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Cover picture The walled city of Shanghai (*Shanghai xianzhi*, 1872)

THE END OF THE QUEUE: HAIR AS SYMBOL IN CHINESE HISTORY

 Michael R. Godley

A Chinese athlete attempting the high jump in the autumn of 1910 reportedly displaced the bar with his queue. When he returned to the contest without the hairpiece, one foreign wag remarked that China had many useless appendages to be dispensed with.¹ Before another year had passed, the Qing dynasty was also in danger of being toppled by revolutionaries who, in a gesture of defiance as well as practicality, severed their own tails. Thus, the removal of the 'queue' or 'pigtail' became one of the better-known symbols of the fall of imperial rule, modernization and political change. After queue-cutting had become something of a mania, the *North-China Herald* observed that, while the act might not "mark an epoch," it was "inevitable that a queueless China should mean a new China."² Be this as it may, hair cannot be so casually discarded by the modern social historian.

Introduction

Hair has a way of personalising history. The Normans wore theirs short at the time of William the Conqueror, which is said to have prompted the English to grow theirs quite long. Both long locks and bald craniums have demonstrated political power and its absence. Hair has represented the life force—strength, energy, vitality, and the power of Samson. Its removal has signified surrender, rejection of the feminine or material worlds, as well as the bonding of martial groups. Loose hair has sometimes expressed the nubile state, freedom, sorrow and insurrection, just as dishevelled hair has also been a common, but not universal, sign of grief. Bound hair may signify marital status or even subjugation. So, too, has the shaven head of the true believer. Prisoners, slaves and soldiers have all endured the imposition of short hair. Indeed, Freudians have often argued that hair-cutting is ritual castration.³ However, as the anthropologist Raymond Firth concluded, "different forms of social control may

¹ *Chinese Recorder and Missionary Journal* (Nov. 1910), p.968. The *North-China Herald* (hereafter *NCH*) also reported that the majority of contestants simply tucked their queues into their belts or shorts (28 Oct. 1910).

² *NCH*, 20 Jan. 1911.

³ For a sample of the literature see J. C. Cooper, *An illustrated encyclopedia of traditional symbols* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1978), p.77; Ad de Vries, *Dictionary of symbols and imagery* (London & Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing Company, 1974), pp.231-4; W. Cooper, *Hair: sex, society, symbolism* (London: Aldus, 1971); E. R. Leach, "Magical hair," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 88 (1958): 147-63; C. R. Hallpike, "Social hair," *Man* 4 (1969): 254-64; P. Hershman, "Hair, sex and dirt," *Man* 9 (1974): 274-98; G. Obeyesekere *Medusa's hair: an essay on personal symbols and religious experience* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981); and for the Freudian classic, C. Berg, *The unconscious significance of hair* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1951).

⁴ R. W. Firth, *Symbols: public and private* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1973), pp.262–98. Charles Mackay recognized this back in 1841 when he included a chapter on the influence of European politics on hair and beard in his eccentric work, *Memoirs of extraordinary popular delusions and the madness of crowds*, while J. M. Wallace-Hadrill sensed the significance of the head to his 1960s study of Frankish history, *The long-haired kings*, where he demonstrated that hair was then associated with power as well as virility. Clovis, who tonsured his rivals to strip them of their magic and royalty, eventually thought it wise to kill them lest their hair grow out and portend renewed resistance.

⁵ *The history of that great and renowned monarchy of China, lately written in Italian by F. Alvarez Semedo now put into English by a person of quality* (London, 1655), p.266.

⁶ J. Scarth, *Twelve years in China: the people, the rebels and the mandarins by a British resident* (Edinburgh: Edmonston & Douglas, 1860), p.117.

⁷ J. Doolittle, *Social life of the Chinese, with some account of their religious, governmental, educational and business customs and opinions, with special but not exclusive reference to Fuchao*, reprint ed., 2 vols (Taipei: Ch'eng Wan Publishing Co., 1968), 2: 240–1.

⁸ *Zhongwen dacidian* [The encyclopedic dictionary of the Chinese language:] (Taipei: Zhongguo Wenhua Yanjiusuo, 1968), vol.26, p.178; and *Ci bai* [Sea of phrases] (Taipei: Taiwan Shonghua Shuju, 1969), vol. 2, p.2290. There are several popular histories of the queue: Qiu Zongzhong, “Bianzi jing” [The passing of the queue] in *Mianjing* [Change], Sept. 1936, pp.11–12, Aug. 1938, pp.17–20; Kuwabara Jitsuzō, “Zhongguo bianfa shi” [History of the queue in China], transl. from the Japanese by Su Qianying, in *Dongfang zazhi* [Eastern miscellany], Feb. 1913, pp.15–21. But by far the most scholarly account of the origins of the queue is Shiratori Kurakichi, “The queue among the peoples of North Asia,” *Memoirs of the Tōyō Bunko* (Tokyo: Tōyō Bunko, 1929), vol.4, pp.1–69. See also: Yoshito Harada, *Tōdai no fukusoboku* [Chinese dress and personal ornaments in the Tang dynasty] (Tokyo: Tōyō Bunko, 1970), pp.23–4 and 171–7; Inaba Iwakichi, *Qingchao quanshi* [Complete history of the

demand different forms of hair treatment even in the same society.” Although obviously a private asset, hair needs to be interpreted as a public symbol.⁴ Even today, when no reader can have missed the hairstyles advertising counter-cultural protest, there may be no case study more instructive than the queue, which not only makes it possible to condense two-and-a-half centuries of Qing rule into the following pages, but also illustrates a number of the symbolic uses of hair in Chinese history.

Origins of the Queue

The characteristic Manchu hairstyle attracted the immediate attention of early Western visitors. F. Alvarez Semedo wrote that the Tartars “do shave both the Head and Beard” and “in the hither part of their Heads they leave a Tuft which being curiously woven and plated [sic] they let hang down carelessly below their shoulders.”⁵ A nineteenth-century Britisher disabused readers: “the tail of a Chinaman is not a little tuft on the crown of his head, but is formed of hair suffered to grow luxuriantly in a mass, at least four inches in diameter.”⁶ The Revd Justus Doolittle was more observant: “The tonsure of the common people and mandarins” was produced by “shaving the whole head with a razor ... excepting a circular portion on the crown” which was allowed to grow long and was “braided into a neat tress of three strands.”⁷

Most Westerners assumed that the Manchus invented the queue, but the practice was much older. The character *bian* 辮 originally meant to plait cords or hair, and was interchangeable with its approximate homophone *bian* 編; it was first used to describe the heads of Xiongnu in the Han period. Male and female braids were preserved by tribes of the far west during the Tang dynasty (618–907), while the later Tartar style stemmed from the Khitan. Their officials, who occupied much of North China during the Liao dynasty (947–1125), wore something like a queue from the back of the head. The same custom has been attributed to the Jurchens who overran the north and established the Jin dynasty (1125–1234).⁸

There is no way to prove the supposition of one scholar that the queue originated in honour of the tails of well-loved horses,⁹ but historians speak with confidence when they say that Emperor Taizong 太宗 of the Jin ordered all Chinese to adopt Tartar dress and hairstyle in 1179.¹⁰ Most men in the

/Qing] (Shanghai, 1919; reprint ed., Taipei: Zhonghua Shuju, 1960), p.6; and K. A. Wittfogel with Feng Chia-sheng, *History of Chinese society: Liao, 907–1125*, Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, n.s. no.36 (Philadelphia, 1949), p.235.

⁹ H. A. Giles, *A glossary of references on subjects connected with the Far East* (London: Kelly & Walsh, 1878), p.64.

¹⁰ Although the extent to which the edict was enforced might be debated, ethnic Chinese at court wore something approximating braids. See Inaba, *Qingchao quanshi*, p.6, and Huang Hongshou, “Fabian kao” [Inquiry into the queue], in *Geming yuanliu yugeming yundong* [The origins of the revolution and revolutionary movement], 16 vols (Taipei: Zhenzhong Shuju, 1964), 1: 34.

south, which was still under native rule, are said to have believed that a full head of hair was a sign of virility. Some had long side whiskers, beards and even hair down to the shoulders. The entire society was captivated by headgear, sporting caps, hats and turbans appropriate to rank and position.¹¹ Soon enough, the Mongols removed heads with hats when they brought all China under the sword in 1279.

We have William of Rubruck's description of the Mongol version of braids, which reads:

The men shave a square on the top of their heads, and from the front corners they continue the shaving to the temples, passing along both sides of the head. They shave also the temples and the back of the neck to the top of the cervical cavity, and the forehead as far as the crown of the head on which they leave a tuft of hair which falls down to the eyebrows. They leave the hair on the sides of the head, and with it make tresses which they plait together to the ears.¹²

Although most Chinese still wore unshaven hair tied at the back or on the crown in Marco Polo's time, braids of one sort or another were common before the Mongol Yuan dynasty came to its end in 1368.

In its efforts to purge the country of alien influences, the Ming dynasty reverted to what was seen as Chinese dress and hairstyle. Emperor Taizu 太祖 forbade those who wanted to be considered genuine 'Han' 漢 Chinese to wear foreign queues. Only those with Tartar names were permitted to continue the practice.¹³ The restored Chinese coiffure was described by a number of sixteenth-century visitors. Juan Gonzalez de Mendoza observed that "they do binde their hairs up to the crown of their heads, in calles of gold verie curious, and with pinnes of the same."¹⁴ Moreover, Father Gaspar da Cruz noted in 1569: "They wear long hair like women, which they have very well brushed and combed." Martin de Rada completed the picture when he observed: "they are proud to have a great head of hair."¹⁵

All this changed in the mid-seventeenth century when the conquering Manchus ordered the Chinese to follow northern customs once again and shave their heads except for a queue. After Nurhachi 努爾哈赤, the Qing emperor Taizu, launched his movement southwards, he required Chinese living in the Liaodong peninsula to cut their hair (*xiaofa* 削髮) in 1622. Although officials apparently refused and were put to death, townspeople complied. Similar orders were handed down in 1630 and 1631. Even the King of Korea was asked to conform as a sign of vassalage.¹⁶ As Qing forces approached the border, Chinese who had joined their ranks already spoke Manchu and wore the appropriate costume. While Wu Sangui 吳三桂, the Liaodong-born general who invited the Manchus in through the pass in the Great Wall in 1644, had not yet shaved his own head, it is said that individuals in the army swore to do so when the necessity arose. Indeed, it was reported that when the invaders approached Beijing, the rebels then in control of the capital knew that Manchus had breached the frontier defenses when they saw the trailing queues. Dorgon 多爾袞, regent to the Shunzhi 順治 emperor,

¹¹ Jacques Gernet, *Daily life in China on the eve of the Mongol invasion 1250-1276* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1962), pp.130-1.

¹² W. W. Rockhill, transl., *The journey of William of Rubruck to the eastern parts of the world, 1253-55, as narrated by himself (etc.)* (New York: Hakluyt Society, 1909), as cited in Bertold Spuler, *History of the Mongols: based on Eastern and Western accounts of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries*, transl. H. S. Drummond (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972), p.95.

¹³ Kuwabara, *History of the queue*, pp.17-18, and Inaba, *Qingcbao quanshi*, pp.6-7.

¹⁴ Juan Gonzalez de Mendoza, *The history of the great and mighty kingdom of China and the situation thereof* (Rome, 1585), ed. Sir George Staunton, reprint ed. in 2 vols (New York: Burt & Franklin, 1909), p.30.

¹⁵ C. R. Boxer, ed., *South China in the sixteenth century: being the narratives of Galeote Pereira, Fr. Gaspar Da Cruz, O.P., [and] Fr. Martin Rada, O.E.S.A.* (London: Hakluyt Society, 1953), pp.138, 282.

¹⁶ See *Huang Qing kaiguo fanglue* [History of the founding of the Qing] (1786; reprint ed., Taipei: Chengwen Chubanshe, 1968), 7: a, 15: 7a; *Taizong shilu* [Veritable records for the Taizong reign], 3: 33a and 10: 20a; *Taizu shilu* [Veritable records for the Taizu reign], 7: 22a; D. C. Boulger, *History of China*, 2 vols (London: W. H. Allen, 1882), 2: 209; Zheng Tianting, *Qingshi tanwei* [Investigations into Qing history] (Taipei: Dalu Chubanshe, 1947), pp.51-2; and Inaba, *Qingcbao quanshi*, p.8.

¹⁷ There are numerous accounts of this period: Wei Yuan, *Da Qing shengwu ji* [Record of the military achievements of the Qing dynasty], 1881 edition, 1: 35b–48b; Li Wenzhi, “Wanming tongzhi jieji de touxiang Qingchao ji nongmin qiyijunde fanqing douzheng” [The surrender of the late-Ming ruling class to the Qing and the struggle of the anti-Qing peasant rebel army], in Li Guangpi, ed., *Ming Qing shi luncong* [Symposium on Ming and Qing history] (Hubei: Renmin Chubanshe, 1957), p.152; Meng Sen, *Qingshi jiangyi* [Lectures on Qing history] (Shanghai, 1947), p.165.

¹⁸ See *Da Qing Shizu zhang huangdi shilu* [Records of the Shunzhi reign], 5: 3a–b. The full text for this and many of the other edicts can be found in the secondary sources; also Père Pierre Joseph D’Orléans, *History of the two Tartar conquerors of China (etc.)* (Paris, 1686) (New York: Hakluyt Society, 1909), pp.25–6; and A. Hummel, ed., *Eminent Chinese of the Ch’ing period*, 2 vols (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1943–44), 1: 241.

¹⁹ Huang Hongshou, *Inquiry into the queue*, pp.37–8; Chen Zhiping, *Zhonghua tongshi* [General history of China] (Taipei: Limin Wenhua Shiye Gongsi, 1979), p.100; Xiao Yishan, *Qingdai tongshi* [Comprehensive history of the Qing period] (Taipei, 1963), vol.1, p.315; Yang Kuan, “Yiliusiwu nian Jiading renminde kang Qing douzheng” [The Jiading people’s anti-Qing resistance struggle of 1645], in Li Guangpi, *Ming Qing shi luncong*, pp.215–16. See also *Shunzhi shilu*, 5: 1b, 10a; 17: 7b–8b; 19: 6b–7a; 21: 10; 28: 11a.

²⁰ F. Wakeman, Jr., “Localism and loyalism during the Ch’ing conquest of Kiangnan,” in *Conflict and control in late imperial China*, ed. F. Wakeman and C. Grant (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1975), pp.55–7. See also F. Wakeman, Jr., *The great enterprise: the Manchu reconstruction of imperial order in seventeenth-century China*, 2 vols (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1985), 1: 646–50.

²¹ Chinese sources are filled with anecdotes: for example, *Geming yuanliu yu geming yundong*, pp.38–9. The best treatment in English is J. Dennerline, *The Chia-ting loyalists: Confucian leadership and social change in seventeenth-century China* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1981), p.287.

made compliance with the order a matter of some urgency soon after entering China.¹⁷

There for only a matter of days, Dorgon proclaimed in early June that former Ming officials and soldiers would have to shave their hair (*tifa* 剃髮) and adopt the dress and headgear of the new order. However there was no shortage of converts, including Father Martini who permitted a Manchu captain to give him the regulation haircut when the “Mandate of Heaven” had but barely changed. Scholars generally credit Feng Quan 馮銓, a mandarin of dubious integrity, as being the first Chinese official to step forward. He subsequently became Grand Secretary and was protected from charges of corruption on account of the speed with which he had accepted the inevitability of Qing rule on that day.¹⁸

The head-shaving edict was extended to the rest of the population; Dorgon ordered the Board of War to crush opposition but subsequently rescinded the order on the grounds that “it contradicted the will of the people.” Nevertheless, the capital and its environs were properly groomed by the time the young emperor arrived in November 1644. After the fall of Nanjing the following July, another decree was issued—this time more diplomatically through the Board of Rites. Although this edict has entered popular myth as amounting to the sentiment “off with your hair or off with your head,” and armed barbers allegedly carried the severed heads of recalcitrants on bamboo poles to show the double-edged nature of their profession, Dorgon’s rescript was comparatively restrained. After noting that his earlier orders had not been enforced in the hope that males would conform of their own volition, he appealed to Confucian precepts: “Now that the country has become as one family, the ruler is like a father and the people are like sons How can they be different or distant?” Nonetheless, the throne was more than willing to employ coercion if this milder approach failed, for the edict also warned that the laws of the new dynasty had to be obeyed. More to the point, hair was a sure way to distinguish “our subjects” from “those bandits who oppose our mandate.”¹⁹

A number of historians have already described the disastrous consequences of this policy in the Jiangnan region between Shanghai and Nanjing, and have questioned the timing of the infamous edict since it seems to have stiffened Chinese resistance in an area which had been generally pacified.²⁰ Martial law was needed in Suzhou and, in a celebrated incident, unwilling customers took control of the town of Jiangyin and held out for two-and-a-half months before they dropped hair clippings over the town wall to signify surrender. With Jiangyin as a warning, the head-shaving order was not proclaimed in Jiading, some miles to the east, until early August. By then resistance was being organized. There was reputedly a time when “those who had their hair could not go into the city, while those who had lost their hair dared not go out of it.”²¹

In other locations heroic individuals are remembered. Zhang Dai 張岱, an historian and essayist, retreated into the mountains when his native

Shaoxing fell to the Manchus in 1646 to avoid having to shave his head, and spent the remainder of his life as a hermit. A hero who suffered a different fate was Qu Shisi 瞿式耜 who defended Guangzhou for the failing Southern Ming during an eight-month siege in 1650. When he surrendered, Qu was offered a pardon on condition that, to save face, he shave his entire head in the Buddhist fashion. He refused and was promptly executed. Another loyalist, Gu Yanwu 顧炎武, tacitly accepted Qing rule when he adopted the disguise of a merchant and immortalized the deed in a poem entitled *Jianfa* 剪髮 (Cutting Hair) with the understated line: “Having removed my hair here and there”²² Later in the decade, Koxinga 鄭成功 was offered forgiveness on condition that he shave his head. He declined, but his grandson, together with surviving generals, voluntarily did so before they handed over their Ming imperial seals in 1683. Even as late as this, there were still documented cases of opposition in Guangdong province.²³ Indeed, well into the eighteenth century it was held politically dangerous to yearn, euphemistically, for the old cap and gown of the Ming, since hair was the obvious sign of resistance—a fact which can only have hardened Qing determination to enforce its particular brand of uniformity.

The ‘Semiotics’ of Hair

The reason for Dorgon’s stubborn determination to shave the heads of males is not clear, although there is probably some truth to the speculation that the prince regent, who had otherwise taken a conciliatory position towards the conquered Han, pursued a hard line on this one issue because of pressure from more traditional Manchus. Hairstyle was certainly an easy means of identifying loyal troops on the battlefield, which explains the requirement for Chinese bannermen. But there is clear evidence that the victors associated the act with surrender, first in Liaodong and then in China proper. When the Manchus were settling into Beijing, for example, Dorgon warned residents in nearby Sanhe county 三河縣 to cease resistance and submit to the new dynasty by shaving their heads. Before the month was over, similar instructions were passed to other areas with the added caveat that all who refused would be deemed rebels.²⁴ However to be fair to the often-vilified conquerors, the other side of insurrection was obviously conversion. Hence, when he first ordered Ming officials to change their dress and hairstyle, Dorgon was generously offering them employment. The Manchu had an eye for talent and, far from setting out to humiliate Chinese civil and military élites, he was keen to embrace those who voluntarily removed their old topknots. Even Shi Kefa 史可法, who led the futile defense of Yangzhou, was promised an amnesty. While he refused and was executed, many others crossed over to the Qing.²⁵

There seems to have been little opposition in the region north of the Yellow River where people were more familiar with Tartar practice, but a

²² Willard J. Peterson, “The life of Ku Yen-wu (1613–1682),” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 28 (1968): 151–2. See also Hummel, *Eminent Chinese*, pp.54, 201. For more on the loyalists see L. A. Struve, *The Southern Ming 1644–1662* (New Haven, Conn. and London: Yale University Press, 1984).

²³ L. D. Kessler, *K’ang-hsi and the consolidation of Ch’ing rule, 1661–1684* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1976), pp.17, 40, 93, 178 nn.57, 20.

²⁴ R. B. Oxnam, *Ruling from horseback: Manchu politics in the Oboi regency, 1661–1669* (Chicago, Ill.: Chicago University Press, 1975, p.41; *Geming yuanliu yu geming yundong*, p.35; *Shunzhi shilu*, 5: 10–11a; 17: 7b–8a; 19: 7a.

²⁵ See Wakeman, *Great enterprise*, vol.1, pp.399–404.

²⁶ Inaba, *Qingchao quanshi*, p.8; Chen Zhiping, *Zhonghua tongshi*, p.100; Gu Cheng, “Lun Qingchu shehui maodun—jianlun nongmin junde lian Ming kang Qing” [Social antagonisms in early Ming—remarks on the efforts made by peasant armies to unite with the Ming against the Qing], in *Qingshi luncong* [Symposium on Ming and Qing History] (Hong Kong: Datong Tushu Gongsu, 1980), pp.140–1; Lan Jiadu, “Yiliu-siwu nian Jiangyin renminde kang Qing douzheng,” pp.196–7; and Hummel, *Eminent Chinese*, p.359.

²⁷ “Shunzhichao tifa an” [Archives on hair-shaving in the Shunzhi period], in *Lishi tang’an* [Historical archives] no.1 (1982), pp.13–14; *Geming yuanli yu geming yundong*, p.37; *Shunzhi shilu*, 78: 15b–16a.

²⁸ Wakeman, “Localism and loyalism,” pp. 83–5; H. J. Beattie, “The alternatives to resistance: the case of Tung-ch’eng Anhwei,” in *From Ming to Ch’ing: conquest, region, and continuity in seventeenth-century China*, ed. J. D. Spence and J. E. Wills, Jr. (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1979), p.257.

²⁹ Xiao Yishan, *Qingdai tongshi*, vol.1, p.315.

³⁰ Doolittle, *Social life of the Chinese*, pp. 242–3.

³¹ *Lishi tang’an*, p.13.

number of turncoat officials reportedly warned that southerners would resist. One such adviser was Hong Chengchou 洪承疇—known as the “Pacifier of Jiangnan”—who allowed his own head to be shaved in 1642 and became Grand Secretary two years later, yet nonetheless recommended the preservation of Ming style before he was sent to Nanjing in 1645, with mostly ethnic Chinese troops, to implement the unpopular decree.²⁶

Evidence certainly suggests that local Chinese officials were far from zealous in their enforcement of Dorgon’s will. In at least one case they measured the degree of guilt according to the amount of hair left, and let culprits off. They also preferred fines or persuasion—particularly where the gentry were concerned—and could take months to investigate what should have been self-evident. Dorgon’s patience ran thin in June 1649 when he ordered the Board of War to seek out long-haired recalcitrants amongst the gentry, and subsequently, in 1653, instructed the Board of Punishment to enforce the death penalty.²⁷ Perhaps the most famous case mentioned in official records is that of Chen Qiyu 陳奇瑜, who was eventually executed in his own home in 1648. Chen, who had once served as Grand Secretary to a vanquished Ming pretender to the throne, was treated with great deference and implored to obey the letter of the law. His resolve was probably unusual since his grandson was serving the Manchus by the 1660s.

Because magistrates were reluctant to admit that there were ‘rebels’ in their districts, those prosecuted are frequently described in seventeenth-century sources as bandits or individuals of ill repute. Beyond Jiangnan, it is difficult to coax much evidence of mass resistance out of the historical record. Another researcher has found no noteworthy antipathy in adjoining Anhui province.²⁸ Perhaps the celebrated phrase, “I would rather be a long-haired ghost than a shaven man,” was no more than rhetoric, however heartfelt? Modern, nationalistic historians have, even so, adamantly held that at least one brave man proclaimed, “you can cut off my head but not my hair.” One respected scholar has romanticized the circumstances that made Jiangyin and Jiading famous, concluding that “those who lacked the strength to resist or flee into the hills, or the ardour to take their own lives, built a tomb to bury their hair and wept.”²⁹

So much of what has been written has, unfortunately, been contaminated by anecdotes from the unofficial—or “wild”—histories (*yeshi* 野史, as that genre of folklore, unofficial and often highly imaginative works, is known) and by a conception of Chinese ‘nationalism’ which did not exist at the time. Revd Doolittle may be quite reliable in his observations of nineteenth-century Fuzhou, where “at first, those who shaved their heads and conformed to the laws received, it is said, the present of a tael of silver; after a while, only half a tael, and then only a tenth of a tael, and afterward only an egg. Finally even the egg was not allowed.”³⁰ What seems likely is that the queue *per se*, the *cause célèbre* for so many later nationalists, was not as important an issue as it was made out to be. One unfortunate, executed for having “illegal hair” in the mid-seventeenth century, had willingly adopted the Manchu tail but refused to do any more than trim the fringe at the front.³¹

**Figure 1***Missionary school*(source: Arthur Smith, *Chinese characteristics* [New York: Revell, 1894], p.25)

Since most people are naturally conservative, there were probably a number of reasons why Chinese resisted adopting the Tartar style. Although some modern writers have claimed that Chinese resisted hair-cutting because of their reluctance to part with a gift handed down from their ancestors, the heads of boys were, in fact, shaved even during the Ming Confucian revival, a practice which continued throughout the Qing.³² It could, therefore, be that head-shaving was perceived by adults as an insult. The cutting off of hair in fact accompanied castration in ancient China, and hair was cropped as a form of punishment right up to the eve of the Mongol invasion. From cases reaching the Board of Punishments in the early Qing, we do know that members of certain heterodoxical sects attached magical potency to their long hair.³³ As Philip Kuhn concluded in his study of the role of sorcery and “soul-stealing” in the “queue-clipping” outbreak of 1768, a century after the conquest, the tonsure was still far more important, symbolically, than the queue.³⁴

Some modern historians have correctly referred to Chinese resistance in the seventeenth century as “the anti-hair-shaving struggle.” Communists have been particularly hard on those “traitors” who shaved in order to ingratiate themselves with the Manchu invaders although in the works of the 1950s and 60s this was also attributed to a natural affinity between the Manchu and Chinese ruling classes. One scholar actually stated that ‘landlords’ went out to welcome the barber. Resistance has been attributed to peasants who rallied their brothers to oppose not just foreigners but collaborators. (In contrast, Taiwan-published works have tended to stress the scholar-gentry role in the resistance.³⁵) A 1957 communist work, for example, labelled the resistance “a forty-year people’s war” and concluded that “the Han Chinese recognized that long hair was the symbol of a free race while shaving it off was tantamount to submitting to the Qing dynasty.” Another author insisted that “long hair was a mark of the Chinese race; shaving could not but mean the destruction

³² Gernet, *Daily life in China*, p.131. It is interesting to note that E. D. Harvey, *The mind of China* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1933), p.173, observed well after the 1911 Revolution that the heads of male children continued to be shaved save for a tuft. The practice has survived in northern Taiwan. See E. A. Ahern, “The power and pollution of women,” in *Studies in Chinese society*, ed. A. P. Wolf (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1978), p.279.

³³ *Lisbi dang’an*, pp.7–9.

³⁴ P. A. Kuhn, *Soulstealers: the Chinese sorcery scare of 1768* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1990), pp.53–9. Even so, Muslims in the far West were apparently excused from both the queue and tonsure in the 1750s. See also J. D. Spence, *The search for modern China* (New York: Norton, 1990), p.98.

³⁵ See Gu Cheng, “Lun Qingchu shehui maodun,” pp.139–40, 156–7; Lan Jiadu, “Jiangyin renminde kang Qing douzheng,” p.200; Xiao Yishan, *Qingdai tongshi*, vol.1, p.315; and Chen Zhiping, *Zhonghua tongshi*, p.100. The argument about landlords may not be entirely ‘political’. See the heavily-documented article by Chen Shengxi, “Qingchu tifa lingde shishi yu Hanzu dizhu jieji de paixi douzheng” [The early Qing implementation of the hair-cutting order and factional struggles of the landlord class], *Lisbi yanjiu*, Sept. 1985, pp.9–21.

³⁶ Li Xun, *Ming-Qing shi* [History of the Ming and Qing] (Beijing: Renmin Chubanshe, 1957), pp.153,160; Yang Kuan, "Jiading renminde kang Qing douzheng," pp.215–25; Lan Jiadu, "Jiangyin renminde kang Qing douzheng," p.197.

³⁷ Semedo, *Great and renowned monarchy of China*, p.284; D'Orléans, *Two Tartar conquerors*, p.24; Martini cited by Xiao Yishan, *Qingdai tongshi*, vol.1, p.315; and Hummel, *Eminent Chinese*, p.75.

³⁸ See: Hummel, *Eminent Chinese*, p.75; *Shunzhibishilu*, 21:10a–11a and the interpretations by Gu Cheng, p.147; Xiao Yishan, *Qingdai tongshi*, vol.1, p.315 and *Qingchao yeshi daguan* [An overview of Qing unofficial histories] (Shanghai, 1930), pp.7–8.

³⁹ *Straits Times* (Singapore), 1 Feb. 1898. See also: Giles, *Glossary*, p.664; J. Hutson, *Chineselife in the Tibetan foothills* (Shanghai: Far Eastern Geographical Establishment, 1921), pp.55–6; and W. G. Walsh, "Some funeral customs," *Journal of the North-China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, vol.35 (1903–04): 42.

⁴⁰ S. Naquin, *Millenarian rebellion in China: the Eight Trigrams uprising of 1813* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1976), pp.35, 206–7; idem, *Shantung rebellion: the Wang Lun uprising of 1774* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1981), pp.84, 115; B. Novikov, "The anti-Manchu propaganda of the Triads, ca.1800–1860," in *Popular movements and secret societies in China 1840–1950*, ed. Jean Chesneau (Stanford, Calif.: California University Press, 1972), pp.51–2.

of the nation." One more work from the highly nationalistic 1950s stated outright: "love of hair and love of country were one and the same."³⁶

Seventeenth-century European analysts were not so impressed. Alvarez Semedo accused the Zhejiang rebels of having "fought more desperately for the hair on their heads than they did for King and Kingdom." D'Orléans concluded that resistance to the Manchus ultimately failed because "this mark of bondage appeared to them more insupportable than the bondage itself. Too effeminate and cowardly to save their heads, they became brave to save their hair." Martin Martini wrote that "the matter was as important as country or court."³⁷ Although Chen Mingxia 陳名夏, a former Ming mandarin, displayed the queue and tonsure himself and was rewarded with promotion to Grand Secretary in 1653, he was later strangled for treason when he dared to advocate a return to the old style. Other officials who readily accepted foreign rule nonetheless petitioned the throne for permission to keep their traditional coiffure. Chinese historians tell of Kong Wentan 孔聞譚, a descendant of Confucius, who protested that the official costume had not changed for three thousand years, and begged to leave his long hair unshaven. Many versions of this story exist, passed on by the revolutionary press at the turn of the twentieth century which lamented: "the very name of Confucius would not save his hair." What they neglect to mention is that even this staunch defender of tradition recognized the legitimacy of the foreign Manchu dynasty.³⁸

There are, nevertheless, those who would contend that hair never ceased to be a political symbol; it just went underground. Chinese in Xiamen and Shantou are said to have "concealed the badge of slavery beneath cotton turbans." Zhejiang residents apparently had a saying that "men surrendered but women did not; the living surrendered but the dead did not," and a similar refrain was heard in distant Sichuan province. Coastal practice was observed by a European who noted that "the hair of the dead man is ... combed by the daughters and daughter-in-law, each taking a turn, kneeling and weeping at the same time, and the hair is then rolled up into a kind of knot on top of the head, something like the top knot worn by the Chinese of the Ming dynasty." A version popular in South-east Asia, where the overseas corpse was dressed in Ming fashion, had been stripped of obvious anti-Manchu content: "Alive we serve the Qing, in death we go back to the Ming."³⁹

At the turn of this century, members of the White Lotus sect apparently cut their queues to demonstrate renewed defiance, although most men cautiously removed only a token strand or simply unbraided their hair and wore it loose except for a knot at the end. A small area under the queue could also be shaved or burnt off with moxa as a form of secret identification, a practice followed in the Eight Trigrams uprising in 1813. New brothers unbraided their hair and dressed it in Ming style, at least for the duration of the ceremony, because their ancestors had not worn queues. One scholar has suggested that members of the Hong League, another secret society, attached false queues whenever they went out in public.⁴⁰ However, bandits in South China are known to have let their hair grow long, not so much by way of protest but as a sign of shared

outlaw status—which could be the ironic reason why barbers were not allowed in Qing prisons.⁴¹

Members of the famous Taiping movement (1850–64) were known colloquially as “long hairs” or “hairy rebels.” Recruits let their hair grow wild although, alternatively, many simply hid their queues under red turbans. Charles Taylor reported being surrounded by “fierce-looking ‘long-haired men’.” E. C. Bridgeman advised that they were so unlike ordinary Chinese that the rebels appeared “a new race of warriors.” W. H. Medhurst thought them “unkempt and farouche and very forbidding at first sight.”⁴² And there seems to be no question that this was the intended impression. But also intended was the anti-dynastic message.

In 1853, the rebel leaders issued a proclamation: “The Chinese have Chinese characteristics; but now the Manchus have ordered us to shave the hair around the head leaving a long tail behind, thus making the Chinese appear to be brute animals. ... You are all Chinese people; how can you be so stupid as to cut your hair and follow the demons?” A more questionable document proposed that the Tartars had transformed Chinese “into the shape of beasts.” Hong Ren’gan 洪仁玕 offered this further explanation: “Hair grows on the head as grass grows on the mountains. Mountains without grass will break down and erode and will no longer be pleasing in the eyes of man.” Head-shaving was therefore immoral in the eyes of this pseudo-Christian, not just because hair was God-given, but because it protected the brain and ensured a person was “clear-headed.” Nurtured, as hair was, in the mother’s womb, it was improper to remove it. “God has willed it to grow,” the revolutionary continued, “but you have perversely cut it off!” Yet Hong confessed, two hundred years into Manchu rule, that “nowadays, the masses do not consider the injury of their bodies to be an insult, but consider it a mark of honour to shave the head.”⁴³

By the 1800s, queues could be found throughout East Asia. Not only were they prominent on the overseas Chinese, but visitors to Siberia noted that men there allowed short hair to grow on the crown of the head. Mixed Manchurian-Chinese inhabitants on the Russian coast did “shave the head, and wear a tail” while the natives of Sakhalin dressed their hair “something after the Chinese style” but refrained from shaving the front. Probably the strangest-looking belonged to aboriginal tribes. Men on Hainan island wore their hair “pressed through a ring on the forehead.” When the British consul at Xiamen visited Formosa in the 1860s, he found natives whose hair was short and fringed at the front but hung loose behind. At one village occupied by what the Chinese referred to as “domesticated savages,” however, he found a few young men who, nearly naked, also had their heads shaved “in the Chinese fashion.” Others commonly wore the queue when in town but allowed their hair to grow out at home.⁴⁴ Moreover, tribes in western China gathered all their hair into a knot on the forehead and twisted it up in a cotton cloth so as to resemble a unicorn. As was the case on Formosa, there was pressure to adopt the queue in Chinese-occupied territory but, as one travel-

⁴¹ P. A. Kuhn, *Rebellion and its enemies in late imperial China: militarization and social structure, 1796–1864* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1970), p.173; and C. F. G. Cumming, *Wandering in China*, 2 vols (Edinburgh: Blackwood & Sons, 1886), 1: 48.

⁴² Taylor and Medhurst cited in P. Clarke and J. S. Gregory, eds, *Western reports on the Taiping: a selection of documents* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1982), pp.65, 164–5; *NCH*, 22 July 1854; Bridgeman cited from *North China Herald*, 22 July 1854.

⁴³ V. Y. C. Shih, *The Taiping ideology: its sources, interpretations, and influences*, Publications on Asia, no.15 (Seattle, Wa.: Washington State University, Far Eastern and Russian Institute, 1967), p.136; F. Michael, *The Taiping rebellion: history and documents*, 3 vols (Seattle, Wa.: University of Washington Press, 1971), 2: 145, 150, 178, 279, 283; 3: 814–15. See also Yang Kuan, “Jiading renminde kang Qing douzheng,” pp.215–16.

⁴⁴ R. Swinboe, “Narrative of a visit to the island of Formosa,” *Journal of the North-China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society [JNCBRAS]* 1 (1858): 151–2, 161; and “The aborigines of Hainan” (1873), *JNCBRAS*, n.s. vol.9, p.23; E. C. Taintor, “The aborigines of northern Formosa” (1875), *JNCBRAS*, n.s. vol.1, p.61. For more on the variety and extent of the queue see J. M. Canny, “The sea-board of Russian Manchuria” (1864), p.80; and A. Erman, *Travels in Siberia* (Philadelphia, 1850) as cited in *The China repository*, vol.20 (Jan. 1851), p.21.

Figure 2

"Our second 'boy', bith hair unbraided (Source: Sarah Pike Conger, *Letters from China: with particular reference to the Empress Dowager and the women of China*



⁴⁵ Mrs. J. F. Bishop [I. Bird], *The Yangtze valley and beyond: an account of journeys in China, chiefly in the provinces of Sze Chuan and among the Man-Tze of the Somo territory* (London: John Murray, 1899), p.451; and E. C. Baber, *Travels and researches in western China* (London: John Murray, 1882), p.61.

⁴⁶ F. E. Forbes, *Five years in China: from 1842 to 1847* (London: R. Bentley, 1848.), p.39.

⁴⁷ W. A. P. Martin, *A cycle of Cathay, or China, south and north: with personal reminiscences* (1896: reprint ed., New York: Paragon Book Gallery, 1966), pp.24–5.

⁴⁸ Hummel, *Eminent Chinese*, p.922, and *Gaozong shilu* [Veritable records of the Gaozong reign], 316: 3a–4b.

⁴⁹ J. D. Ball, *Things Chinese: or notes connected with China* (London: John Murray, 1926), pp.220, 603, 609.

⁵⁰ C. T. Downing, *The fanqui in China 1836–37* (London, 1838), as cited in *The China repository*; vol.7 (Canton, 1839), p.331.

⁵¹ For more on the subject of mourning see J. J. M. De Groot, *The religious system of China* (Leiden, 1892–1910; reprint ed. in 6 vols, Taipei: Jingwen Shuju "Literature House," 1964), vol.3, bk.1, pp.335–6, 478–604, 632.

⁵² Doolittle, *Social life of the Chinese*, pp.241, 247; Cumming, *Wandering in China*, vol.2, pp.40–1. Sarah Pike Conger, *Letters from China: with particular reference to the Empress Dowager and the women of China* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1909), also observed (p.20): "There is an etiquette of the queue. It must be braided in a special style, and tied with a black cord and tassels; the black cord is removed and a white cord takes its place in mourning."

ler in the late 1870s observed, "for convenience's sake" men had begun to conceal their "sacred" horns under a turban and to tack on a short "pigtail."⁴⁵

The most ironical situation in Qing China was perhaps that which obtained following the death of an emperor. The heir and other Manchu princes, along with sons, officials and servants, were required to clip off their queues. Banner men were forbidden to shave for one hundred days, and thus, in that age of poor communication, news of an imperial demise was spread by this form of 'bush telegraph'.⁴⁶ The requirements of mourning were therefore inconsistent with shaving. But if hair growth on the forbidden spot was a folly, so was removing it at the wrong moment. W. A. P. Martin reported that a mandarin in Yunnan province was cashiered for calling in his barber too soon.⁴⁷ A similar circularity applied to Manchus; Yinzhi 胤祉, third son of the Kangxi 康熙 emperor, found his rank lowered one degree for shaving his hair after the death of an imperial concubine. The

same ruler was furious when he caught sight of mourners with shaved heads, a precedent recalled by the dowager empress in the Qianlong 乾隆 period who disciplined banner men for their breach of custom and warned of the danger of Manchu traditions being undermined by contact with Chinese.⁴⁸

The ancient *Liji* 禮記 (Book of Rites) required mourners to tie their hair up in a knot, but in Qing times, when this was no longer tolerated politically, males simply unbraided their queues and left their hair "flowing dishevelled down their backs." Sons of the deceased were also permitted to remove the braid, while, in honour of the classical scriptures now endorsed by the Manchus, chief mourners were required not to shave before the seventh week.⁴⁹ C. Toogood Downing, in Guangzhou in 1836, met a waiter whom he wrote about thus:

Instead of the hair being shaved in front, he had it cut round the top of the forehead, about an inch and a half in length. All the other part was turned as usual, and plaited down the back. This thin semicircular ridge of hair was then made to stand bolt upright, and as stiff as a bristle, the whole looked like a very-fine-toothed comb turned upwards instead of downwards.⁵⁰

J. M. M. De Groot believed that not everyone waited so long before getting down to the scalp: "Without any qualms of conscience they all apply to the barber as soon as they think fit and they are specially quick to do so when profession or social standing obliges them to appear in society neat and clean." Others, he continued, "have the stubble on their heads trimmed with scissors, this not being forbidden by the letter of the law."⁵¹

Revd Doolittle discovered that Taoist priests dared to leave their hair long, and rather than braiding it, massed it on the top of the head. Another Westerner, somewhat displeased at being called “red-bridled” by a rowdy crowd, recalled meeting an old hermit, the very first person he had encountered without the front part of the head shaven. The ever-observant Doolittle felt confident enough to note that “the political condition or the religious profession of a Chinese is indicated by the cut of his hair and the dressing of it, as plainly as the colour of one’s neckcloth, or the fashion and colour of one’s apparel, in some Western countries, advertise the wearer’s profession or rank.”⁵²

Clark Abel, chief medical officer on Lord Amherst’s 1816 embassy, reported the consequences of the “universal custom amongst the Chinese, of shaving all but the crown of the head, and of eradicating every straggling hair from the face No circumstance arrests the eye of a stranger in the cities of China more than the great number of barbers.”⁵³ Lieutenant Forbes of the Royal Navy noted that encounters with a barber were a matter of necessity for the gentlemen, “while scarcely a labourer goes more than three or four days unshorn.”⁵⁴ Another European was amused to watch a small boat darting between junks. This was the barber at work “shaving the heads and tickling the ears of Chinamen.”⁵⁵ The inveterate traveller Isabella Bird was struck by the number of itinerant barbers on land. “Their business is an enormous one in China,” she observed, “where hair is regarded as an enemy to be battled with.”⁵⁶ However, J. Dyer Ball believed that “the calling of a barber is one of the most despised in China.”⁵⁷

The tools of the trade were described by many visitors. Abel observed that barbers carried a bamboo pole over their shoulders from which they balanced a stool, furnace, water, razors and assorted brushes. Forbes was impressed that the itinerant barber always managed to keep the water boiling.⁵⁸ Ball observed with wonder: “how the Chinaman stands the torture of a scrape without the mollifying influence of soap is a mystery to an Englishman.” Unlikely as it is that Isabella Bird had first-hand experience, she could still remark that the clients “wore a look of serene contentment.”⁵⁹

Writing of the queue at the time of the Taiping Rebellion, Revd Doolittle believed that Chinese had “entirely forgotten the servile object and violent manner of its introduction.” Hair simply illustrated the power of authority over the people, since neither the rebel nor the imperial side had bothered to consult individual preference.⁶⁰ For John Francis Davis writing in 1836, the queue confirmed the insidious nature of Oriental despotism:

Many are the changes which may be made in despotic countries without notice, or even knowledge, of the larger portions of the community; but an entire alteration in the national costume affects every individual equally,

Figure 3

Chinese barber

(Source: Charles H. Eden, *China*, historical and descriptive [London: Marcus Ward, 1880], p.153)



⁵³ C. Abel, *Narrative of a journey to the interior of China* (London: Longman Hurst, 1818), pp.134–5.

⁵⁴ Forbes, *Five years in China*, p.39.

⁵⁵ R. Fortune, *Three years' wanderings in the northern provinces of China* (London: John Murray, 1847), pp.148–9.

⁵⁶ Bishop [Bird], *Yangtse valley and beyond*, p.90.

⁵⁷ J. D. Ball, *The Chinese at home: or the man of Tong and his land* (London: Religious Tract Society, 1911), p.15.

⁵⁸ Abel, *Narrative*, Forbes, *Five years in China*.

⁵⁹ Ball, *Chinese at home*, p.16; Bishop [Bird], *Yangtse valley and beyond*.

⁶⁰ Doolittle, *Social life of the Chinese*, pp.244–5.

⁶¹ J. F. Davis, *The Chinese: a general description of the empire of China and its inhabitants*, 2 vols (New York: Harper, 1836), 1: 180.

Figure 4

Chinese razor

(Source: Clarke Abel, *Narrative of a journey in the interior of China* (London: Longman Hurst, 1918), p.136)

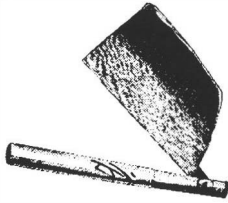
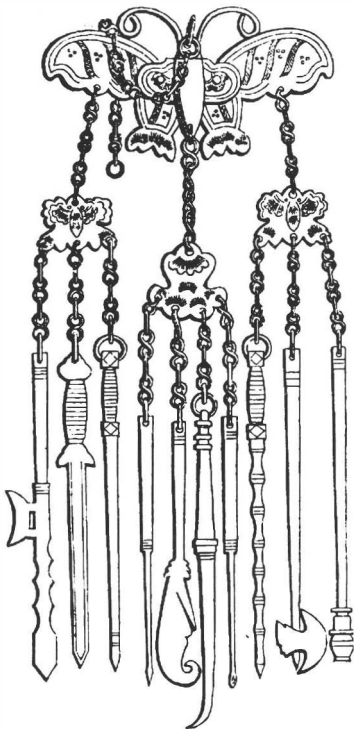


Figure 5

Tools of the trade

(Source: Able, *Narrative*, p.137)



from the highest to the lowest, and is perhaps, of all others, the most open and degrading mark of conquest.⁶¹

Samuel Wells Williams quoted this in his 1843 treatise *The Middle Kingdom*, while Robert K. Douglas reiterated in 1894 that “the manner in which this badge was adopted and the tenacity with which it is now adhered to, are worth note as illustrating the character of the people.”⁶² Moreover, Arthur H. Smith’s best-selling *Chinese Characteristics* concluded:

It was inevitable that such a conspicuous and tangible mark of subjection should have been bitterly resisted, even to the death by great numbers of the Chinese. But the Manchus showed how well they were fitted for the high task which they had undertaken, by their persistent adherence to the requirement, compliance with which was made at once a sign and a test of loyalty. The result is what we see. The Chinese are now more proud of their cues [sic] than any other characteristic of their dress.⁶³

One missionary said it all: “When we consider the Oriental mode of dress as adapted for Orientals, we cannot help recognizing the undoubted fact that for Orientals that dress is exactly suited.”⁶⁴ For most Westerners, Chinese and the queue went together. Both were thought to be clumsy, dirty, and above all, funny.⁶⁵ Erasmus Doolittle wrote in 1830 that one’s first impulse was to laugh. “His cap is fantastic and his head is shaven except on the crown, whence there hangs down a tuft of hair as long as a spaniel’s tail.”⁶⁶ Williams described how Chinese played tricks on one another and pictured three queues tied together. Nothing, he was certain, irritated them more than to have it cut off.⁶⁷

The prejudice was not always so blatant. Lord Macartney once favourably compared the queue to the ramillie—a wig with a long plait at the back tied with a bow top and bottom.⁶⁸ In fact, the queue did not disappear from the British army and navy for another century, but tastes of a bygone era did not stop the sailors on H.M.S. *Nemesis* from rigging a “Chinaman’s tail” after they dressed in captured uniforms to celebrate an Opium War victory. When Chinese surrendered, the crew “cut off their tails—a mark of deep disgrace to a Chinaman—and let them go about their business.”⁶⁹ In 1858, the British



⁶² S. Wells Williams, *The Middle Kingdom: a survey of the geography, government, literature, social life, arts and history of the Chinese empire and its inhabitants* (New York: Charles Scribner, 1883), p.179; R. K. Douglas, *Society in China* (London: A. D. Innes, 1895), p.362.

⁶³ A. H. Smith, *Chinese characteristics* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1894), pp.118–19.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p.99.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ Erasmus Doolittle, cited in S. C. Miller, *The unwelcome immigrant: the American image of the Chinese 1785–1882* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1969), p.29.

⁶⁷ Williams, *Middle Kingdom*, p.762.

⁶⁸ J. L. Cranmer-Byng, ed., *An embassy to China: being the journal kept by Lord Macartney during his embassy to the Emperor Ch’ien-lung 1793–1794* (London: Longmans, 1962), p.320.

⁶⁹ The removal of Chinese queues is recorded by W. H. Hall and W. D. Bernard, *The Nemesis in China: comprising a history of the late war in that country [etc.]* (London: H. Colburn, 1847), pp.70–1. For the story of the queue in the West see L. G. C. Laughton, “Seaman’s Pigtail,” *Blackwood’s Magazine* (Oct. 1929), pp.551–61.

again cut the queues off trouble-makers before expelling them from occupied Guangzhou. Decades later, foreign soldiers took queues as trophies when they relieved the siege of the Beijing legations.⁷⁰ In the final analysis, such actions said as much about the imperialists and their contemptuous attitude toward China as it did about Oriental customs.

The End of the Queue

From a Chinese point of view, it was their nation's humiliation in the Sino-Japanese War of 1895 which caused Sun Yat-sen and many of his associates to lose faith in the Qing dynasty. He recalled: "I cut off my cue which had been growing all my life. For some days I had not shaved my head, and I allowed the hair to grow on my upper lip."⁷¹ In one of his polemics, he charged the Manchus with tyranny for making Chinese shave their heads. His colleague Wang Jingwei 汪精衛 complained that it was a terrible indignity to force a man to shave, because appearance was a critical part of a people's spirit.⁷² Yet another revolutionary proclaimed: "Our people had never endured such an insult,"⁷³ while a like-minded contributor to *Minbao* 民報 (The People's Journal) cried: "The death of hair! The death of the nation!! The death of freedom!!!"⁷⁴

Zou Rong's 鄒容 *Geming jun* (The Revolutionary Army), a 1903 work that had an immediate impact in radical circles, protested that "China is the China of the Chinese, not something the Manchu scoundrels can make their own." The people had become "oxen, horses, slaves and bondsmen," abandoned the costume of the Han and Tang, and rejected the hair of their fathers. "When a man with a queue and wearing Manchu clothes wanders around London," he pressed on, "why do all the passers-by say 'Pig-tail' or 'Savage'?" And if he is in Tokyo, why do they all shout "Chanchanbotsu [pig-tailed Chinaman]?" Indeed, Zou had been so influenced by foreign opinion that he himself used the English word 'pig-tail'.⁷⁵

Zhang Binglin 章炳麟, a scholar-turned-revolutionary who cut off his own queue at a public protest in 1900, attacked both the Qing dynasty and the reform party headed by Kang Youwei 康有為. If, as they argued, Manchus had become culturally indistinguishable from Chinese, it was not because the foreigners had been Sinicized but because the barbarians had forced their ways upon the country. Dress, the shaving of the head, and the queue were proof enough.⁷⁶ Although this sort of ridicule was understandable in that it criticized the reformers for their reluctance to sever ties with the monarchy, it did not portray their actual attitude toward either hairstyle or the national costume.

⁷⁰ F. McCormick, *The flowery republic* (London: John Murray, 1913), pp.371–2.

⁷¹ Sun Yatsen, "Zhongguo wenti zhi zhen jie jue" [The true solution of the Chinese question], in *Guofu quanji* [Complete works of the father of the nation], ed. Jin Xiaoyi, 12 vols (Taipei: Jindai Zhongguo Chubanshe, 1957), 6: 21. See also L. Sharman, *Sun Yat-sen: his life and its meaning* (New York: John Day, 1934), who noted that "it was a momentous hair-cut ... symbolic of an already accomplished inward change" (pp.40–1).

⁷² Wang Jingwei, "Minzu yu guomin" [Nation and citizen] in *Wang Jingwei xiansheng wenji diyi chuan* [Volume 1 of the collected works of Mr Wang Jingwei], ed. Feng Ziyou (Shanghai: Sanmin Gongsi, 1910), pp.17–18.

⁷³ Xiao Yishan, *Qingdai tongshi*, vol.1, p.315.

⁷⁴ *Minbao*, no.2, pp.3–4.

⁷⁵ Tsou Jung, *The revolutionary army. A Chinese nationalist tract of 1903*, transl. J. Lust, *Materiaux pour l'étude de l'extrême-orient et contemporain* (textes), 1, 6 (The Hague & Paris: Mouton, 1968), p.79.

⁷⁶ Tang Zhijun, ed., *Zhang taiyan* /OVER

Figure 6

Cartoon (Shibao, 13 Jan. 1911)



zhenglun xuanji [Selected political essays of Zhang Binglin] (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1977), p.195. Li Chien-nong, *The political history of China, 1840–1928*, transl. Ssu-yu Teng and J. Ingalls (Princeton, N.J.: Van Nostrand, 1956), p.191.

⁷⁷ Wang Ermin, “Duanfayifu gaiyuan: bianfa lunzhi xiangwei zhiqiu” [Cutting hair, changing dress and the calendar: symbolic intentions of reform], in *Zhongguo jindaide weixin yundong—bianfa yu lixian taojibui* [Research conference on the modern Chinese reform movement—reform and the establishment of the constitution] (Taipei: Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica, 1981), pp.60–2.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, pp.62–3.

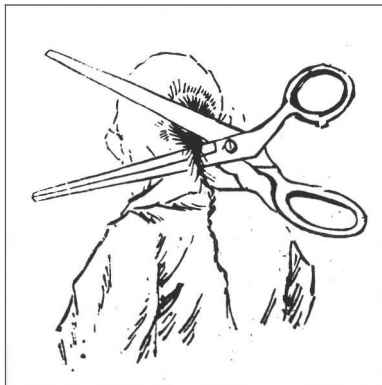
⁷⁹ *NCH*, 9 July 1902.

⁸⁰ Wang Ermin, “Duanfa yifu gaiyuan,” p.64; E. S. K. Fung, *The military dimension of the Chinese revolution and its role in the revolution of 1911* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1980), p.79; and Qiu Zongzhong, “Bianzi jing” (Sept. 1936), p.12. As Sir Charles Eliot observed, queues did “contrast somewhat oddly with their uniforms” but he, too, believed that “the question is not unimportant since it shows a readiness to abandon a national custom which might not have been expected.” *Letters from the Far East* (London: E. Arnold, 1907), p.107.

⁸¹ *NCH*, 23 Sept., 9, 23, 30 Oct., 13 Nov. 1909; Fung, “Military dimension”; *Huazi ribao*, 3 Aug. 1910; *Shibao*, 19 Sept. 1910.

Figure 7

Cartoon (*Shibao*, 30 Nov. 1910)



As early as 1890, the reformer Chen Qiu 陳虬 had, in fact, proposed a loosening of the law so that individuals might follow whatever style was most appropriate. No rebel, Chen advocated the continued use of Manchu dress at court and for official ceremonies, but managed to hint that, just as the King of Zhao 趙 had abandoned ‘barbarian’ clothing some two millennia before and the Manchus themselves had seen no reason to preserve Ming fashion, styles could change. Less prudently, perhaps, he also noted that both of the historical reforms he chose to cite had been accomplished by force. Nevertheless, similar arguments were put two years later in a letter from the Zhejiang scholar Song Cunli 宋存禮 to Viceroy Li Hongzhang 李鴻章, but this time it was also suggested that the self-evident success of the Japanese at modernization might be related to their change of dress—a sentiment shared by the missionary-sponsored *Wanguo Gongbao* 萬國公報 (International News), which ensured wide circulation of the idea amongst like-minded people.⁷⁷

When Kang Youwei still had the young emperor’s ear in 1898, he specifically addressed the issue. A hairstyle which once suited cavalry was no longer proper to the machine age: it was downright dangerous. The Westerners had already removed their queues a hundred-odd years before, so that when Chinese went abroad they were a laughing-stock; their queues were pulled by children; they were insulted and mistreated because China was weak. Under such circumstances, it made good sense for them to cut their hair. The militaristic Romans had done so, as had Tai Bo 泰伯, one of the virtuous descendants of the legendary Zhou 周 kings, who was said to have cut his hair before coming to rule the ancient state of Wu 吳. Could they have achieved great things, Kang asked rhetorically, “if they had not first cut their hair?” While this kind of search for classical precedents characterized Kang’s personal approach to reform, he had also noticed the probable connection between hair-cutting and success in Meiji Japan, and boldly proposed that the Qing ruler should lead the way into the modern era.⁷⁸ Within the next two decades, most Chinese would come to take a greater interest in foreign fashions. Once hair became a battleground in the contest between tradition and modernity, students, reformers, officials and even a Manchu prince, as well as the often eulogized revolutionaries, were caught with scissors in hand.

In mid-1902, Wu Tingfang 吳廷芳, the Chinese Minister in Washington, had already warned the throne that students in America were discarding their queues and donning Western dress. This was not the first time, for youths sent to the United States back in the 1870s had also ‘gone native’, which was one of the reasons the pilot programme was aborted. But Wu, who would soon turn against the traditional hairstyle, dutifully passed on a new imperial ruling that queueless students risked immediate repatriation. Similar orders infuriated those who had been sent to Japan and caused a stir in the vernacular press.⁷⁹ Yet even while revolutionaries tried to convert cast-off braids into political capital, the anti-queue movement was being promoted by a coalition of progressive forces.

In 1904, the *Wanguo gongbao* editorialized that a change of national costume was fundamental to reform. The Commission for Army Reorganisation petitioned for Western-style uniforms and short-haired troops. When they obtained their new uniforms, young officers began to coil their hair under their caps so that it looked as if the queue had been discarded. Students in Hangzhou military schools went ahead and cut their hair in 1907, beginning a nation-wide trend.⁸⁰ Further pressure was applied by the diplomatic corps, but it was the death of the Empress Dowager in November 1908 which gave the reformers real courage. By the following October, as the capital was preparing for the formal burial, the country was rife with rumours that changes would be made. Ironically, the agitation this time was openly led by a Manchu. Prince Zai Tao 載濤, just returned from a world tour, said that his queue had been the object of foreign derision. Reiterating that the Japanese had cut their hair as a first step towards modernization, he called for the immediate abolition of the queue in China's armed forces.⁸¹

Details of the debate which followed at the highest level are not known, although the general issues can be culled from the public record. After explaining that the majority of Chinese in Latin America either cut their queues or tried to conceal them, Wu Tingfang assured the court that hair had nothing to do with political loyalty. Queues were laughed at and dangerous when near modern machinery. However, the fundamental contention was that fashions changed. Support came from other diplomats, the Board of Foreign Affairs, and military leaders, who proposed that those overseas, including students and officials, as well as soldiers and police at home, be exempt from the traditional requirement. Some people advocated that all Chinese likely to come into frequent contact with foreigners should be allowed to "modernize."⁸²

Newspapers were filled with rumours in the second half of 1910 and the entire bureaucracy was in a dither. In August it was reported that the court was still soliciting opinions from mandarins. The following month, while the Grand Council debated the matter, the Boards of both War and Foreign Affairs simply looked the other way when their officers adopted modern hairstyles. The *North-China Herald* was hardly exaggerating when it concluded that "the time devoted to its discussion is held to ridicule, as an indication of the waning power of the dynasty."⁸³ Students came to school with the latest fashion although authorities in Hubei cracked down in November, and Shanghai's popular *Shibao* 時報 (Eastern Times) suggested the true nature of the challenge in a cartoon which shows a boy hiding his face in shame as an adult (his father?)—albeit wearing a western-style suit—points at him a finger of accusation, holding the missing queue in his other hand. By far the greatest controversy came in December when "the hair-cutting tide," as the phenomenon was openly described in the Chinese-language press, hit the

Figure 8

Using the queue as a compass



⁸² *Dongfang zazhi* 8 (Aug. 1910), *Zoudu* [memorials], pp.98–100; *NCH*, 16 Sept., 9 Oct., 13 Nov., 9, 18, 24 Dec. 1909; 15 July, 30 Sept., 1910; *Datong bao* (Shanghai), 8 Oct., 19 Nov. 1909; *Shibao*, 19 Sept. 1910; *Huazi ribao*, 9 Sept., 5 Oct., 12 Nov. 1910.

⁸³ See *NCH*, 7 Jan., 2, 23, 30 Sept., 4, 25 Nov. 1910; *Shibao*, 21 Dec. 1910; *Huazi ribao*, 7, 9 Sept., 5 Oct., 12 Nov. 1910.

Figure 9

Cartoon (Shibao, 21 Oct. 1910)



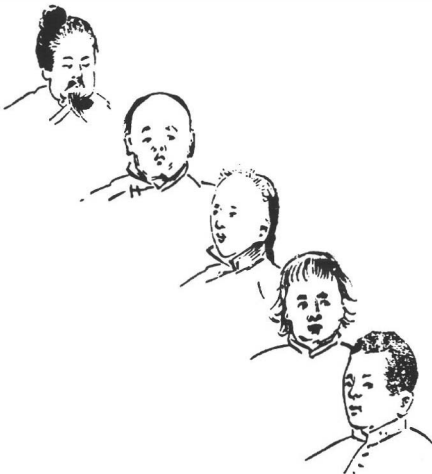


Figure 10
Cartoon (*Shibao*, 17 Dec. 1910)

⁸⁴ *Shibao*, 30 Oct., 22 Nov., 8, 11, 15–17 Dec. 1910; *Datong bao*, 3 Dec. 1910; *NCH*, 25 Nov., 2, 9, 12 Dec. 1910.

⁸⁵ For details of the debate see Qiu Zongzhong, “Bianzi jing” (Sept. 1936), p.12; *Shibao*, 9, 12 Dec. 1910]. *NCH*, 12 Dec. 1910, gave the vote as 102 to 28; *Huazi ribao*, 8, 16 Dec. 1910. E. T. Williams, *China yesterday and to-day* (London: Harrap, 1923) reported (pp.478–9) that one of the dissenters said: “I would rather lose my head than my queue.”

Figure 11
Cartoon (*Shibao*, 13 Nov. 1910)



capital. As new rumours swept the country, the talented cartoonist pictured a razor in suggestively close proximity to still-braided hair.⁸⁴

The situation became critical when the newly-elected National Assembly took up the question. Two abolitionists reportedly lopped off their queues in the heat of the debate. Most agreed that since diplomats and army officers had already done the deed and had not been reprimanded, it was time the throne ruled on the matter once and for all. A few conservatives protested, but most of the dissension was reserved for the concurrent discussion about the national costume. Finally, on 12 December 1910, members—agreeing, when it was moved that the queue was no longer in harmony with the spirit of constitutional government—resolved overwhelmingly that the throne permit all Chinese students, diplomats, government servants, and soldiers to remove their queues.⁸⁵

The *North-China Daily News* took this to mean that “the discarding of the much ridiculed way of hairdressing by the male population of China is now, it is apparent, assured beyond doubt.” Beijing’s *Diguo ribao* 帝國日報 (Imperial Times) gleefully published an open-ended list of prominent queue-doffers, and other papers supported the civil disobedience, reproducing these names under headlines such as “Death to the Queue.” Informal queue-cutting ‘societies’ operated within the shadow of the Forbidden City until, by early 1911, only ten of the several hundred students in one government school, for example, bothered to keep faith with tradition. Another cartoon in *Shibao* depicted five figures illustrating the history of hair in the Middle Kingdom. Whereas the one on the left wore a Ming topknot and the next in line the early Manchu queue with full tonsure, the third gentleman had already allowed hair to grow on his forehead, the fourth had lost his queue, and the last had adopted the so-called modern style. Although the queue was on the way out, there was, in fact, some opposition to “foreign hair.” One Hunan official, who listed all the advantages of a queueless head, nevertheless resisted Japanese and Western styles. Some tried to pile their hair on top, while others adopted a half-cut which resembled a mop. A few had bets each way and, having experienced the moment of liberation, tied their braids back on.⁸⁶

Concerned officials asked the Prince Regent how to handle queueless youth, while leading newspapers debated the pros and cons. *Shibao*, for example, pointed out that Japanese authorities were permitting Chinese residents of occupied Taiwan to retain their queues. Hong Kong’s *Huazi ribao* 華字日報 (Chinese Mail) highlighted the hazards, inconvenience and foreign ridicule, but showed how deeply involved the question had become: “There are those who say that cutting the queue can promote the spirit of the country,” while others ask, “how can the cutting of a queue make a country powerful?”⁸⁷

The imperial response was a masterpiece of equivocation of the kind we have come to expect of modern politicians:

Our systematic distinction in dress to be observed by all classes has so long existed that we would never lightly effect any change. With the exception of the military, naval and police uniforms, which have been sanctioned, for convenience and as a necessity of the time at the suggestion of the yamens concerned, and which are to continue in use, all other Government officials, those engaged in educational work, as well as those in other occupations shall consistently respect Our established law, and shall not lightly give credit to idle sayings.⁸⁸

Although Wu Tingfang and the National Assembly had been careful to separate the hair and clothing issues, leaders in the business community had become concerned about the economic ramifications. Apparently deluged by cables, the Board of Agriculture, Industry and Commerce conveniently blamed a serious trade depression on the rumours concerning the fate of the queue, putting even more pressure on the Prince Regent to come to a decision.⁸⁹

Things had actually gone full circle. The normally progressive commercial ministry had not used the word 'queue' (*bian*) in any of its memorials, employing instead that old euphemism 'cutting hair' (*jianfa*). When the short imperial edict glossed over the question of coiffure, editorialists protested that, rather than slowing the reform, the ambiguous ruling merely promised that changes would not be treated "lightly." Conservatives were convinced that the court was divided, and reformists, sensing victory, renewed their campaign.⁹⁰ It may not be true that Prince Zai Tao threatened to resign or that the imperial guards talked mutiny when it was proposed that, as soldiers, they should set a short-haired example, but the Shandong Governor memorialized for immediate change, repeating that queue-cutting was just the act to symbolize a new national spirit and transform China from a weak into a strong country. The Board of Education hardly agreed, and showed its displeasure by expelling guilty students. The Secretary to the Chinese Legation in Washington, however, was reported to have wielded the shears himself at a queue-cutting party. Big-character posters, not unlike those of the 1960s, attacked the slavish imitation of Western ways, though many others appropriated the sarcasm of foreigners and included images of pigs with braided tails. Satirists



Figure 12

A hopeful examination candidate, with the long, fine queue of the educated élite, searches in vain for his name on the list of the successful posted on the wall of the examination hall—an illustration by Feng Zikai for the novel Baiguang [White Light] by Lu Xun (Source: Feng Zikai huihua Lu Xun xiaoshuo [Feng Zikai's illustrations to novels by Lu Xun] [Hangzhou: Zhejiang Renmin Chubanshe, 1982])

⁸⁶ *North-China Daily News*, cited in U.S. Department of State records relating to internal affairs of China, 1900–1929, 893.4051. *Shibao*, 13 Dec. 1910, 3, 12 Jan. 1911; *NCH*, 20 Jan. 1911; Qiu Zongzhong, "Bianzi jing" (Sept. 1936), p.12.

⁸⁷ *Datong bao*, 24 Dec. 1910; *Shibao*, 21, 22 Dec. 1910; *Huazi ribao*, 19, 22 Dec. 1910.

⁸⁸ *North China Herald*, 21 Dec. 1910.

⁸⁹ U.S. Department of State, *Internal affairs of China*, *NCH*, 23, 30 Sept., 21 Dec. 1910; *Xuantong shilu* [Veritable records for Xuantong reign], 45: 20a; *Zhengzhi guanbao* [Government gazette] (21 Dec. 1910, pp.7–8; *Shibao*, 22, 29 Dec. 1910, and the month of January 1911.

⁹⁰ *Dongfang zazhi*, Jan. 1911; *Zhongguo dasiji* [Chronology of China], p.178; *Shibao*, 3, 9, 12, 21, 25 Jan. 1911.

Figure 13

Cartoon (Shibao, 6 Nov. 1910)



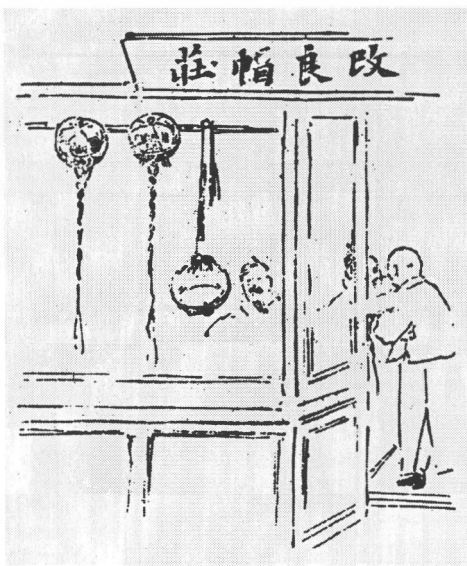
⁹¹ *Datong bao*, 24 Dec. 1910; *Shibao*, 9, 15, 17, 19, 22 Jan. 1911; *New York Times*, 3 Jan, 26 Feb. 1911; and *NCH*, 3 Mar., 3 June, 22 July, 26 Aug. 1911.

⁹² J. W. Inglis, "Moukden in 1911," *Chinese recorder and missionary journal* (July 1911), p.395. See also *NCH*, 6, 12 Jan., 3 Mar. 1911; *Shibao*, 19 Jan. 1911; *Huazi ribao*, 17, 18 Jan. 1911; Chin-chun Wang, "The abolition of the queue," *Atlantic monthly* (June 1911), pp.810–16.

⁹³ *Xuantong shbilu*, 66: 5a.

Figure 14

Cartoon (*Shibao*, 6 Nov. 1910)



⁹⁴ Han Woo-keun [Han U-gun], *The history of Korea*, transl. Lee Kyung-shik (Seoul, 1970; Honolulu: East-West Center Press, 1974), p.432. See also *The Korean repository* (July 1896), pp.263–72; and G. A. Lensen, *Balance of intrigue: international rivalry in Korea and Manchuria, 1884–1899* (Tallahassee, Fla.: University Presses of Florida, 1982), pp.528, 575–9.

ridiculed the practice and, with double-edged wit, depicted their unliberated brothers as cringing dogs. Another 'hair-cutting tide' struck major cities, and in one Shanghai park thousands of spectators watched 'barbers' provide free haircuts.⁹¹

The reaction of the authorities was mixed. A number of Chinese officials were eager to de-politicize hair, and many newspaper editorialists agreed that the end of the queue was not necessarily revolutionary. Public gatherings were suppressed, particularly in South China where the Guangzhou Viceroy ordered the old requirement to be upheld in public schools. With many agents of law-enforcement already themselves queueless, it is hard to believe that the government really cared. The superintendent of police in the Chinese sector of Shanghai had already cut his own hair as an example to the rank and file. Hence, as 1911 progressed, so did tales of queue removal. As one foreigner observed: "if individual men dare quietly to remove them, it would seem that no one interferes." By spring, for active diplomats and many mandarins it was a *fait accompli*. Even police at Mukden, in the very heart of Manchuria, abandoned their queues.⁹² It was finally on 7 December 1911, two months *before* the formal abdication, that the prince regent decreed that all the emperor's subjects were entirely free to wear their hair any way they liked.⁹³ The termination of the queue was thus one of the very last acts of the moribund regime.

Hair as Metaphor

In the 1860s, when young Japanese samurai called for an end to the Tokugawa shogunate, a number of them had already adopted Western hairstyles. A decade later, when the Meiji Emperor grew a moustache and adopted European dress, Japanese could see that times were changing. For a while styles were fluid and three traditions competed: in addition to those opting for tonsorial modernity, some samurai clung to medieval customs, shaving the hair from their temples and across the middle before turning a queue-like appendage forward on the top of the head, while others cut off the topknots or permitted hair to grow on parts of the scalp that had previously been bare. However, when the Japanese attempted to impose a 'modern' coiffure on their neighbours, trouble was inevitable. As one Korean historian has written, the prohibition of the venerated topknot "symbolized the denial of all their customs and traditions," while a Confucianist allegedly replied that he would sooner let them cut off his head than his hair. Although the Korean king announced in the imperial plural that "We have already cut our hair; none of our subjects will dare refuse to imitate us," the countryside was in an uproar. Peasants rioted and those who had cut their hair were afraid to leave the cities.⁹⁴

How tempting it is to accept John Blacking's proposal that "each body in history is also an event in the history of the body."⁹⁵ Novelist Han Suyin tells how her father had had his queue removed in 1903 on his way to study in Europe. Something of a pioneer, he let hair grow on his forehead, learned to part it and to use pomade.⁹⁶ Jiang Menglin 蔣夢麟 had his braid cut off in Shanghai in 1908, before setting off to California. "When the barber applied a pair of long scissors to my hair I felt as if I were on the guillotine—a chill stole over me," he remembered. "With two quick, heavy, cuts my queue fell off and I felt as if my head had gone with it."⁹⁷ Mrs. Theodore Roosevelt, Jr. could not but notice when, soon after the 1911 Revolution, her houseboy in San Francisco suddenly appeared without his customary queue in an "electric-blue suit with padded shoulders" and yellow shoes, with his remaining hair "sticking up in all directions."⁹⁸

In Guangzhou and other centres of insurrection where mobs roamed the streets in search of queues, thousands of Chinese reportedly hid their long hair under a cap or removed less than the full length. While queue-cutting became something of an urban mania, many males, especially those in the countryside, resisted. Many may well have sympathised with Lu Xun's 魯迅 anti-hero Ah Q, who remarked that someone who dressed as an "imitation foreign devil" (*jia yangguizi* 假洋鬼子) or attached a false queue "could scarcely be considered human." Indeed, the further north one travelled, the more in evidence queues were except, perhaps, for that area in Jiangnan where people had a long memory. General Feng Yuxiang 馮玉祥 recalled that some of his men wept when they were asked to sever their queues and he had to pay a dollar each in compensation.⁹⁹

Queue-removal was something of an official crusade in the early years of the Republic. It was deemed a prerequisite for voting in one province, while as late as 1914 Beijing authorities renewed their pressure on the recalcitrant inhabitants of that city. Now it was the police that cut the queues off anyone arrested. Gu Hongming 辜鴻銘, who read six European languages, steadfastly refused to make the change even during the New Culture movement. Likewise ridiculed was Zhang Xun 張勳, the "pig-tailed general"; this self-appointed champion of the old imperial family retained his "slender queue" until 1917, when he attempted to restore the defunct dynasty. And there were undoubtedly others who saved their severed braid, like another of Lu Xun's characters, for just such a day of retribution.¹⁰⁰

Needless to say, the end of the queue did not make a new China. A despondent Lu Xun, whose *Toufade gushi* (The Story of Hair) was written some nine years after the 'revolution', featured two old gentlemen who, after a moment's reflection, conclude that those events which once held out such promise had produced little real change. One of them knowingly slaps the

Figure 15

An illustration from Feng Zikai's pictorial version of Lu Xun's Ah Q zhengzhuan (*The true story of Ah Q*): Ah Q and Little D are deadlocked in struggle, grasping each other's queues (Source: Feng Zikai huihua Lu Xun Xiaoshuo)



⁹⁵ J. Blacking, ed., *The anthropology of the body* (London: Academic Press, 1973), p.4. Mary Douglas has argued that "most symbolic behaviour must work through the human body." *Natural symbols: explorations in cosmology* (London: Barrie & Rockcliff, 1970), p.vii. Readers might also wish to consult V. Turner, *Dramas, fields and metaphors: symbolic action in human society* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1974).

⁹⁶ Han Suyin, *The crippled tree* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1965), p.116.

⁹⁷ Chiang Monlin, *Tides from the west: a Chinese autobiography* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1947), p.67.

⁹⁸ E. Roosevelt, *Day before yesterday: the reminiscences of Mrs. Theodore Roosevelt, Jr.* (Garden City, N.J.: Doubleday, 1959), p. 54.

⁹⁹ *NCH*, 25 Nov., 30 Dec. 1911; *New York Times*, 29 Jan. 1912; *The Times* (London), 8 Dec. 1911; McCormick, *Flourery republic*, pp.116–17, 180, 227, and ch.15 on “Queue-cutting parties,” pp.366–75; *Selected works of Lu Hsun*, 4 vols (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1956–64), 1: 91; E. T. Williams, *China, yesterday and today* (London: Harrap, 1923), pp.478–9; Fernand Farjanel, *Through the Chinese revolution: my experiences in the south and north [etc.]*, transl. M. Vivian (New York: F. A. Stokes, 1916), pp.66–7 and 168–9; Feng Yuxiang, *Wode sbenghuo* [My life] (1937; reprint ed., Shanghai: San Hu Tushu, 1944), pp.169–70.

¹⁰⁰ E. P. Young, *The presidency of Yuan Shih-k'ai: liberalism and dictatorship in early republican China* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University of Michigan Press, 1977), pp.78, 204–5; *NCH*, 4 July, 17 Oct., 19 Dec. 1914; *Internal affairs of China*, 893.4051/3; Jiang Monlin, *Tides from the west*, pp.94, 118; Qiu Zongzhong “Bianzi jing” (Sept. 1936), pp.12–13; and W. A. Lyell, Jr., *Lu Hsun's vision of reality* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1976), pp.56, 105–6, 125, 266,

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back of his head where a queue had once hung and, a few pages later, comments that girls are now bobbing their hair in Western style and confronting school authorities in the capital.

Conclusion

Historians, with their ability to determine change over time, are in a particularly good position to assess the problematic relationship between symbols and culture. Research might yet explain why some Chinese resisted the imposition of the tonsure in the seventeenth century while others accepted the change. Although hairstyle would remain a rallying cry for rebels, the majority eventually adopted the Manchu queue. Perhaps this indicates a lack of nationalism, or nothing much more than pragmatism. Some readers might even want to propose just the opposite: that once styles had changed, the Chinese again became bound to tradition. Of course, it could be argued that the end of the queue meant more than just a changing fashion: after all, it could be taken as symbolizing that the mandate of heaven was also lost, a point of obvious importance to revolutionaries. However, when the Manchus ceased to defend their orthodox style the dynasty was probably doomed well before its opponents, thinking they were evening an old score, administered their *coup de grâce*. Naturally, the end of the queue did not produce a new China, and the fact that the male population ultimately substituted one foreign style for another might be worth further discussion. Hair was again cut short by puritanical communists in the early 1950s—but is growing longer once more.