on the *Shenbao*, a paper studied precisely for its "neutral political stance" in the 1910s and 1920s.¹⁵⁹ I have done so to show that in spite of its lack of xenophobic reporting, it is wrong to adopt the general view that the *Shenbao* did not "meddle in public affairs."¹⁶⁰ This and a number of other recent studies show clearly that the *Shenbao* was critically engaged in all the important issues of reform and modernization at stake in the late Qing and early Republican periods.¹⁶¹ Like many other commercial papers, it was fervently nationalistic. But its nationalism was fundamentally directed against the Chinese and their government. It is no accident that Shi Liangcai 史量才 (1880–1934), the first longtime Chinese owner of the *Shenbao*, was assassinated, if not by the government, then certainly with the government's consent.¹⁶²

The press—simply by nature of its pervasiveness—is of considerable importance to national(ist) discourse: local happenings can be amplified by being read, known, and thus perhaps even emulated on a national scale. Thus, the press *can* indeed play a crucial role simply by informing a national public.¹⁶³ But there were alternative ways of spreading the news, too, in late Qing and early Republican China, semi-oral traditions among them: plays and storytelling, songs and placards, rumors. All of these constituted an "oral news network" that did not lose its impact even when newspapers became increasingly available all over China. They, too, were crucial sources of information.¹⁶⁴ Indeed, some of these popular forms may have been more effective in spreading the message in spite of the rise and spread

158. Britton, *The Chinese Periodical Press*, 81.

159. Narramore, "Making the News in Shanghai," 366: "Newspapers like *Shen Bao* had proved notoriously slow to respond to expressions of anti-imperialist nationalism."

160. For this view, see, e.g., Britton, *The Chinese Periodical Press*, 81; Britton argues that the commercial newspapers were generally not involved in politics.

161. See Janku, "Nur leere Reden"; Mittler, "Verkehrte Welten"; Vittinghoff, "Am Rande des Ruhms"; and Wagner, "The *Shenbao* in Crisis."

162. Lu Keng, "Press Control," 153.

163. For a similar argument, see Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 127; and Hulteng and Nelson, *The Fourth Estate*, 151.

164. See Harrison, "Newspapers and Nationalism"; and Barend ter Haar, "Telling stories."

of newspapers. It will require a closer study to measure the effects of these popular forms of communication on popular nationalist sentiment.

The period investigated in this chapter was one during which, as Henrietta Harrison shows, the press established itself as one of the most important communication channels even as far as the countryside. The press began to coexist with and, by the end of the period, also slowly to edge out the "oral news network." The press was powerful insofar as it was disseminating its message far and wide. But even this theoretical power is rather elusive. In Alfred Döblin's 1929 novel *Berlin Alexanderplatz*, Biberkopf, a vendor of newspapers, muses over an advertisement. The citizens of Berlin are invited in this advertisement to see a theatrical performance. But they might be on holiday and not see the ad, or they might be in Berlin but have no opportunity to read it, or they might see it and think it really stupid, or they might not be able to go because they are ill. So the existence of the advertisement does not mean that (1) a lot of people read it, (2) people agree with it, or (3) people are going to act on it.¹⁶⁵ It might mean all these things, but none is inevitable. That is, the advertisement's effects on the audience "do not follow directly from and in correspondence with the intent of the communicator or the content of the communication."¹⁶⁶ Information alone does not make for a powerful message. Accordingly, even if Shanghai newspapers had encouraged xenophobia, that would not necessarily have led to xenophobic actions.¹⁶⁷ But idiophobic newspapers such as the *Shenbao* cannot be held responsible for creating the particular type of nationalism that did occur on China's streets, either. It is important to acknowledge the considerable disjunctions between the thoughts of a Shanxi villager, for example, as recorded in his diary, and the content of what he was reading. His conception of foreigners as "barbarians" was in no way shaken by the use of neutral vocabulary in the newspapers. His xenophobic gut-nationalism was not instigated but neither was it challenged by newspaper rhetoric.¹⁶⁸

165. Döblin, *Berlin Alexanderplatz*, 168-69.

166. Berelson, "The Variable Influence of Communication," 168.

167. Arlette Farge (*Dire et mal dire*, 290) puts it succinctly: "It is fair to say that individual opinion does not follow exactly the inflation of news nor even its contents."

168. See Henrietta Harrison, "Newspapers and Nationalism."

If papers such as the *Shenbao* did not instigate xenophobic Chinese nationalism, was it the reformist and revolutionary papers that did so? According to Christian Henriot, many of the so-called revolutionary papers were rather more moderate in tone than one might expect.¹⁶⁹ A cursory examination of articles and caricatures in revolutionary newspapers such as the *Minbu ribao* 民呼日報 has revealed, once again, the idiophobic aspect of Chinese newspaper-nationalism;¹⁷⁰ the xenophobic element is not as striking as one might expect from conventional historians' claims. And even if some of the more drastic formulations from Cai Yuanpei's 蔡元培 (1868–1940) infamous *Jingzhong ribao* 警鐘日報 or xenophobic caricatures from the *Geming huabao* 革命畫報 seem to tell a different story,¹⁷¹ the assumption that “the papers” rather than “specific papers” were responsible for the creation of xenophobic nationalism is unwarranted. Obviously some Shanghai papers may have promoted xenophobic nationalism, but not “the papers” as a whole. Furthermore, the revolutionary and reformist papers clearly catered to an elitist readership; their circulation figures were even smaller than those of the commercial papers (in the early to mid-1920s *Shenbao* circulation figures grew from about 30,000 to 140,000, not very impressive in view of a population of around one million).¹⁷² Moreover, most of them were extremely short-lived, and accordingly the claims made for the revolutionary potential of such publications are exaggerated.¹⁷³ Although they were fiery and anti-imperialist, their potential impact on the ordinary citizen was even less than that of

169. See Henriot, “Nouveau journalisme.”

170. It would be interesting to look more closely at some of the radical journals put out by native-place organizations and mentioned in Goodman, *Native Place*, 196n50. Yet the passages Goodman cites sound rather idiophobic again (see *ibid.*, 197).

171. I am particularly grateful to Paul Cohen for making select issues of this paper (from 1926 and 1927) available to me. Even this paper does contain some idiophobic illustrations, too (e.g., vol. 42, 84, challenging the treatment of women in traditional China), although it is largely xenophobic.

172. For an exhaustive list of *Shenbao* circulation figures, see Narramore, “Making the News in Shanghai,” 373.

173. See Lee En-Han, “China’s Response to the Foreign Scramble of Railway Concessions,” 11, 13; and Rigby, *May 30 Movement*, 33, 100. For the short life of reformist and revolutionary papers, see some examples in Janku, “Nur leere Reden,” 260–61.

papers like the *Shenbao*.¹⁷⁴ Although detailed studies of the texts of the revolutionary as well as the commercial press remain to be done, it is evident that the narrative of the nation provided by the newspapers examined here is a counter-narrative to that provided by the actors on the street.¹⁷⁵ As we trace the narration of nation in these texts, it becomes clear that they are nationalistic, in a particular way, but that their idiophobic nationalism did not instigate other types of nationalism on the street, the nationalisms that—according to many historians—have made and determined Chinese history.

174. The low circulation figures may indeed explain the discrepancy between newspaper discourse and street action: according to Huang Tianpeng 黄天鹏, himself a journalist at the time, newspapers “seldom coincided with public opinion because press circulation was so small” (quoted in Narramore, “Making the News in Shanghai,” 207).

175. The question that remains in the end is how such “counter-narratives” of the nation “that continually evoke and erase its totalizing boundaries—both actual and conceptual—disturb those ideological manoeuvres through which ‘imagined communities’ are given essentialist identities” (Bhaba, “DissemiNation,” 300).

CONCLUSION

The Power of the Press—Revisited

Critics look at the press and see Superman when it's really just Clark Kent.

— Michael Schudson

In a 1909 article entitled "Chinese Journalism and the Government," the *North China Herald* cited an imperial edict of October 1898:

As newspapers only serve to excite the masses to subvert the present order of things, and the editors are composed of the dregs of the literary classes, no good can be served by the continuation of such dangerous instruments, and we hereby command the entire suppression and sealing up of all newspapers published within the Empire, while the editors connected with them are to be arrested and punished with the utmost severity of the law.¹

Needless to say, this edict was not implemented successfully. Indeed, newspapers began to flourish even more in Shanghai and many other cities of the Chinese empire following the abortive 100 Days Reforms in the summer of 1898. Nevertheless, this edict testifies to the enormous respect for and awe of the power of the press at the very top of the Chinese government. The press, so this edict conjectures, can capture the public's attention, and therefore it is also able to instigate change or, worse, to "subvert the present order." Evidently the Chinese court believed that the knowledge citizens gained by reading newspapers *could* be effective:² in its view, the journalist—a despicable

1. *NCH* 25,9,1909. The edict was dated 8.10.1898.

2. Cf. Schudson, *The Power of News*, 21.

but nevertheless frightening creature³—can summon the people to action.⁴ The court thus acknowledged the importance of the news media and credited them with enormous powers.⁵

And yet, in another article published in 1909, "The Press of China To-Day," the *North China Herald* made a curious statement:

The ordinary Chinese, as yet, does not evince any great amount of news hunger. He is more stolid and indifferent to things that are happening beyond the range of his own personal knowledge than is the Westerner. He is interested in the most petty details of affairs affecting his own neighborhood, but takes a very slight interest in matters that do not immediately concern him. . . . And that voracious appetite for any thing with which to satisfy the cravings of curiosity, that enables a certain class of newspaper readers daily to wade through a thirty-two page hash of the sighs, sores, and sorrows of the world, besides a special supplement on Sunday, is not only still unknown in China, but in the present condition of the average Chinese mind is impossible. This fact is rather to the credit of the Chinese mind than otherwise. . . . It is the pride of the literatus which prevents him from taking an interest in the ordinary affairs of the world.⁶

If the Chinese did not read newspapers, why would the court be so afraid of them? The description of the taste for news in early twentieth-century China, especially in Shanghai, presented in this article is anything but truthful. Many newspapers specializing in the "sighs, sores and sorrows" of China and the world were thriving and boasted ever-growing readerships (from 600 in the earliest days of the *Shenbao* to 7,000 by 1912). Evidence from diaries, letters, and scholarly writings of the time shows that the Chinese read newspapers for entertainment and, even more important, for instruction. Obviously, at least part of the Chinese public had accepted the importance and the legitimacy of the newspapers' voice. Thus, both those on the top and those on the bottom of the hierarchy of communication in China would have agreed that the press was powerful. But whereas the reading public assumed that the press spoke with an authoritative voice, the authorities thought that the press spoke for the people.⁷

3. On the background of this common stereotype (not just in China) see Vittinghoff, "Am Rande des Ruhms," chaps. 1 and 3.

4. For a similar description, see Popkin, "Media and Revolutionary Crises," 22.

5. Cf. Schudson, *The Power of News*, 33.

6. *NCH* 6.3.1909.

7. Cf. Matthews, "The Power of the Press?," 185.

In the nineteenth century, both foreigners and Chinese described the newspaper as a mighty tool able to solve (or to create) many of the problems facing a state, its government, and people. And even today, the “paper bullets”⁸ of the press are believed to have enormous and universal powers:⁹ they voice public opinion and thus help form a rational public sphere;¹⁰ they create identities and nationalist feelings;¹¹ they stir up emotions and mobilize citizens,¹² and thus instigate change¹³ and even make revolutions.¹⁴ At least since Carlyle and

8. Hung, “Paper Bullets.”

9. See, e.g., Eisenstein, *Grub Street Abroad*, esp. 149; Hardt, *Social Theories of the Press*, 66; and Stephens, *History of News*, 185–90.

10. In 1881 Albert Schäffle (*Bau und Leben des sozialen Körpers*, vol. 1, 460) argued that “with the help of the press one ‘makes’ public opinion at least for the day.” This point of view was still prevalent in the beginning of the twentieth century, in the writings of Ferdinand Tönnies (discussed in Hardt, *Social Theories of the Press*, 153), for instance, who “regarded the press as a central force in a society in which public opinion had become the guiding spirit.” The contrary conviction is argued in Walter Lippmann’s works of the 1920s such as *Public Opinion* and *The Phantom Public*. Nevertheless, with Habermas’s *Strukturwandel* and especially after its translation into English, the idea became, once more, classic. Habermas argues that without the periodical press and the active ongoing exchange of ideas that it made possible, public opinion could not have taken on the importance that it did in the late eighteenth century. This paradigm can be found in recent histories of the Japanese press, Huffman’s *Creating a Public*; and Altman, “Shinbunshi,” esp. 53, 54. For a historical perspective, see Schiller, *Objectivity and the News*, esp. 15, 40, 73.

11. As discussed in Chapter 5, Benedict Anderson (*Imagined Communities*) argues that reading the same journalistic texts at different places at the same time develops a sense of common identity. Similarly, Timothy Brennan shows (in “National Longing for Form,” 48): “Literature participated in the formation of nations through the creation of ‘national print media’—the newspaper and the novel.” See also Peake, *Nationalism and Education*, 120; Argus, *The Fourth Estate*, 6; and Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*.

12. In Schäffle’s opinion (*Bau und Leben des sozialen Körpers*, vol. 1, 459), the press may “stimulate mass movements.” See also Andrew Nathan (*Chinese Democracy*, xiii). The compilers of *Shanghai jindai wenxue shi* (139) are convinced that the early missionary press in Hong Kong and Malaysia was responsible for the genesis of the Taiping rebellion.

13. Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change*; Cranfield, *Development of the Provincial Newspaper*, v–vi; and A. C. Smith et al., *Paper Voices*, 11: “Our starting-point was the assumption that at all times, but especially in periods of rapid social change, the press performs a significant role as social educator.”

14. Without newspapers, so it is assumed, some of the great revolutions of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century could not have succeeded: in 1830,

Macaulay established the Fourth Estate as a respectable and mighty institution,¹⁵ these contentions have been repeated so often that they have become axiomatic. But evidence and proof for these neat assumptions has seldom been asked for, and—even less often—provided. A historian may occasionally remark on the apparent lack of a relationship between a specific social movement and the discussion of it in the press around it, but such instances are taken to be deviants from a norm.¹⁶ Curiously, they have seldom been used to disprove or even question the well-established paradigm, at least among historians. They simply state that the press was powerful without asking why and how it might attain such powers.

Until the 1930s, the power of the media was accepted as axiomatic among both practitioners and scholars of communications and journalism.¹⁷ Between the 1940s and the 1960s, however, a great number of

Moses Myer (*Celebration of the Revolution in France*, 22) argued: "It is acknowledged, that principally through the Press . . . was the recent important and glorious Revolution in France effected." Anthony Smith (*The Newspaper*, 116) states: "Across Europe, the spread of the Revolution which had begun in February 1848 in Paris brought about a transformation in the world of the press. The newspaper was the carrier of insurrection, and established the basis for political activity for the rest of the century." Stephens, *History of News*, 185: "Why were newspapers with investments and reputations to protect, leading revolutions? And how were rebels like Samuel Adams able to forge news, that great unifier of societies, into a weapon in their struggles to topple 'Tyrants'?" For the Chinese case, see *Land Without Ghosts*, 97: "Revolutionary activities—spurred in part by Liang Qichao's piercing journalism—led to the overthrow of the Manchu Qing dynasty in 1911." Similarly, MacKinnon, *Press Freedom and the Chinese Revolution*, 174: "The Chinese press has been an integral part of the Chinese revolutionary process." See also Chartier, *Cultural Origins of the French Revolution*; and some of the essays in *Media and Revolution*.

15. The expression goes back to the early days of the British Parliament, with its three estates of Lords Spiritual, Lords Temporal, and "Commons." Lord Thomas Babington Macaulay (1800–1859) considered that "the gallery in which the reporters sit has become a fourth estate of the realm" (quoted in Hulteng and Nelson, *The Fourth Estate*, 75). Thomas Carlyle (1795–1881) put the same thought a little differently: "Burke said there were Three Estates in Parliament; but, in the Reporters' Gallery yonder, there sat a Fourth Estate more important far than they all" (Drewry, *Concerning The Fourth Estate*).

16. For example, during the Boxer Rebellion and the May Thirtieth movement; see Chapter 6.

17. For a view from 1899, see Yarros, "The Press and Public Opinion," 380: "There is no device which would enable us to lessen the tremendous power of the

empirical studies seeking the reasons for and the mechanisms of press power reached negative conclusions about the influence of the media.¹⁸ Even though the media were proved to be far less important than was commonly assumed (Why did the female workforce in America increase steadily even though women as workers were invisible in the media? How could it be that half of the American people believed in devils when no devils were to be found in the relentlessly secular mainstream media?),¹⁹ the myth of media power proved perplexingly resilient. Despite copious evidence that the press's powers are quite modest, the question is still debated in contemporary scholarship.²⁰ The myth of the press as superman flourishes unabated, and the number of "breathless accounts"²¹ of media power continues to grow.²²

Using the phenomenological approach advocated by some communications scholars,²³ this study attempts to approach the argument from the point of view of a specific culture under specific circumstances, China in the late Qing. Unlike historians who have used newspapers as references and quarries for historical constructions, I have treated the newspaper not as a collection of facts but as a structured body of text.²⁴ In emphasizing the text rather than the context

daily newspapers." In 1926, we can still read in a handbook on writing news (Ross, *The Writing of News*, 19) of the "tremendous influence of the press." And as late as 1937 this view is prevalent in writings on the press; Tiffany Blake ("The Editorial," 445) wrote of the press that its "tremendous and ever broadening and deepening power for good and evil is being more and more anxiously recognized." This belief was based not on scientific investigation but rather on accidental observation of sudden extensions of the audience or the attractions of the popular press.

18. See, e.g., Raymond Bauer, "The Communicator and the Audience," 126; Rogers and Dearing, "Agenda-Setting Research"; and Klapper, "What We Know About the Effects of Mass Communication." This research has not shown the media to be completely without effects, but it has established the primacy of other social facts and showed that the media's power is located within the existing structures of social relationships and systems of culture and belief.

19. See Tuchman, "Introduction"; and Schudson, *The Power of News*, 17.

20. See recent publications such as McQuail, "The Influence and Effects of Mass Media," esp. 9–11; Schudson, *The Power of News; Media Power in Politics*; and Reardon, *Persuasion in Practice*.

21. A term borrowed from Schudson, *The Power of News*, 23.

22. *Media Power in Politics*, xiii.

23. See, e.g., Klapper, "What We Know About the Effects of Mass Communication," 468, 471.

24. Popkin and Censer, "Lessons from a Symposium," 3.

of newspaper writing in China, I asked *how* the Chinese press functioned and thus *how* and *why* it could be powerful.²⁵

In the Introduction, I showed that the foreign medium boasted of its power continually. In Part I of the book, I elaborated on different devices used by newspapers to gain cultural plausibility, to be acceptable to (and thus potentially influential on) a Chinese reading public. The new(s)papers (*xinbao* 新報) such as the *Shenbao* worked hard to adapt well-known literary forms and formats and to employ the prestigious language of the sages and powerful images from Chinese history in their arguments. They even reprinted the court gazette as a means of co-opting the voice of highest authority. The Chinese-language newspaper, I have argued, gained power in China not because of its foreign but because of its Chinese qualities: it became sinified to the point that it was not much different from common literary, scholarly, or even official publications. By employing all these methods, it became trusted, persuasive, and attractive. By studying the nature of the foreign-style Chinese-language newspaper as a text, we can understand why it had the potential to be powerful. The very nature of its text engendered the possible might of the press.²⁶

All these moves make clear, however, that rather than instigating change, the medium was more often instigated to change itself: the resulting discrepancies between form and content in the Chinese newspaper culminated in the creation of a new style, the *xin wenti* 新文題, but one salient characteristic of this style was that it relied heavily on an eclectic selection of traditional elements. More often than not, for example, classical citation was used to advocate radical change. In most cases, however—be it great revolutions, trade regulations, or women's education—the newspaper usually jumped aboard a bandwagon that was already rolling: it did not push the bandwagon or

25. Some have argued that the medium as a medium would be powerful regardless of its text. See, e.g., Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 127: "It is the media themselves, the pervasiveness and importance of abstract, centralized, standardized, one to many communication, which itself automatically engenders the core idea of nationalism quite irrespective of what in particular is being put into the specific messages transmitted." One has to wonder how. Such statements are, to my mind, simply the unsubstantiated perpetuation of a long-held belief.

26. Arensberg and Niehoff, *Introducing Social Change*. Communications research has shown that the degree of trust in a medium is a determining factor in its ability to generate any kind of attitude change (Andreoli and Worchel, "Effects of Media, Communicator, and Message Position on Attitude Change").

even steer it once it was under way.²⁷ Similarly, the reprinting of the *jingbao* caused a number of technological improvements in the court gazette—it was printed legibly, it was obtainable sooner than it had been, and it was cheaper—but the court gazette never altered its voice and style, nor did the traditional editions cease to circulate before 1912. Thus, rather than changing the Chinese consciousness and creating a new identity, the foreign medium itself changed under the pressure of a strong and already existent Chinese identity. The modifications in the alien medium show the influence of readers on journalists rather than the opposite.²⁸ The Chinese experience with the newspaper is “China’s response to the West” in reverse. The foreign medium was not so much the stimulant but the object of a stimulus.²⁹

In turning from form to content, in Part II of this book, I hoped to see if sinification had made it possible for the newspaper to become a subject, to see how the adapted medium became influential, a mouthpiece of Chinese identity. Did it become a catalyst of the women’s movement in China? Did it propagate conflicts with the foreign powers? And was it indeed the newspapers that made cosmopolitan Shanghai the hotbed of Chinese nationalism? The short answer is no. The newspapers never wrote the revolutionary manifesto, they did not create unambiguous gender identities, they never fomented anti-foreignism. From close readings of the *Shenbao* and other Shanghai news media, it appears that although the press had its hand on the public pulse, it always remained “an observer rather than a leader, a critic rather than an initiator.”³⁰ Indeed, juxtapositions of news reports and historical realities lead one to conjecture that the newspapers’ depiction of weak and domestic women came in response to

27. For this metaphor, see Matthews, “The Power of the Press?,” 183.

28. For a study of these effects, see Pool and Shulman, “Newsmen’s Fantasies.”

29. The study of the reactions of the foreign medium to the Chinese environment in Part I of this book thus reverses common descriptions of nineteenth-century China, studied as the object responding to the stimulus of modernization introduced through the West. Paradigmatic for this approach is Teng and Fairbank, *China’s Response to the West*. For problematic aspects in this approach, see Cohen, *Discovering History in China*.

30. Salmon, *The Newspaper and the Historian*, 283–84. See also Matthews, “The Power of the Press?,” 183–84; and Schudson, *The Power of News*, 6: “The press more often follows than leads; it reinforces more than it challenges conventional wisdom.”

common anxieties created by the radical changes in women; that the self-lacerating depictions of Shanghai and its citizens betray the innermost fears of treaty-port society;³¹ that the tirades against the irresponsible and corrupt character of the Chinese as a people were giving voice to commonly shared suppositions. Although a few of the circumscribed women enshrined in Shanghai's news media would make good feminists, there is no evidence that women became more virtuous or motherly because they read the prescriptions given them in Shanghai's press. The perplexed moralizing of the reportorial voice of the *Shanghairen* was certainly not a model for the average citizen of Shanghai or China in his or her daily life: the multiple *Shanghairen* depicted in the city's press could not be the basis for the creation of a well-defined modern Chinese identity. And there was no direct relationship between the xenophobia found on China's streets and the idiophobia spread in Chinese papers.

To study the contents of the foreign-style Chinese-language newspaper as a text is to understand that if that press had the potential to be powerful, it was only by negation. Perhaps some readers felt so offended by what was written in the press that they went out to revolt against men or foreigners in spite of (but not because of) what they had read. The very contents of the newspaper argue against the assumed power of the press.³²

This book set out to investigate how a foreign medium such as the newspaper, transplanted to Chinese soil, became an important tool in the making of a Chinese public sphere, a Chinese nationalism, the Chinese revolution, a Chinese identity. The readings collected here show that the press accomplished none of these things directly. Newspapers created the context, but they did not provide the text of change and revolution.³³

31. For this expression, see Stephens, *History of News*, 9.

32. And this is not only so in the case of China. See, e.g., Curran and Whamel, "The Political Economy of the Human-Interest Story," 315; and Chapter 6, note 154, p. 402.

33. Schudson, *The Power of News*, 18: "The primary, day-to-day contribution the news media make to the wider society they make as cultural actors, that is, as producers—and messengers—of meanings, symbols, messages. Culture, as Clifford Geertz observed, is not itself 'a power, something to which social events, behaviors, institutions, or processes can be causally attributed,' but instead 'a context, something within which they can be intelligibly . . . described.'"

It is true that the newspaper introduced the Chinese reader to a new type of text. It presented itself as the democratic medium, one obtainable by everyone (even merchants, women, peddlers, and children) not only because of its price³⁴ but also because of its nature. No longer was the reader talked down to; he or she was part of an abstract reading public that embraced as equal (*pingdeng* 平等) everyone from emperor to coolie. No longer were a person's thoughts and opinions publicized only once they had been accepted and rescripted by the emperor with a *qin ci* 欽此: the newspaper would print anything by anyone. And yet, to what extent was the "egalitarian" discourse in the newspapers a mirror of the present or a future reality? Is it not rather that the newspaper created a hypothetical situation, an "as if," in Michael Schudson's words, whose truth was dubious?³⁵ Did the Shanghai teahouses ever see heated discussions like those depicted in editorials on the Shanghai-Wusong railway?³⁶ Was it possible, outside the advertising pages of the newspaper, to discuss the function of female menses and other taboo topics in such detail?³⁷ How many women outside Shanghai ever rode in open carriages or on bicycles? Or, to argue the contrary, did many of them care more for a job in a bank than for motherhood? Did anybody—apart from *Shenbao* editorialists—truly dare to speak on questions of high policy in the presumptuous manner of "if I were asked," claiming that "this is not my opinion alone"? Did anyone else attack the emperor and his highest ministers overtly and by name as "muddleheaded"?³⁸

The connection between what was possible in the papers and what possibilities they created in reality is not an easy one. The fact that the court gazette was included inside a foreign-style medium, next to news

34. The *Shenbao*, in its first year of publication, sold for about a fourth the cost of the *Shanghai xinbao*, which led to that paper's closing: *Shenbao* was printed on cheap *maotai* paper and cost 8 *wen* compared with 30 *wen* for the *Shanghai xinbao*.

35. This expression appears in Schudson, *The Power of News*, 25. Schudson (26–27) argues that "a public with information available to it is not an informed public."

36. The railway discussions (see Wagner, "The Role of the Foreign Community"), which perhaps never took place, remind me of Samuel Johnson's (1709–84) reports on the "Parliaments of Lilliput," fictitious dialogues of what went on in the parliament from which journalists were banned (see Koch, *News as Myth*, 1).

37. Patrick Hess, *Anzeigen*, 78.

38. See, e.g., the poem entitled "憤言" (Angry words), *SB* 8.10.1880, which talks of shameless officials interested in nothing but making money. See also the editorials in *SB* 17.6, 1.7, 19.8.1900, discussed in Chapter 6, pp. 364–65.

items from much less authoritative sources, shows that the newspaper was willing to revolutionize thinking about the importance and authority of the gazette. On the other hand, the newspaper had to justify this act in lengthy editorials, and, even as late as February 1905 telegraphed edicts were printed in a prominent position in front of the editorial, in an attempt to pacify the court. Similarly, the fact that newspaper language became more and more readable, by categorization, changes in layout, use of punctuation and illustration, is a sign of the media's willingness to reform, to change the makeup and the consciousness of its implied reading public. On the other hand, the newspaper circumscribed this readership by trumpeting a message interlarded with conservative values perhaps in an effort to soothe the uneasy minds of those who did not want to be counted as equals in a mass readership. Thus, the metamorphoses in the newspaper text, both in its form and in its content, may be read as signs of stress: the newspaper text is at the same time a modifying and a modified system of meanings, stimulus as much as response. Changes in the newspaper as text may serve as indicators of a constant struggle for power in which the press was involved, a struggle over "as ifs" and "what ifs." The newspaper thus acted as a player and reacted to other players in the Chinese public sphere in an attempt to monopolize the article of faith crucial to its survival: the belief in the power of the press.

Indeed, it may have astounded Shanghai's newspapermen with their unquestioned faith in the media's might how difficult it is to measure their influence.³⁹ The contradictory findings in this study show that the power of the press cannot be fully grasped through the text of the newspaper. Some of the qualities of the newspaper text may explain the how and why of its power; others negate it. Quite clearly, the media as a text did not shape the "soul's geography"⁴⁰ of late Qing China directly but only in a rather roundabout way. Thus we need to be wary of the confident statements attributing many of the changes that occurred in China at the end of the Qing to the rise of the printing press, regardless of what and how it wrote.

There is a silent understanding that through the newly developed technique of mechanized printing, in combination with highly capitalized commercial publishing establishments and new systems of trans-

39. Schudson, *The Power of News*, 22.

40. Reardon, *Persuasion in Practice*, 195.

portation and distribution as well as growing literacy, China's newspapers, too, slowly began to communicate with a mass audience, no longer the elite. All I have done in this book is to explain how the development of a "newspaper for China" created the possibility of mass communication. Some of the discrepancies to be observed between text and context have illustrated that mass communication alone does not serve as a necessary or sufficient cause of audience effects, however. Mass communication functions not directly, by the nature of the text itself, but through a nexus of mediating factors. By looking at the formal makeup of the newspaper as a text, I have identified some of the factors that made it possible to begin communicating—but was this act of communication successful?

This book has addressed the question of how newspapers responded to the possibilities of the publishing marketplace but not whether they actually changed anything. In studying the Chinese newspaper as a text, I have pointed to the cultural context of these new media—their conditions of production. But to find a full answer to the question of the power of these media, the conditions of their reception need to be examined in more detail, too. We need to know what interpersonal networks transmitted the information; we need to examine the filters and prisms that lie between the medium and the audience—the physical context of viewing or reading—and the social and cultural context that lies between the newspaper message and any influence it may have. For what becomes of a newspaper text depends on what is in the minds of those who read it, and that is why the power of the press is unpredictable. Most important, therefore, we need to talk about the real audiences of these newspapers. Who exactly were these readers, and why did they read the newspapers? What did they think of the products they read and why? What did they do with them and why? Only once we have addressed these questions (in addition to carefully reading the text) will it be possible to suggest why some newspapers (the *Shenbao* among them) were such a commercial success and answer the question whether they were a cultural success, too, in terms of spreading values and ideas. By providing a view from the text, this book is only a first step in this direction; I hope there will be others to complete the task in the future.

The fact that we cannot trace precise causal connections between media texts and historical realities does not nullify the importance or the tangible power of the press in China. But it makes clear that one

of the most crucial factors behind the reception of the early news media in China was the fact that, however conservative, confusing, or self-critical their pronouncements may have been, all the players in China's public sphere believed the media to be powerful and continued to accept them as a force.

There is a consensus that newspapers played a pivotal role in the formation of a particular Chinese modernity.⁴¹ Newspapers are considered dominant contributors to the symbolic environment; thus they are believed to have cultivated a modern Chinese consciousness. And indeed, although the *Shenbao* did not reflect street realities, what it did mirror, and quite accurately, were the confused realities of the modern Chinese mind. This study of the newspaper as a text illustrates, therefore, that its power was, first and foremost, not tangible but imaginary. Xenophobia was present on China's streets in the first decades of the twentieth century but not because it had been conceived in the papers—Where, then, did it come from, and, more important, why was the press blamed or given credit for it? This book cannot fully answer the question. But my readings suggest that the press's power lies in the power of the imagination. It is there in spite of what is written in the newspapers; it exists because people believe in the press. The authoritative stance assumed by China's newspapermen, who had recourse to many Chinese tropes, not least the "road of speech" 言路, recklessly blocked throughout the late Qing, served to increase the newspaper's power in the imagination even more: it had moral backing.

In the words of one important newspaperman of the nineteenth century, E. L. Godkin (1831-1902) of the *Nation* and the *New York Evening Post*, the idea of the press's power is based on the "delusion" of its ability to influence a great number of people.⁴² That such delu-

41. For a foreign view of the power of the press to modernize China, cf. Wilfried Pennell (quoted in Chao, *The Foreign Press in China*, 56) writing for the *Hongkong Daily Press* in the early 1900s: "The Foreign Press, and particularly the English Press in China, has formed one of the most powerful forces from the West which have been directed towards the historical mission of modernising China."

42. Caudill, "E. L. Godkin," 1045. This attitude on the power of the press is based on the "third-person effect," the belief that others will be influenced by the media and thus become dangerous to the self (Davison, "The Third-Person Effect"). Similarly, L. Erwin Atwood ("Illusions of Media Power," 278) argues that this illusion can in some cases indeed motivate behavior.

sions can be efficacious has been explained succinctly by Pierre Bourdieu, who argues that faith in a ritual is the precondition for its effectiveness. "Only those already converted are preached at."⁴³ People everywhere perceived the press as powerful, and it was this make-believe, this overestimation, which operated only within the pseudo-world that the media themselves invented and sustained, that made them effective. Foreign-style Chinese-language newspapers were powerful not by nature but by default.

43. Bourdieu, *Was heißt sprechen?*, 92.

Appendixes

APPENDIX A

Chapter 1 Texts

I. “論印度法國二處傳來奇談” (On strange stories from India and France), *SB* 9.11.1877

The editorial begins with the aphorism “The way of heaven is indeed difficult to fathom” and concludes “The right over life and death lies with heaven,” and thus “How could one blame fathers or rulers for it?” (l. 32). The author starts by relating an astonishing story from India. There, so a friend has told him, the common view is that colonial England is to blame for the recent spate of famines and other catastrophes. Why? Before the English took over India, the feudal kings had constantly been at war. Accordingly, people had not lived very long. In comparison to these wars, famines—if they occurred—had been viewed as minor (ll. 4–6).

The author considers this attitude remarkable. How strange, he muses, inviting his readers to think the same, that peace should be considered worse than war.¹ In this era of peace under British sovereignty, people are thriving, and after only a few years their numbers have doubled. Naturally, in such a situation, since the amount of land is fixed, even one year of bad harvests leads to an unspeakable calamity (ll. 6–8).

Everyone, he continues, considers the birth of children (sons, primarily) a reason for happiness (this, he reminds the reader, is especially true in China); hence, in times of peace the number of people

1. It is evident that the editorialist considers the British in India a positive force, an attitude carried over into his own feelings about English “colonial” power in Shanghai. See Chapter 5 for a discussion of the ambiguities of an acceptance and admiration for, as well as an abhorrence of, the foreign presence in China.

inevitably increases year by year. He further explains (in an interesting display of ecological consciousness) that the increased pressure for agricultural land has led to deforestation all over India, and this in turn has caused droughts and floods. All this, he concludes, is related to the growing population (ll. 9–11).

Next he draws an analogy between India and China under the Kangxi 康熙 emperor (l. 13). During his sixty-year reign (1662–1722), the population doubled. And soon enough, rebellions caused many deaths. The author then asks: “Can this mean that heaven helps men to decrease their numbers, or does it mean that heaven sends a warning to people to practice restraint?” (ll. 14–15). Next, the author turns to a rather concrete deliberation of methods of fighting overpopulation in China. India is the measure for evaluating China, a method of argumentation derived from rules of the Tongcheng school: one deals first with what is far and then returns to what is near. The author suggests a number of solutions for the Chinese problem: encouraging Chinese handicrafts will lead to a surplus of goods that can be used to buy other countries’ surplus goods (ll. 22–23). A second method is to establish an institution to help the unemployed go to other countries to find a job.² Other countries with surplus populations, such as England and Prussia, have done so and thus solved their problems in part, even though their populations still keep growing. China’s failure to adopt such methods, on the other hand, has led to population increases in the millions. This in turn has resulted in constant rebellions, epidemics, and food shortages (ll. 23–25). In this carefully constructed tirade against the Chinese government, the editorialist first delineates his personal proposals and then matches them with facts from abroad, a sequence that again follows Tongcheng school prescriptions for good writing.

Next, the author turns to a second exemplary story. Although France has a low rate of emigration, it does not suffer from overpopulation. Accordingly, rebellions, famines, and epidemics have decreased in number (l. 26). “Now this is due to the fact that all the couples have two or three children and then are not willing to have any more. Their method [of contraception] I don’t know, but if among the authorities there are those who are interested in this matter, I advise

2. This can be taken as a direct criticism of the contemporary policy of the government discouraging emigration. On this problem, see Godley, *Mandarin-Capitalists*, and the discussion of trade limitations in late Qing China in Chapter 2.

them to go to France on a trading trip and perhaps obtain the recipe" (ll. 27-28). Again, what is done in faraway places is taken as an example for what should be done nearby. The Chinese official is given a hint as to how to act, in this Tongcheng-style *lun*-editorial. Yet the practical advice given here is given an ironical twist in the final passage, when the author ends on a philosophical note, interpreting the aphorism given in the beginning of the essay according to Tongcheng practice, which calls first for citation and then for illumination.

If Indians blame England by saying that they are dying of hunger, and if they prefer to die at the hands of the military, this can be called not knowing one's fate. And as for the French who are afraid that their population would daily increase, [even if] the individual person were to wish for two or three children only, how could they—knowing what the ancients have said long ago, that if one person has two sons, then in ten generations there will be 1,000 (and how much more would this increase if there were three)—still hope that [their population] did not grow? Thus both of these can indeed be called strange stories. (ll. 30-32)

II. “風氣日開說” (On daily advances toward enlightenment), *SB*
23.2.1882

This *shuo* begins with the aphorism: “All the great countries wish and search for a long-lived government, sustained peace, prosperity for all, and strength in abundance. And if they made sages their rulers and wise men their ministers, bracing themselves in their desire for good government, then this would indeed be possible.” In the typical Tongcheng manner of “first the far, then the near,” the editorialist argues that China, a country reputed to be civilized, needs to be open to foreign improvements in order to obtain a successful government. In this respect, he contrasts the glorious past with the deplorable present. There is a constant sense of irony as he talks of China and the foreign countries as “one family” (ll. 2-3), or of China as understanding the necessity of foreign trade, foreign machines and technology. Only “in regard to railways is China still a bit behind and, full of doubts, has not quite decided”—this at a time when the aborted railway debate, fought out (ll. 7-8), among other places, on the pages of the *Shenbao* in 1876, was evidently still on people's minds.³ Similarly ambiguous and

3. For a discussion of the debate, see Ye Xiaoqing, “Shanghai Before Nationalism”; and Wagner, “The Role of the Foreign Community.”

ironic is the function of Shanghai as a model for its straight roads, functioning bridges, and running water: the foreign government of Shanghai is held to be superior to the Chinese government of China (ll. 13–21). The article ends with a witty rhetorical question: Would it not be appropriate if more cities emulated Shanghai? The editorial makes clear the author's conviction that the rise of China would not be difficult, if only people would open their eyes and minds and adopt his suggestions.⁴

III. “腳踏車將來必盛興說” (On the fact that bicycles must flourish in the future), *SB* 1.4.1898

The editorial begins with the aphorism “On water ships are used, on land carts. This unites China and the West and will never change” (l. 1). This is followed by a misquotation from the *Shijing*. A short introduction explains the advantages and disadvantages of different vehicles; for example, animal-powered carts lead to manure in the streets, and some modes of transport are noisier than others. Of all the various means, the bicycle is the fastest, the most affordable, and the most convenient (ll. 2–6). This glorification of the bicycle leads to the narrative part of the editorial. Foreigners begin riding bicycles when they are children. Thus, they become quite skillful, unfazed by hills and small obstacles (ll. 6–10). As a number of world travelers who used bicycles have shown, it is possible to ride anywhere on a bicycle; furthermore, it is good for one's health (ll. 10–14).

The following section introduces another benefit of the bicycle: bicycles have proved to be the most appropriate, most convenient, and the fastest vehicles for moving troops. Japan has thus decided to invest in bicycles for its army (ll. 14–21). These bicycle armies could be overcome, however, by a canine corps trained to bite the legs of the soldier-cyclists to make them fall off their vehicles.

The author concludes with a call to consider the benefits of the bicycles, to make use of them, and not to disdain them as China modernizes. This is a typical *shuo*, arguing its point confidently by providing a dazzling amount of amusing detail while making use of traditional tropes such as classical citation and contrasts between the golden past and the dismal present.

4. For similar *shuo* critical of the government and using the past as an example for changes in the deplorable present, see *SB* 14.4. and 25.11.1887.

A P P E N D I X B

Chapter 2 Text

“共和國大總統履任祝詞” (Congratulatory wishes on the president of the Republic’s assumption of office), *SB 1.1.1912* (All quotations are marked in *italics*)

1. What kind of a day is it today? It is the first day of a new era, that of the Republic. It is the first day the great president will assume his duties, and it is the first day my 400 million compatriots can rest their lives on a secure basis, enjoying the Republic for ever and ever.

At this very moment, when, according to the solar calendar, spring begins, the curtain opens up for democracy. *We are wild with contentment and happiness, free from all worries.* If once we followed the *good government* in the regulation of society [practiced during] the *golden age*, we now open up the happiness of a republic for generations to come. It is a day that will be remembered by our Republic for ever and ever.

2a. Never, since the times when autocracy like a vicious flame poisoned the entire country, has the *perverse behavior* of the Northern Caitiffs [the Manchus] been worse than in these days. *Never has the citizens’ suffering from brutal government been worse than at this time.* Every one of the country’s peasants, workers, and merchants was *full of hatred and worries*, for daily their life sustenance would be reduced, and they would be oppressed by the powers of another people. There was no method of security nor any way of strengthening [oneself]. Had this continued, the day would have been destined to come on which all 400 million compatriots would have been ruined.

2b. How happy that now, due to the election of Sun Zhongshan as first acting president of the Republic of China, who long ago began to

uphold the theory of people's livelihood, a new era begins in magnificence and glory. As for the new and *wise plans* for the state, I know for certain that they will contain three attentions 三注意 to the sufferings of the people. I am only an unworthy journalist, and yet I dare proffer a eulogy, in order to congratulate the great president on today's ceremony of his assumption of office. It shall be a sign of my conviction that in about a year my 400 million compatriots will have put these dire straits behind them and will live in peace.

3. *The ruler alone establishes his country
And is thus an example for his people.
He establishes the people [as human beings] and improves
them [in their humanity],
He looks after the people, as his heavenly duty.
O, glorious Zhongshan,
You consider all men and things your brothers, equal to yourself.
The Three People's Principles⁵
You have researched for a long time.
Nationalism, Democracy,
And People's Livelihood, they are necessary.
The military uprising in Wuhan
Destroyed the Manchu house,
And in the fourteen provinces
The five-colored flag is waving.⁶
When the republic was established,
One person stepped forward [like a ruler],
He nourished our multitudes of people,
He supported industry.
The masses of the people, 400 million,
Each one of them and each family have everything they need.
He/We will overtake America and will leave Europe behind,
He/We will recover the power of our country and increase it
ever more.*

5. The "Three People's Principles" were first formulated in the *Minbao* of the Tongmenghui (1905). In the 1920s, they became the basic ideology for the Guomindang (see Frank W. Price, *San Min Chu I*).

6. The flag of the republic combined the five colors red, yellow, blue, white, and black for the five major ethnic groups in China: the Han, the Manchu, the Mongols, the Muslim Hui, and the Tibetans.

APPENDIX C

Chapter 6 Texts

I. “血染南京路別錄” (Other records of the bloodshed in Nanjing Road), *SSXB* 31.5.1925

The article begins emotionally: “This is the first tragedy I have ever seen in my life. When I hold the pen now, my heart is still pumping ‘boom-boom.’” The reporter describes his attempt to get through Nanjing Road on a bicycle, when it was being blocked by the students. He records the remarks of bystanders: “Look at that, the students are giving speeches” and “This is the workers’ affair, why do the students get involved?” and “Well, the Japanese have humiliated us so much.” After observing the unsuccessful attempts to calm the students and move them away from the street, he cries out: “Oh God, the students really did not know who they were facing!” Fighting back with fists and sticks against those who had pistols, they almost deserved what they got: they had been asking for death (該死). He then describes the arbitrariness of the moment in which the first shot was fired, and the volleys that followed, observing one Chinese policeman open fire hesitatingly, his face ashen. Although the reporter argues that one should pity the students who died, on the other hand, “who told them . . . to come out and disturb other people’s peace?” According to him, one should pity even more the innocent pedestrians and bystanders who were hit, such as a woman with a small child. The article makes a clear moral statement against the students. Did they have to create such disorder that hurt innocent people?

II. “治安與無辜” (Public order and the innocent), *SSXB* 1.6.1925

This article begins with the emotional observation that the “great tragedy of Nanjing Road” had staggered everyone. The author, too, is shocked. And yet, he says, his feelings are not so much with the students but with the bystanders. Checking through news reports, he found that among the wounded and dead were a great number of shop clerks, cooks, tailors, and the like. These people had nothing to do with the demonstrations and placards such as “Get rid of imperialism,” and yet they, too, had been hurt. That so many of them died, the author says, had something to do with the bad Chinese habit and love of “enjoying a show” 看熱鬧 and with the lack of public security in a busy place such as Nanjing Road. Public security and the inability of the authorities to provide it are the main themes of another emotional outburst, full of 嗚呼 and 噫, in a short commentary in the same issue: “南京路共和路之槍聲” (The shooting on Nanjing and Republican Road), *SSXB* 1.6.1925.

III. “大馬路的槍聲” (Shooting on the avenue), *SSXB* 31.5.1925

Here, the avenue is personified, its experiences traced in a crescendo effect: certainly, it had heard shots fired before, a year before and several years ago, too, there had been some robberies and shootings, and indeed, a wall had been hit by a policeman’s bullet. But never had the avenue experienced volleys of shots directed at the masses of people. That indeed was a first experience. Significantly, the article does not mention those who did the shooting.

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Finding List of Shenbao Articles

The following items from the *Shenbao* are mentioned in the text or cited in the notes. The entries are arranged chronologically by date of publication. The numbers within parentheses indicate the pages in this book on which discussions or citations of the article in question can be found

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