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## SHANGHAI BEFORE NATIONALISM

史 Ye Xiaoqing 叶晓青

A number of important anti-foreign riots and movements occurred in Shanghai during the twentieth century, and Shanghai is regarded by some scholars as a very politically-conscious city, the most nationalistic city in China.<sup>1</sup> While nationalism has its origins in nineteenth-century Europe, in China it is essentially a twentieth-century phenomenon.<sup>2</sup> The fact that there was no modern nationalism in nineteenth-century China does not mean that there was no anti-foreignism. A survey of the popular press, novels, contemporary writings and memoirs, however, reveals that there was no discernable sense of anti-foreignism in Shanghai before the twentieth century. Quite the opposite. Shanghainese were very keen to accept Western culture—Western material culture in the first instance. Nationalism began to develop around the turn of the century amongst certain new social élite groups as a reaction against foreign power and abuse of privilege, rather than as a resistance to foreign culture *per se*.

### 1. *The Lack of National and Political Consciousness*

Despite the fact that there was a good deal of contact of one type or another between Chinese and Westerners in Shanghai, there were no large-scale conflicts because of differences in race and culture before the twentieth century. There were, admittedly, some clashes between Chinese and foreigners in Shanghai during the nineteenth century, but these were a result of real clashes of interest. The first of these was the Qingpu Incident of 1848, which involved Cantonese and Fukienese sailors and boatmen resident in Shanghai, who, according to some references, “were not peaceably disposed towards the natives of the place.”<sup>3</sup> The Battle of Muddy Flat, in 1854, was

<sup>1</sup> Joseph Fewsmith, *Party, state and local elites in Republican China* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1985), p.13: “Shanghai was undoubtedly, across classes, the most politically conscious city in China. Its labour movement was the largest and, with the possible exception that of Guangzhou (Canton), the best organised in China. Its students were at least as active, if not so well known, as those of Peking. Its merchants were the most nationalistic and progressive in the nation.”

<sup>2</sup> Nicholas R. Clifford, *Shanghai, 1925: urban nationalism and the defense of foreign privilege* (Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, University of Michigan, 1979) p.xi; J. V. Davidson-Houston, *Yellow creek, the story of Shanghai* (London: Putnam & Co., 1962), pp.127–38.

<sup>3</sup> Alexander Michie, *The Englishman in China* (1900; reprint ed., Taipei: Ch'eng-wen Publishing Co., 1966), p.129. Cf. also G. Lanning and S. Couling, *The History of Shanghai* (Shanghai: Kelly & Walsh, 1921), pp.296–303; F. L. Hawks Pott, *A short history of Shanghai: being an account of the growth and development of the International Settlement* (Hong Kong and Singapore: Kelly & Walsh, 1928), p.22–3; J. K. Fairbank, *Trade and diplomacy on the China coast: /OVER*

/the opening of the treaty ports, 1842–1854, 2 vols (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1964/1969), 2: 407.

<sup>4</sup> C.A. Montalto de Jesus, *Historic Shanghai* (Shanghai: *Shanghai Mercury Ltd*, 1909), p.42.

<sup>5</sup> *Shen Bao*, 4 May 1874.

<sup>6</sup> Pott, *History of Shanghai*, pp.95–8, 128–9; Montalto de Jesus, *Historic Shanghai*, pp.240–4; Ge Enyuan, ed., *Shanghaisiming gongsuo da shi ji* [A record of major events relating to the Ningbo Guildhall incident] (Shanghai: Juzhen Fangsong Yinshuju, 1920); *Minguo Shanghai xianzhi* [Supplementary Gazetteer of Shanghai county during the Republic], reprint ed. (Taiwan: Ch'eng-wen Publishing Co., 1975), vol.3, *juan* 14, pp.28–9; Kuai Shixun, *Shanghai gonggong zujieshibiao* [A draft history of the Shanghai settlements], reprint ed. (Shanghai: Renmin Chubanshe, 1980), pp.432–3; Sun Baoxuan, *Wangshanlu riji* [Diary of the Master of Wangshan Studio] (Shanghai: Guji Chubanshe, 1983), p.86.

<sup>7</sup> Elizabeth Perry, “Tax revolt in late Qing China: the Small Swords of Shanghai and Liu Depei of Shandong,” *Late Imperial China*, vol.6, no.1 (June 1985): 83–111.

<sup>8</sup> Richard W. Rigby, *The May 30th movement: events and themes* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1980), p.19.

<sup>9</sup> Shanghai Tongshe, ed., *Shanghai nianbiao* [A chronology of Shanghai], unpublished MS, Shanghai Library; cf. also Pott, *History of Shanghai*, p.124.

<sup>10</sup> Michie, *Englishman in China*, p.124.

<sup>11</sup> Pott, *History of Shanghai*, pp.21–2.

foreigners in Shanghai during the nineteenth century, but these were based on real clashes of interest. The first of these was the Qingpu Incident of 1848, which involved Cantonese and Fukienese sailors and boatmen resident in Shanghai, who according to some references “were not peaceably disposed towards the natives of the place.”<sup>3</sup> The Battle of Muddy Flat, in 1854, was purely a military clash, and in any case was with troops from the Imperial forces which had been sent to Shanghai to suppress the Small Swords, not with the local people.<sup>4</sup> There were two major clashes between foreigners and Chinese in the last two decades of the nineteenth century: the Ningbo Guild Incident and the Wheelbarrow Pullers’ Anti-Tax Riot. These two incidents were based on real clashes of interest rather than anti-foreignism as such. The Ningbo Guild Incident, for example, was directed against the French, and specifically not against the British.<sup>5</sup> The Wheelbarrow Pullers’ Anti-Tax Riot was directed against the Municipal Council, and was instigated by an increase in the wheelbarrow tax levy.<sup>6</sup> It could be considered rather a type of tax revolt, similar to those discussed by Elizabeth Perry.<sup>7</sup> In general, as Richard Rigby has noted, “During the first sixty years of the International Settlement, the Chinese on the whole submitted passively to foreign rule. What occasional riots or disturbances there were, were only quarrels over particular matters, with no deep seated causes or wider significance.”<sup>8</sup>

During 1891, several anti-missionary incidents, including the destruction of churches and the killing of missionaries, occurred in Nanjing, Wuhu, Yangzhou and other areas near Shanghai. Anti-foreign leaflets were distributed in the streets of Shanghai, including Xujiahui. Liu Kunyi 刘坤一, the Governor-General of Liang-Jiang (Jiangsu, Jiangxi and Anhui), ordered the *daotai* of Shanghai to protect missionaries. Orders to this effect were issued, and armed troops were posted near churches and missionary property. It was clearly a tense time for foreigners in Shanghai, but no anti-foreign activity occurred.

A few years later the Boxer movement spread throughout China, but there is no evidence of any support for the Boxers in Shanghai.

There were probably two reasons for this lack of anti-foreign sentiment. Foreigners in Shanghai at that time regarded the native Shanghainese as peaceful and friendly by nature. In describing the earliest days of Shanghai, Alexander Michie noted: “... the consul maintained good relations with the native authorities and no hostile feeling existed between the foreign and native communities. The circumstances of the place were favourable to all this: the foreign residents were not, as at Canton, confined to a narrow space ... The people of that part of the country are of a peaceable and rather timid disposition.”<sup>10</sup> Similar comments can also be found in Pott’s *A Short History of Shanghai*: “Compared with the life in the factories of Canton where the merchants were confined in a small circumscribed area, the residents of Shanghai enjoyed considerable freedom, but they were not allowed to penetrate into the country around the settlement so far that they could not return to Shanghai the same day. As the shooting was excellent, and the villagers friendly, these expeditions into the country were most enjoyable.”<sup>11</sup>

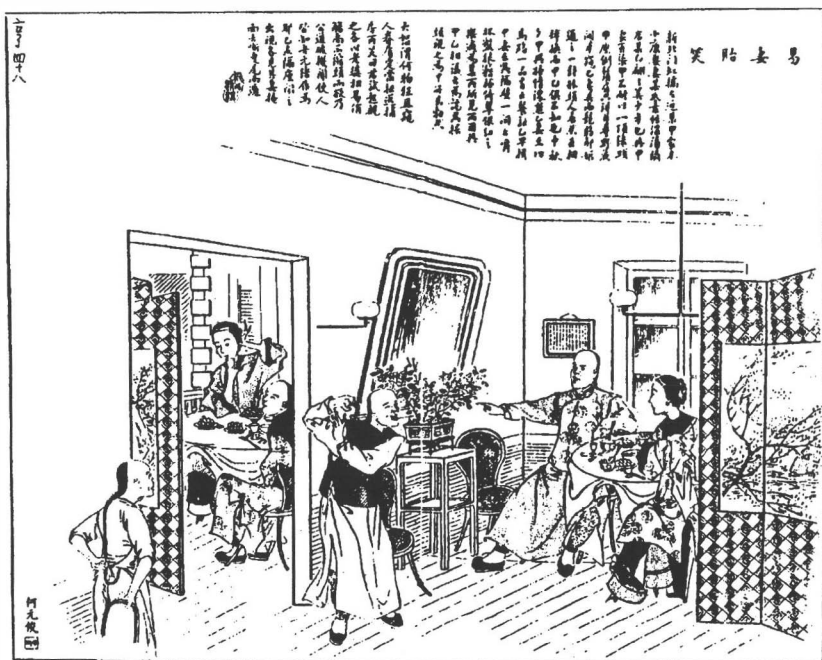
In Canton, Westerners even avoided going to the city so as to avoid stirring up any violent clashes.<sup>12</sup> Not long after the Treaty of Nanjing (1842), Qi Ying 耆英, the Governor of Guangdong and Guangxi, wrote: "... the nature of the Cantonese is fierce and violent ... there is indeed implacable enmity between the people and the barbarians ... so if the matter of their entering the city is raised, there is great public outrage. The people want to eat their flesh and sleep on their skins. Even if you try to convince them with great sincerity, they will certainly not compromise."<sup>13</sup> Lanning and Couling tried to analyse the reasons for this difference in attitude: "There was good reason why the Shanghai people as a whole appeared as friendly as they really were ... it was very soon discovered that the Shanghai native belonged to practically a different race from the Cantonese with whom alone visitors to China during the previous century had been intimately acquainted. Most Shanghai residents were blissfully ignorant of the history of the Kingdom of Wu, but they soon saw the difference between the men of Wu and those of the Nanyüeh, the Cantonese. Not only were the two languages as wide apart as two European tongues, but the native characteristics were equally separated. Where the Cantonese was aggressive, his Shanghai contemporary was peacefully complaisant. The southerner was a radical: the native of Wu a conservative. Shanghai had long since been reconciled to the *de facto* native government: Canton was ever ready to intrigue and rebel. As against the foreigner, the Cantonese was stand-offish at best, and had on many occasions shown active antipathy, particularly since the war, while the Shanghai man, though not impulsively pro-foreign, was at least willing to meet friendly advances half way. When, therefore, we find most of the early troubles with

<sup>12</sup> H.B. Morse, *The international relations of the Chinese empire, 3 vols* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1910-18), 1: pp.367-87.

<sup>13</sup> *Chou ban yiwu shimo* (Daoguang chao vol.6, p.3170), quoted in Yuan Jicheng, *Jindai Zhongguozujieshibiao* [A draft history of foreign settlements in modern China] (Beijing: Zhongguo Caizheng Jingji Chubanshe, 1988), p.9. Generally speaking, the Shang-hainese were not aggressive, nor did they appreciate such behaviour. In 1888 the *Dianshibizhai* (see n.15 below) reported on the case of a certain Liu Guilu 刘桂露 from Jiangbei, who suddenly went mad: one day in the early morning he grabbed a knife and rushed out into the streets, slashing at whomever he came upon. In all he wounded fif-teen people. The remarkable thing was that when he was arrested and asked why he wanted to kill people, "Liu laughed loudly and said, 'I wanted to kill foreigners.'" Then everyone knew he was mad." (*Mao* 21).

<sup>14</sup> Lanning and Couling, *History of Shanghai*, pp.295-6.

<sup>15</sup> The *Dianshibizhai* was a pictorial magazine distributed with the *Shen Bao* from 1884 to 1898. For a description of the *lover*



**Figure 1**

*Inside the Yipingxiang Restaurant, a Western establishment run by Chinese. Men with queues and women with bound feet can be seen eating with knives and forks. They are all ordinary people, probably fairly well off. The sketch refers to a husband who went to the Yipingxiang with his lover, and his wife who also happened to go to the the Yipingxiang at the same time*

/Dianshizhai and an analysis of the types of migrants to Shanghai, see Ye Xiaoqing, "Dianshizhai Huabao zhong de Shanghai pingmin wenhua" [Shanghai popular culture in the Dianshizhai Pictorial], *Ersbiyi sbiji* 1: 36–47). References to the *Dianshizhai* in this article are to the forty-four volume edition republished in 1983 by Guangdong Renmin Chubanshe.

<sup>16</sup> Yao Gonghe, *Shanghai xianhua* [Chats on Shanghai] (Shanghai: Shangwu Yinshuguan, 1917), p.143.

<sup>17</sup> Lanning and Couling, *History of Shanghai*, p.487.

<sup>18</sup> Yao, *Shanghai xianhua*, p.5.

<sup>19</sup> Wang Tiejai, ed., *Zhongwai jiu yue zhang huibian* [Collection of treaties between China and foreign countries in former times] (Beijing: Sanlian Shudian, 1957), vol.1, p.102.

<sup>20</sup> Guo Tingyi, *Jindai Zhongguo shishi rizi* [Daily record of current affairs in modern Chinese history] (Taiwan: Zhengzhong Shuju, 1963), p.927.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Xianggang Xiandai Chuban Gongsi ed., *Sbili yangchang hua Shanghai* [Ten li of foreign territory: talks on Shanghai] (Hongkong, 1976), vol.1, pp.30–1; Hua ye

natives in or about the settlements in the early days arising from Fokien men or Cantonese."<sup>14</sup>

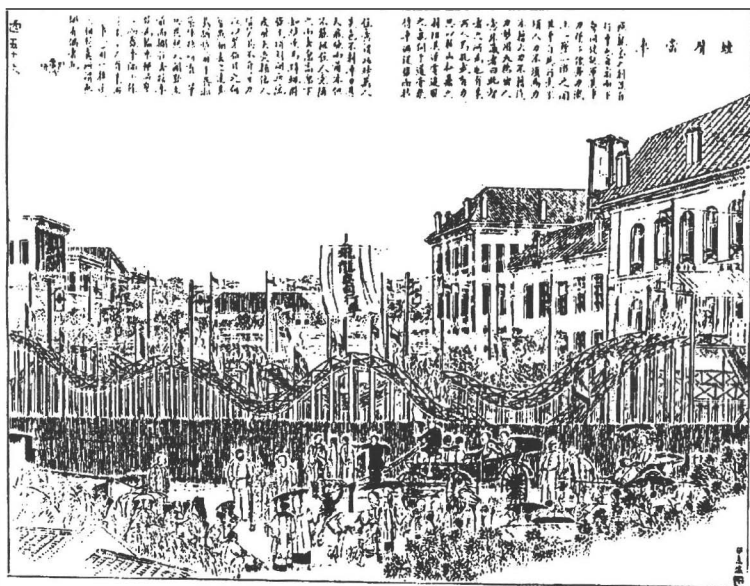
The second reason is simple but very significant: immigrants to Shanghai had gone there in search of opportunities lacking elsewhere. Such people had no strong anti-foreign feelings, otherwise they would not have gone to Shanghai at all. There may have been some exceptions, of course, but such was the general rule.<sup>15</sup> An example of such an exception was the scholar resident in the Chinese City of Shanghai who prided himself on the fact that he had never set foot inside the foreign settlements.<sup>16</sup>

For these two reasons, the residents of Shanghai before the twentieth century did not have any particular feelings of antipathy towards foreigners. This was reflected in even minor aspects of everyday life. All Chinese dialects have various derogatory terms for foreigners. "The Cantonese pronunciation of the characters 番鬼, meaning foreign devils, is used as an insulting epithet. The corresponding term in the North is 洋鬼子 Yang Kuei Tzu."<sup>17</sup> In Shanghai, however, the normal expression is *nga-kok nyung* 外国人, a neutral term with no derogatory overtones. Yao Gonghe noted: "At that time they called foreigners *yangguizi* 洋鬼子 or *yren* 夷人. In the inner parts of China that was the case everywhere. Only in Shanghai did women and children, young and old, from ancient times to the present day, call foreigners *wai guoren* 外国人."<sup>18</sup> Chinese officials during the Qing generally referred to Westerners as *yi* 夷, usually translated 'barbarians'. In the Sino-British Treaty of Tianjin of 1858, Clause 51 reads: "From now on, in all official documents,

whether in the capital or the provinces, in any reference to Great Britain, the character 夷 'barbarian' should never be used."<sup>19</sup> Even as late as 1895, the Court had to reiterate that the word 'barbarian' was not to be used in memorials.<sup>20</sup> In the 1860s, the Shanghaiers referred to the International Settlement as the 'barbarian quarter', *yichang* 夷场.<sup>21</sup> In 1873, the *Shen Bao* published an editorial "In defense of the character *yi*,"<sup>22</sup> in which they argued that the term was not derogatory—or at least its founder, Ernest Major, was convinced that that was the case. In 1874 he published a letter in the *North-China Herald*, arguing that *yi* was "a refined term for foreigner." He went on: "The Chinese have been the subject of much obloquy amongst western nations for the supposed discourteous epithet of 'Ee'; and from fairness to them, it becomes a matter of at least some interest, if it can be proved that the favourite word 'Barbarian', ironically

## Figure 2

1890: A roller-coaster. The sketch shows men, women and children queuing up for a ride, and more people outside awaiting their turn. Sikh and Chinese policemen are maintaining order





applied by us to ourselves, turned out to be a myth of our own imagination."<sup>23</sup> Major's argument did not convince all readers of the *North-China Herald*, however, and the debate continued for several months.

It is not clear when the term 'barbarian quarter' gave way to 'ten li of foreign settlement'—*shili yangchang* 十里洋场, but in the *Dianshizhai* of the 1880s only the latter term was used. The term 'barbarian quarter' was used only once in the *Dianshizhai*, and then purposely, in the context of condemning the International Settlement authorities for using Chinese convict labour in building projects.<sup>24</sup>

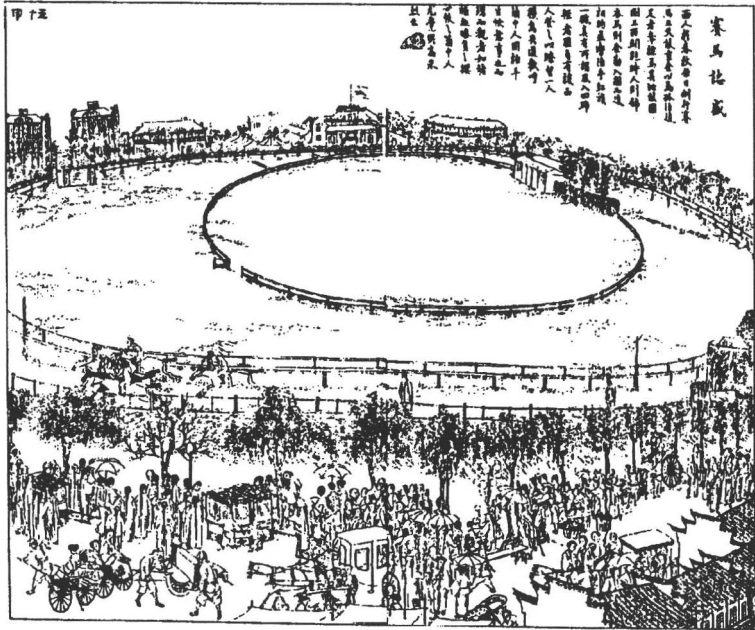
The general consensus of opinion is that relations between Chinese and Westerners were excellent.<sup>25</sup> In 1887 the *Dianshizhai*, in commenting on a traffic accident, said: "In this port, Chinese and Westerners have got along well together for a long time. Even in the middle of the night people can travel safely. There are no restrictions on their movements."<sup>26</sup>

The lack of anti-foreign sentiment amongst the Chinese of Shanghai in the nineteenth century was conducive to their acceptance of many aspects of Western material culture. The Shanghaiese were always enthusiastic about something new, something fancy, such as Western restaurants, Western entertainment, and even Western sports. Chinese never took part in these sports themselves, but they were certainly enthusiastic spectators. In all the sketches in the *Dianshizhai* about various sports, Chinese are always amongst the spectators. In reports in the *Shen Bao* on horse-racing and boat-racing, there are often descriptions such as "Chinese and Western spectators were packed together like a wall, and the crowding was extraordinary."<sup>27</sup> In 1873 the *Shen Bao* carried a report to the effect that the prize for a track-and-field competition was awarded by a local Chinese bank, noting that "this is meant to extend the friendship between Chinese and Westerners."<sup>28</sup>

For Westerners, of course, such activities came under the rubric of 'sport'. For the Chinese, however, such occasions performed the social role of a new type of festival. Every year, at a particular time or season, old and young, men and women, would dress in their best clothes to observe these activities with great interest and enthusiasm. They were never actually permitted to take part in them, of course, nor would they have wanted to, but that did not diminish their enthusiasm for going to have a look.

**Figure 3**

1884: Horse-racing. The Chinese spectators are from all social backgrounds—officials, poor pedlars, prostitutes, women and children. They were not permitted to take part in the sport, but had no objection to this, as they could enjoy the spectacle more by watching than by participating



/liannong (Han Ziyun), *Haisang hua lie-zhuan* [Flowers on the sea], reprint ed. (Taipei: Tianyi Chubanshe, 1974), ch.15, p.10; ch.27, p.11; ch.32, p.6.

<sup>22</sup> *Shen Bao*, 21 November 1873.

<sup>23</sup> *North-China Herald*, 19 February 1874.

<sup>24</sup> *Gui* 8.

<sup>25</sup> A news item in the *Shen Bao* (12 April 1873) reported that a drunken Westerner had got into a fight with some local residents. The report opened with the words: "Chinese and foreigners have maintained harmonious relations for quite a long time. Rarely do we hear of any disputes or disturbances."

<sup>26</sup> *Ren* 96. In his memoirs, Li Pingshu also gives us some indication that other Chinese regarded the Shanghaiese as being on relatively good terms with foreigners. In 1899 the French occupied Guangzhou Bay. Li Pingshu, in his capacity of Magistrate of Suixi county, led a group of local villagers to protest, and was later dismissed from his position. The next year Li Hongzhang /OVER

/remarked, "You are a Shanghainese; you should be used to dealing with foreigners, but you utterly failed to make an appraisal of your own position." Cf. Li, *Zixu*, p.45.

<sup>27</sup> *Shen Bao*, 29 October 1872, 5 November 1873, 24 October 1874, 5 May 1875.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 19 May 1873.

<sup>29</sup> *Mu* 57–64, *xia*.

<sup>30</sup> Haishangshushisheng, *Haishangfanbua meng* [Dreams of the splendour of Shanghai] (1898; reprint ed., Shanghai: Guji Chubanshe, 1991), vol.1, pp.377–8.

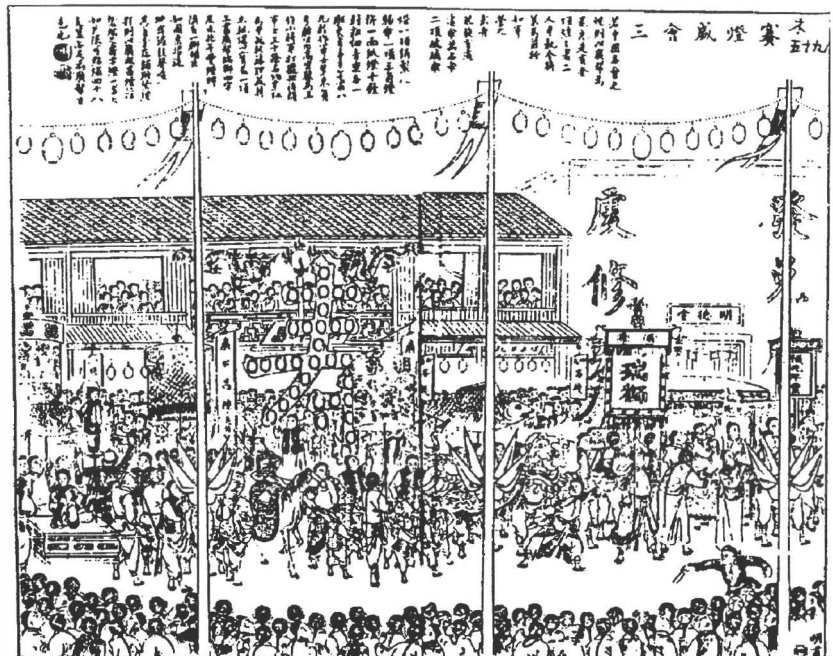
Various types of celebrations in the settlements performed much the same function. They may have had political or patriotic significance to the Westerners, but to the Chinese they were no more than a lively, energetic display of colour, enthusiasm and excitement.

A good example of the lack of political or nationalist consciousness amongst people in late nineteenth-century Shanghai was their attitude towards the celebrations on the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the settlements, in 1893. When the Reverend Muirhead read his address on the Bund, recalling the achievements of fifty years of Western settlement in Shanghai, there was a huge crowd of Chinese there to listen, displaying no antagonism or opposition to him at all. (Of course, they were not able to understand his speech, which was in English.) Both Chinese and Westerners cooperated to organize the anniversary celebrations. Wealthy merchants, guilds and associations, and ordinary people all enthusiastically participated. Not only were the streets crowded with people, but even the windows and balconies of the houses facing the main streets were packed. Many of them had come in for the day from outlying districts. Fares on carriages and rickshaws increased tenfold, and all hotels and other lodgings were booked out. This harmonious atmosphere is quite clear in no less than nine sketches in the *Dianshizhai*.<sup>29</sup> A similar description can be found in the late Qing novel *Haishang Fanbua Meng*.<sup>30</sup>

The following year witnessed the sixtieth birthday of the Empress Dowager, and the enthusiasm of the merchants and people of Shanghai on this occasion was obviously much less than the previous year. The

#### Figures 4 & 5

1893: Fiftieth Anniversary of the Foundation of the Foreign Settlements. The sketch on the left shows Cantonese merchants and that on the right the Ningbo Clique. The signs on the lanterns read "Grand Celebration on the Foundation of the Open Port"



*Dianshizhai* devoted only one sketch to it, and even mentioned that the scope of the celebrations could not be compared to those of the jubilee. One interesting aspect of the jubilee celebrations is that one lantern had the words "In Anticipation of Her Majesty's Birthday."<sup>31</sup> The fiftieth anniversary celebrations and the birthday of the Empress Dowager were not really connected at all, but in the eyes of the Shanghaiens they were much the same sort of thing—at least there was no political difference between them. The streets of Shanghai were packed with enthusiastic revellers on other similar occasions, such as the birthday of Queen Victoria or Bastille Day. This sort of cooperative attitude does not imply political support for the Settlement authorities, but it does demonstrate that the Shanghaiens had no clearly defined national consciousness or antagonism towards foreigners. In fact, they even developed a feeling of admiration for the West, especially for its humanitarian tradition. For example, the practice of 'taking a bride by force' (*qiangqin* 抢亲) was very common in Shanghai. If the Settlement police, or any other foreigner, were to witness such an attempt, they would be sure to intervene. The *Dianshizhai* gave two examples of such attempted kidnappings in the main streets of the Settlement; in both cases they were foiled by the intervention of a Westerner or the police.<sup>32</sup> The way Western hospitals treated their patients also left a strong impression on the Shanghaiens, and the *Dianshizhai* commented: "Westerners value highly benevolence and righteousness."<sup>33</sup> In 1889 the *Dianshizhai* gave a report of a missionary who had run a school for deaf, dumb and blind children in Bombay and had been very successful. He had come to Shanghai to establish a similar school.

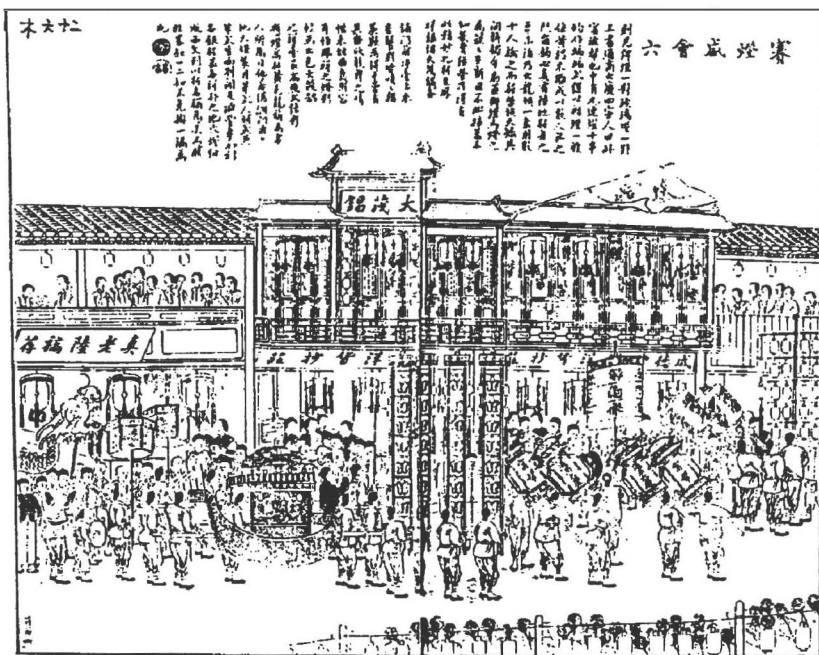
<sup>31</sup> "Yu zhu wanshou" 预祝万寿 (*She* 58).

<sup>32</sup> *Wu* 80; *Ji* 72.

<sup>33</sup> *Yu* 42.

<sup>34</sup> *Yi* \* 2.

<sup>35</sup> In 1884 the *Dianshizhai* carried a report of an incident in a silk filature. A group of women workers were queuing to receive their wages, when one lost a hair-ornament in the crush. She was so upset she began to cry loudly. When the foreign foreman heard of this, he paid the woman the cost of replacing the hair-ornament in addition to paying her wages, and even arranged for someone to escort her home. The commentary was fulsome in its praise: "Westerners, it could be said, are good at practising what they preach." (*Jia* 89, *xia*).



<sup>36</sup> *Mao* 14, *xia*.

<sup>37</sup> *Gui* 8; "Lun bufang ya zuo kugong" [On the use of prisoners to perform hard labour], *Shen Bao* editorial, 20 March 1887.

<sup>38</sup> *Shen Bao*, 4 May 1895.

<sup>39</sup> *Chen* 49, *Sbu* 48, *Yin* 18.

<sup>40</sup> Yen-p'ing Hao, "Changing Chinese views of Western relations, 1840–95," in *The Cambridge history of China*, vol.2: *Late Ch'ing, 1800–1911*, pt.2, ed. J. K. Fairbank and Liu Kwang-ching (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), pp.156–90.

<sup>41</sup> *Jia* 81, *xia*.

<sup>42</sup> *Shen Bao*, 31 October 1872.

<sup>43</sup> In the *Dianshizhai* there are reports of a steward of a certain foreign household who reduced the fare payable to a rickshaw driver (*Jia* 81, *xia*) and of a young servant who bought a watermelon for his Western master. The pedlar called him "Mister Boy" *Xizai xiansheng*, whereupon he became very angry: "You can call me Mister; there's no need to add Boy!" The pedlar's language was inappropriate, so the young servant beat him (*Jin* 40, *xia*).

<sup>44</sup> Charles M. Dyce, *The model settlement* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1906), p.154.

<sup>45</sup> Zheng Yimei, *Shanghai xianhua* (2) [Chats on Shanghai (2)] (Shanghai: Wenhua Chubanshe, 1957), p.8.

<sup>46</sup> *Zhu* 40, *Sbu* 16, *Ge* 71, *Xin*\* 88.

<sup>47</sup> *Zhu* 40.

<sup>48</sup> Liang Qichao, *Wushi nian lai Zhongguo jinbua gailun* [An overview of Chinese evolution in the last fifty years] (Shanghai: Shen Bao Guan Zuijin Wushi Zhounian Jilun, 1923), p.3.

<sup>49</sup> *Heng* 87. This state of affairs was by no means limited to Shanghai. In his essay on the need to establish proper schools for the study of Western languages, Feng Guifen/

The sketch shows the doors and the windows of the school surrounded by curious onlookers.<sup>34</sup> This attitude of respect and helpfulness towards the disabled undoubtedly made a strong impression on the Chinese.<sup>35</sup>

Chinese employed by Westerners often praised them for their fairness and honesty. In 1888 the *Dianshizhai* carried a report about a time-bomb which had exploded on a steamship in mid-ocean, *en route* from London to Australia. The man who had hidden the time-bomb had done so to claim 80,000 ounces of silver in insurance. This was quite a sensational and terrifying story to the Chinese. The commentary was: "Even someone with the slightest conscience could not bear to do such a thing. So now we know that there are treacherous and malicious people amongst Westerners, ten times worse than the Chinese. Some people who scamper around foreign firms always say that Westerners are upright and trustworthy, but what they say is based on only what they have seen."<sup>36</sup> The commentary was quite objective, and did not deny the impression of Westerners gained by those Chinese working for them in Shanghai.

The educated, such as the commentators of the *Dianshizhai* and the editors of the *Shen Bao*, were neither pro-Western nor anti-Western as a matter of principle; their attitude depended very much on individual experience. When the authorities in the settlements used convict labour to build roads, the *Dianshizhai* and the *Shen Bao* condemned it,<sup>37</sup> but they gave their full support to Mrs Archibald Little and the Anti-Footbinding Movement.<sup>38</sup>

At much the same time, a new set of cultural values was forming in Shanghai, first at the popular level, out of a desire to imitate the West. Certain imported goods like dark glasses, cigarettes, and so on, functioned as status symbols.<sup>39</sup> The national consciousness of the literati, even if it could not be considered modern nationalism in the strict sense, was of course much stronger and more clearly defined than that of ordinary people. One group completely rejected Western culture in all its forms—those who opposed the Self-Strengthening Movement, for example. The other group was very anxious to "learn from the West," but their aims were "wealth and power" for China.<sup>40</sup> This was very different from the uncritical emulation of everyday Western culture by the ordinary Chinese living in the foreign settlements of Shanghai.

Relations between Chinese and foreigners in Shanghai may have been harmonious, but there could be no doubt that the foreign authorities were the dominant group. The desire to emulate them was based on this political fact. Some Chinese, in their efforts to ally themselves with this group, relied on the power and prestige of foreigners to oppress other Chinese.

In 1884 the *Dianshizhai* mentioned certain rickshaw-pullers who were happy to have foreigners ride in their rickshaws: "They are all customers, but when they carry Westerners, they really leap."<sup>41</sup> The rickshaw-pullers were happy to have Western passengers, of course, because they could expect a larger fare from them—even though there were some who refused to pay the fare requested.<sup>42</sup>

Employees in foreign firms, and even servants in foreign households, considered themselves a cut above the rest.<sup>43</sup> This sort of attitude was also mentioned in books written by Westerners. When servants accompanied their masters on hunting expeditions in the countryside around Shanghai, for example, they would, on occasions, refuse to pay a sufficient amount for supplies from the peasants, threatening them that their Western masters would shoot them if they were not willing to accept the sum offered.<sup>44</sup>

An extreme example were the carriage-drivers of Shanghai, whose occupation had appeared, of course, as a result of Western influence. Their conditions being vastly better than those of ordinary workers, they developed a sense of superiority which led them to bully the weak and the poor, giving them a bad reputation.<sup>45</sup> Those in the *Dianshizhai* were mentioned because of their arrogance towards poor people, and their insulting attitude towards women.<sup>46</sup> As the *Dianshizhai* commented: "Recently we have heard a lot of news about carriage-drivers in the International Settlement causing trouble. Although they are strictly restrained by the police, alas, their perverse nature is already formed, and they are unwilling to change. We often see a carriage-driver, holding high his reins, come through the ten *li* of foreign settlement. Whenever a rickshaw crosses their path, the rickshaw must give way. If there is the slightest hesitation, they will gallop straight ahead, brandishing their whips, and even bump into pedestrians. Then they will certainly take their whips and viciously attack them . . ." It went on to report how a carriage-driver in Nanjing Road had knocked over a middle-aged woman and a child and then given them a good cursing, which went on until onlookers reprimanded him, and he ran away.<sup>47</sup>

/had the following to say on the general standard of competence of the so-called linguists of the day: "Nowadays those familiar with barbarian affairs are called 'linguists'. These men are generally frivolous rascals and loafers in the cities and are despised in their villages and communities. They serve as interpreters only because they have no other means of making a livelihood. Their nature is boorish, their knowledge shallow, and furthermore, their moral principles are mean. They know nothing except sensual pleasures and material profit. Moreover, their ability consists of nothing more than a slight knowledge of the barbarian language and occasional recognition of barbarian characters, which is limited to the names of commodities, numerical figures, some slang expressions and a little simple grammar. How can we expect them to pay attention to scholarly studies?" (in Ssu-yu Teng and John K. Fairbank, *China's response to the West—a documentary survey 1839-1923* [Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1975], p.51.) Even if we make allowances for Feng's somewhat extreme language, the general standard of competence of Chinese 'linguists' was certainly low.

<sup>50</sup> E.g. *Shen Bao*, 30 May 1876, 25 July 1877, etc.



**Figure 6**

1886: A Western band accompanies a procession in honour of the Queen of Heaven

*tory of Shanghai*, p.93, gives the following definition: "Pidgin English is a form of English spoken according to Chinese idiom with words altered in such a way as to make it easy for the Chinese to pronounce them. Some Portuguese and French words have been incorporated into it." Pott further notes on p.93: "Communication between foreigners and Chinese was largely carried on in 'pidgin English'." Charles M. Dyce, *The Model settlement, Shanghai 1870-1900* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1906), pp.229-37, also gives an account of pidgin English. The word 'pidgin' is itself a corruption of the English word 'business'.

<sup>52</sup> Zhi mitu ren, *Haishang yeyou beilan* [Complete guide to the night-life of Shanghai] (Shanghai, 1891), *juan* 3, p.15.

<sup>53</sup> *Shen Bao*, 30 September 1895.

<sup>54</sup> In the *Dianshizhai* of 1886 there is a story of a Cantonese merchant who hired a Western band to pave the way for a religious procession welcoming the spirits to the Temple of Heaven. The writers of the *Dianshizhai* ridiculed him, commenting that a man with any education would never have thought of such vulgarity (*Xin* 68). The custom caught on in Shanghai, however, and showed no signs of abating. Even middle-class families, if they could afford it, would be sure to hire a band on such occasions as weddings, whether or not the music being played was suitable for the occasion was irrelevant. See Wang Rangqing, *Wang Rangqing biji* [Notes of Wang Rangqing] (Shanghai: Shanghai Shudian, 1926), *xia ce*, *juan* 6; and Wu Jianren (Wu Woyao), *Ersbinian mudu zhi guai xian-zhuang* [Bizarre happenings witnessed over two decades], reprint ed. (Taipei: Guangya Youxian Gongsi, 1984), ch.78.

<sup>55</sup> Tianzhuisheng, *Shangjixianxingji* [True stories from the commercial world], reprint ed. (Shanghai: Guji Shudian, 1991), p.70. This is not to say that the term did not exist prior to that, only that I have not been able to find any evidence for it. In 1900 Li Hongzhang called Li Pingshu "a Shanghainese" (see n.26 above), but this is not evidence that the term Shanghainese was in common use for Chinese residents of Shanghai, because Li Pingshu was a *native* of Shanghai.

<sup>56</sup> Zhou Zhenhe and You Rujie, *Fangyan yu Zhongguo wenhua* [Dialects and Chinese

Nineteenth-century Shanghai not only lacked anti-foreign sentiment; the overwhelming atmosphere of the place was 'fawning on foreign things' (*mei wai* 媚外). Most of the Chinese who had dealings with the foreigners—cooks, maidservants, rickshaw-pullers and even compradors—had little in the way of Chinese education. As Liang Qichao put it: "Scholars cannot speak foreign languages, while those who can speak foreign languages are not scholars."<sup>48</sup> In 1897 the *Dianshizhai* carried a note on compradors: "Compradors of the foreign firms of Shanghai are generally illiterate. They have to ask other people to read and write their correspondence for them. They even have to ask other people to manage their family accounts. The reason for this is that when they were young they learned foreign languages, and never gained any familiarity with Chinese characters."<sup>49</sup> In fact, however, most compradors had only a bare smattering of English. Crash courses in English abounded in Shanghai, and advertisements for these are common enough in the pages of the *Shen Bao*.<sup>50</sup> This sort of English was known as 'pidgin English', and even foreigners in Shanghai needed some time to learn to understand it.<sup>51</sup>

To these people, the material culture of the West appeared very attractive. They were happy enough to accept foreign culture, even if at a fairly superficial level. As we can see from the *Dianshizhai*, Shanghainese quickly accepted horse-racing, theatres, Western restaurants and other forms of amusement, and developed a taste for keeping up with the fashions. Even the word 'fashion' (*shimao* 时髦) evolved from being a derogatory term to one of high praise. At the very beginning of this process of acculturation, even prostitutes did not want to be seen as being fashionable.<sup>52</sup> Yet it was not long before the dandies and the scions of the rich feared nothing more than to be thought unfashionable. Western food, apart from any intrinsic appeal it may have had, was also seen as being fashionable, and was highly popular.<sup>53</sup> Western bands, too, were considered the height of fashion.<sup>54</sup>

## 2. The Emergence of Nationalism at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century

During the decade around the turn of the century, however, nationalism did begin to develop in Shanghai. In its initial stages, national consciousness and a sense of political participation were connected with the formation of a Shanghai identity. Such an identity had not yet formed in the nineteenth century. Natives of Shanghai were referred to in the press as 'locals' (*ben yi ren* 本邑人), while others were referred to as 'resident in Shanghai' (*yu Hu* 寓沪) or 'travelling in Shanghai' (*lü Hu* 旅沪); their place of origin was always given. The first mention of the term 'Shanghainese' (*Shangbairren* 上海人) I have found is in a novel published in 1911.<sup>55</sup> By the first decade of the twentieth century, the Shanghainese had their own recognizable dialect, different from the dialect of the pre-settlement Shanghai and from that of the surrounding areas.<sup>56</sup> It was referred to as *Zaung-be-bak*

上海白 (in Shanghai vernacular). Shanghainese had developed their own values, business acumen and sense of fashion, which were immediately noticeable to outsiders. The relative unsophistication of outsiders, too, was immediately noticeable to the Shanghainese, and that reinforced their sense of 'difference'.<sup>57</sup> This sense of identity gave the Shanghainese a sense of confidence in their right of participation—social as well as political. In the nineteenth century, the Chinese did not object to being excluded from various social activities such as sports, horse racing, and so on; they were quite happy to be onlookers. But their growing familiarity with such matters, combined with a growing sense of confidence and sophistication, led to a desire to join in. This in turn led to the Western authorities taking much stronger measures to exclude them than was thought necessary in the nineteenth century. Nineteenth-century Chinese flocked to Western restaurants, but they were Chinese-style Western restaurants. Very few Chinese went to the 'real' Western restaurants frequented by Westerners. Those who did were treated the same as Western patrons.<sup>58</sup> Increasing numbers of relatively well-off Chinese in the twentieth century, however, who wished to take meals in genuine Western restaurants led to the setting up of 'special seating for Chinese merchants' (*Huashang zhuanzuo* 华商专座).<sup>59</sup> For nineteenth-century Chinese, a ride in a hansom cab along the Bund was the height of fashion, but by the twentieth century, if a group of foreigners were strolling along the Bund the police would no longer allow Chinese pedestrians to walk there at the same time.<sup>60</sup> An accumulation of such incidents eventually led to a degree of resentment on the part of the Chinese in Shanghai at their exclusion from certain activities.

The second major factor was the development of a socially élite group. The gentry merchants (*shenshang* 绅商) had developed from the earlier compradors. In the nineteenth century this group was economically dependent on foreign merchants and foreign trading firms. By the twentieth century, however, they had become more powerful and independent economically, and the younger generation was much better educated. Most importantly, they began to organize themselves. In 1902 the gentry merchants established the Shanghai Combined Merchants Guild (Shanghai Shangye Huiyi Gongsuo 上海商业会议公所), and in 1904 the Shanghai Chamber of Commerce (Shanghai Shangwu Zonghui 上海商务总会). The first matter raised by the Chamber of Commerce was the demand that all countries adopt a just stand in dealing with disputes between Chinese and foreign firms. In 1905 the Chamber of Commerce initiated a nationwide boycott of American goods in retaliation against the American Exclusion Treaty.<sup>61</sup> It was not long before they progressed to a demand for political participation in the form of a determined proportion of seats on the Municipal Council to be filled by Chinese Gentry Councillors (*huadong* 华董).<sup>62</sup> These activities, understandably, had a strong politicizing effect on the ordinary people of Shanghai.

Another influential group were the new intellectuals. They, too, reacted strongly against the political domination of the settlements by the foreign

/culture] (Shanghai: Renmin Chubanshe, 1986), pp.67–8.

<sup>57</sup> Yao, *Shanghai xianhua*, pp.25–7; Bao Tianxiao, *Shanghai chunqiu* [Shanghai years] (1924; reprint ed., Shanghai Guji Chubanshe, 1991), vol.1, p.230, tells of a young man from a rich family in Yangzhou who went to Shanghai to attend school; within a week he had an entirely new set of clothing made, so as not to be laughed at by the Shanghainese.

<sup>58</sup> Zhu Wenbing, *Haishang zhuzhici* [Bamboo-branch rhymes of Shanghai] (Shanghai: Shanghai Jicheng Tushu Gongsi, 1908), p.19.

<sup>59</sup> Haishang shuomengren, *Xiepuchao* [Shanghai tides] (serialized in *Shen Bao* 1916–21; published 1921; reprint ed., Shanghai: Guji Chubanshe, 1991), vol.1, pp.104–5.

<sup>60</sup> Suoposheng and Bao Tianxiao, *Renjian diyu* [Hell on earth] (serialized in *Shen Bao* 1923, published 1924; reprint ed., Shanghai Guji Chubanshe, 1990), vol.1, p.459.

<sup>61</sup> Xu Dingxin and Qian Xiaoming, *Shanghai Zongshanghuisi 1902–1929* [A history of the Shanghai Chamber of Commerce, 1902–1929] (Shanghai: Shehui Kexue Chubanshe, 1991), pp.67–92.

<sup>62</sup> Chen Sanjing, "Shanghai zujie huaren canzheng yundong—Huadong chansheng ji zengshe zhi fendou guocheng" [The political participation movement of Chinese in the Shanghai settlements—the preparatory process of the establishment and consolidation of the Chinese gentry council], in *Jindai Zhongguo quyusbi yantaobui lunwenji* [Proceedings of the conference on regional studies of modern China], ed. Zhongyang Yanjiuyuan Jindaishi Yanjiusuo (Taipei, 1986), pp.719–39.

<sup>63</sup> See Clifford, *Shanghai 1925*.

<sup>64</sup> Quan Hansheng, *Zhongguo hanghui zhidu shi* [A history of the guildhall system in Shanghai] (1934; reprint ed., Shanghai: Guji Shudian, 1989), p.202: "The first day the railway was in operation, the Chinese people saw this monster moving along the ground and felt it to be inauspicious; they therefore immediately collected money to buy the railway back so that they could destroy it"; Chen Boxi, *Lao Shanghai* [Old Shanghai], 3 vols (Shanghai: Taidong Shuju, 1919), 2: 155: "The people were excited by this commonplace thing out of ignorance. The officials and the people set up a clamour about it ..."; Zheng, *Shanghai xianhua*, p.32: "... [the railway] incurred the opposition of the local officials and people." This misconception is still current: cf. Wellington K. K. Chan, *Merchants, mandarins, and modern enterprise in late Ch'ing China* (Cambridge, Mass.: East Asian Research Center, Harvard University, 1977), p.129: "The short Shanghai-Woosong railway lasted barely a year before local opposition forced the Chinese government to tear it up after compensating its foreign owners."

<sup>65</sup> "Guan huoche tielu jiltie" [A brief record of an inspection of the railway], *Shen Bao*, 8 April 1876.

<sup>66</sup> *The Times*, London, 10 and 22 May 1876: "You will be glad to hear that the construction of the little Woosong railway is progressing and that there are symptoms of withdrawal of opposition on the part of the Chinese officials. It is rumoured that a hint was received by them a few days ago from Peking to see as little as they could of what was happening, and straws seem to confirm this hint of a change of wind. The persecution to which I have before referred of people who had sold certain pieces of land has ceased, and one or two plots which the mandarins have some reason for wishing to recover are likely to be amicably exchanged—for instance, one which touches the river embankment will be readily exchanged for an adjacent piece a little inland, and the piece on the opposite side of the Woosong Creek, to which I referred a few weeks ago as a cause of trouble, will also be surrendered. Let us hope that this little

authorities, and organized shopkeepers' strikes, protests, and so on. Amongst the new intellectual élite and the students in the universities, the concept of 'foreign settlement' or 'concession' came to be regarded as a national humiliation.<sup>63</sup>

These two groups were the main organizers of nationalist political movements aimed at opposing and restricting foreign power. Three examples clearly show this change in attitude, and also illustrate the role of nationalism in providing a new interpretation of historical facts.

The first is the case of the Wusong-Shanghai Railway. Twentieth-century accounts of the Wusong-Shanghai Railway claim that the "Chinese people" or "local officials and local people" opposed the railway.<sup>64</sup> Contemporary materials, however, reveal that the attitudes of ordinary people and officials were very different. Even before the line was officially opened, several thousand people went, every day, to watch the spectacle of goods being transported by the railway. According to a report in the *Shen Bao*, "Every day several consignments of stone are delivered. Every time there are no less than several thousand people—old, young, men and women, who go to watch. They are like butterflies attracted to flowers, or ants attracted to smelly meat."<sup>65</sup> The London *Times* wrote in the same vein: "Literally thousands of people from all the neighbouring towns and villages crowd down every day to watch proceedings, and criticise every item from the little engine down to the pebbles of the ballast. All are perfectly good humoured and evidently intent on a pleasant day's outing. Old men and children, old women and maidens, literati, artisans and peasants—every class of society is represented, and enterprising peep-show and fruit-stall men have taken advantage of the opportunity to establish a small fair on a convenient spot in the neighbourhood. The engine, of course, is the great centre of attention. It is engaged in dragging trucks with pebble ballast at present, and a general cry of '*Laijtze, laijtze*'—'It's coming, it's coming' heralds each return journey. Then ensues crowding around, and an amount of introspection which suggests awful reflections in case of accident, and then the whistled signal to start; the fall of a live shell could hardly a greater stampede, except that laughter and perfect good temper are present instead of terror. Everything, therefore, is going on so far satisfactorily; and if the people are let alone by their officials they will quietly satisfy their curiosity and go home amused and interested. They are giving practical proof at present of what I have always urged—that there is no instinctive dislike in the masses to things foreign. There is only a great deal of ignorance, which can easily be played upon by the officials and dangerously misdirected if it suits their purpose."<sup>66</sup> The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* also published a similar report.<sup>67</sup>

The territory the railway passed through was originally uncultivated land, but with the advent of the railway, a large number of merchants had set up stalls of various types. The *Dianshizhai* has a sketch of the railway at the time, showing peddlers carrying loads on the ends of bamboo poles, crowds of people enjoying the spectacle, and hired labourers working on the construction of the track. The day the line was officially opened, 3 July 1876,



even greater crowds thronged to the area. A journalist from the *Shen Bao* took a ride on the train, and wrote a report on the experience: "At one o'clock in the afternoon, men and women, old and young, all came running. Most of them had tickets for seats in the first and second classes, but in an instant there was not an empty seat to be had in the whole carriage, and even people who had bought tickets for the first or second class had to sit in the third class. When the train was about to start, more people came rushing onto it. It must have been because they had never witnessed such a scene before, and they wanted to have this experience."<sup>68</sup>

The *Shen Bao* even sold photographs of the train: "For the benefit of women and children, and people who live in distant areas and who have never seen a train, they can now experience the scene as if they were there in person." The photographs cost one cash each, and were on sale after 19 August 1876.<sup>69</sup>

The Wusong-Shanghai Railway was destroyed seven years before the first issue of the *Dianshizhai*, but the *Dianshizhai* used the news that the Qing government was considering the construction of a railway between Tianjin and Tongzhou to provide a retrospective sketch of it. In the commentary the editor noted, somewhat regretfully: "Since the West came to trade we have imitated many things, and these have flourished in recent years. Although it has not been possible to rid ourselves of all earlier prejudices, society is now more open minded, and we are not as parochial as we were in the past. There was a railway to Shanghai in the later years of the Tongzhi period. It went from Wusong to Shanghai, a distance of more than thirty *li*; the return trip took no time at all. Unfortunately it was opposed by the authorities. They repaid the expenses, and it was destroyed immediately."<sup>70</sup> Here it is stated very clearly that the railway "was opposed by the authorities." The matter was again mentioned by the *Shen Bao* on 12 September 1878: the railway was a good thing, but "some officials had different opinions."

On 3 August 1876, a Chinese was crushed to death by a train, an incident which proved to be a turning point in the eventual fate of the railway itself, and reinforced the hostile attitude of the Qing government. Eventually agreement was reached with the British owners of the railway that it would be bought back at the original price, and would continue to operate until the amount was paid in full. There were many versions of the accident.<sup>71</sup> It was mentioned again in the *Dianshizhai* in 1890 in a commentary to a sketch entitled "A mantis trying to stop a chariot": "In former years, during the period of construction of the Wusong-Shanghai Railway, a Chinese soldier had the wild idea that he wanted to stop the train; in the end he was crushed by the wheels of the train, and cut in two." It is not clear how the editor came by this interpretation,<sup>72</sup> but it is clear he had no sympathy for the man who died. The sketch was sealed with the words "Overrating one's ability,"<sup>73</sup> an expression, like the title, used to ridicule one who lacks an understanding of his own capacities.

Even after this accident, people were still enthusiastic about taking a ride on the train. According to the timetable published in the *Shen Bao*,<sup>74</sup> the train

/pioneer railway will get finished without further trouble, and that it will serve to introduce into China a mode of carriage which has done so much to develop the resources of Western countries. It is quite likely that two circumstances are restraining the officials at the present moment from their wonted opposition to innovation—namely, the still unsettled Yunnan difficulty, and a desire to raise a considerable loan for use in Turkestan."

<sup>67</sup> Ninth edition, vol.5, p.672.

<sup>68</sup> *Shen Bao*, 4 July 1876.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 17 August 1876.

<sup>70</sup> *Jia* 96.

<sup>71</sup> The day after the accident the *Shen Bao* carried a report: "Yesterday morning at seven o'clock, there was a train coming from the north of Jiangwan on a trial run. It happened that a man was standing nearby, watching the train. It seems he wanted to rush over the railway line. He slipped on the stones and fell on to the railway tracks. The train's brakes could not be applied in time, and the train ran over the man's body . . . Afterwards a report was presented to the local magistrate. The man was about thirty years old. It is not known who his relatives were. According to a preliminary investigation, he seems to have been a soldier, or something of the kind. The corpse has now been placed in a coffin, and an appeal made to collect it." (*Shen Bao*, 4 August 1876).

There was much speculation amongst the Western community. Some believed that he had been hired by the Chinese authorities to kill himself in this way so as to raise the anger of the masses. As no-one came forward to claim his remains, the theory that he had done it for money could not be substantiated. See Percy H. Kent, *Zhongguo tielu fazhan shi* (Beijing: Sahljan Shudian, 1958) (a Chinese translation of his *Railway enterprise in China: an account of its origin and development* [London, Edward Arnold, 1907]), p.14.

In his memoirs, Xia Yan recollects the two most vivid events of his childhood, one of which was the opening of the Shanghai-Hangzhou railroad in 1909. According to Xia, there was great excitement in Hangzhou and the surrounding villages. His mother walked for two *li* to bring the children, /OVER

**Figure 7**

1887: A Chinese bride in formal wedding attire, being carried in a rickshaw. She is on her way to the Mixed Court to lodge a complaint against her new parents-in-law



/benches and food, and took up a position to the side of the railroad track. They waited for two hours in the scorching sun until the train arrived. Both sides of the track were crowded, and the crops in the fields were trampled underfoot (Xia Yan, *Lanxun jiumeng lu* [In idle search of old dreams] [Beijing: Sanlian Shudian, 1985], pp.14–15).

<sup>72</sup> It may be that this theory derived from an item recorded in the *Shen Bao* about a “man with a Jiangbei accent, both drunk and crazy,” who lay down across the railway track to stop a train. He was escorted to the police station together with two other protesters, who demanded that the railroad construction be halted. This incident apparently caused something of a stir amongst the villagers at the time. (*Shen Bao*, 5 December 1876).

<sup>73</sup> “Tang bi dang che” 螳臂挡车; “bu liang li” 不量力, Xi 56.

<sup>74</sup> *Shen Bao*, 11 August 1876.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 18 September 1877. Of course this sum could be considered reasonable only for a fairly well-off family. Even in 1880, the average monthly wage for a male labourer was no more than 200–300 cash. Cf. *ibid.*, 13 October 1880.

went from Shanghai to Wusong and back seven times every day except Sunday, when it made the return trip only five times. Statistics show that from 3 July 1876 to 17 July 1877 (despite a period of several months when the train did not run), a total of 161,331 people travelled on the train. It was possible to make the return trip in one day, and, at 360 cash a ticket, was cheaper than travelling by pushcart.<sup>75</sup> Strong appeals for the government not to dismantle the railway were made. More than a hundred of the local gentry and merchants signed a joint letter, but to no effect. On 20 October 1877 the last instalment of the debt was paid, and the railway was handed over to the Chinese authorities.<sup>76</sup>

The discrepancy between contemporary accounts and later interpretations does not necessarily mean that the twentieth-century authors were deliberately lying. This is more likely a case of the well-known phenomenon of interpreting the past in terms of the precepts of the twentieth century.

The second example is that of the Mixed Court. From the voluminous material available in the *Dianshizhai*, the *Shen Bao*, and in such late Qing novels as *Flowers on the Sea*, we cannot find a single example of any opposition amongst ordinary people to the Mixed Court.<sup>77</sup> On the contrary, Shanghainese could seek its protection.<sup>78</sup> As far as ordinary people were concerned, the first signs of opposition to foreign control did not appear until after the turn of the century, with the rise of national consciousness. As Pott wrote, “The year 1905 is a memorable one in the annals of Shanghai, as at that time a change in the attitude of the educated Chinese became evident, indicating that they were no longer willing to submit passively to what they

regarded as an infringement of their rights. This brought about a serious situation at the close of the year—the Mixed Court riot in the International Settlement.<sup>76</sup> The 1905 case was based on the question of whether a Chinese woman who had been convicted in the Mixed Court should be imprisoned in a Western or a Chinese jail.

The Western version of this case, as recorded by Kotenev, was as follows: “On December 8th, 1905, some women, one of whom was the wife of a Szechuen official by the name of Li Wang-chih, and two men supposed to be her servants, were brought up before the British Assessor, Mr. Twyman, Magistrate Kuan and the Assistant Magistrate, Mr. King, on a charge of kidnapping girls for an unlawful purpose, fifteen of their victims being in Court. The case was remanded. The British Assessor directed the Municipal Police to take the prisoners and the girls *pro tem* to the Door of Hope, marking this on the Charge Sheet. The Magistrate, however, wanted to send the girls to the cells and the Mixed Court, and he told his runners to take them away from the police. A free fight between the police and the runners was the result, in which the police were victorious. The girls and the prisoners were put into the police van, on which the runners locked the gate of the courtyard. The police then asked the Magistrate to order his runners to open the gate, and the reply of the Magistrate was that the police could break down the gate, break up the whole Court, and kill him if they chose. On being asked if he refused to order the gate to be opened, the Magistrate left the Court, but the gate shortly was opened, and the prisoners and their victims disposed of in accordance with the British Assessor’s directions, and the Court suspended its sitting. This incident, in which the Magistrate was doubtless acting under orders from his superiors, was part of the endeavour made by the higher authorities to assert that the Mixed Court was a Chinese Court, and to abolish the protection which the Municipality was bound to give to the Chinese in the Settlement. The actions of the higher functionaries were at once taken up by conservative native elements. The Canton Guild called a meeting to protest against the treatment suffered by a fellow provincial’s widow at the hands of the Municipal Police. The meeting was held and a telegram was drawn up and sent to the Waiwupu, reporting matters and protesting against the treatment by the police of Chinese ladies of family and standing, for it was ascertained that Mrs. Li Wang-chih was the widow of an official, a native of Kuangtung province, and was on her way home with her servants and slave girls, the coffin of her late husband, and luggage consisting of over one hundred pieces. On the other hand, the committee of Chinese merchants protested against the conduct of the police in striking Court runners during the session of the Court. Over a thousand were computed to have attended the meeting, during which it was decided to demand the dismissal of the police inspectors, detectives and constables concerned, and to ask that another person be appointed to act as British Assessor. As a result of this clamour, the Waiwupu demanded the woman’s immediate release and the Consular body at Shanghai was instructed by the Ministers at Peking to order the Municipal Council to release the lady without further trial, on

<sup>76</sup> On that day, the *Shen Bao* published the timetable for the last time, with the comment: “This is the last train under the management of this Company. It will leave Shanghai today at twelve o’clock. At one o’clock it will leave Wusong and return to Shanghai. Please note.” Before long, the railway was dismantled and destroyed. The engine and the carriages were transported to Taiwan. Most of them were left on the beach. Nobody paid much attention to them, and over a period of time they were either looted, or degenerated into scrap metal. From that time on, anyone wishing to travel to Wusong had only the choice of a horse-drawn carriage or a sedan chair. It was another twenty years before another railway line was built linking Wusong to Shanghai. See Xiang Hua, *Shang-haisibihua* [Talks on the history of Shanghai] (Hongkong: Muwen Shuju, 1971), p.30; Kent, *Railway enterprise* (Chinese translation), p.15; Shanghai Tongshu, ed., *Shanghainyaanjiu ziliao* [Research materials on Shanghai] (1936; reprint ed., Shanghai: Shanghai Shudian, 1984), p.317. Not long after the destruction of the railway the *Shen Bao* noted: “After the railroad was destroyed in this city, there was no more to remember it by than a dozen or so rooms, the railway station and the ticket office. We have recently heard that one of the original owners has sold these facilities for a certain sum of money, and the new owners have dismantled them. The rest of the railroad equipment has also all been destroyed. Now there is only a small path where the railroad once stood; it cannot be recognised.” (*Shen Bao*, 28 November 1878).

<sup>77</sup> National consciousness, of course, was strong amongst the literati. Li Pingshu visited Singapore in 1887, and on his return wrote an pamphlet, *Xinjiapo fengtu ji* [A record of the natural conditions and social customs of Singapore], in which he commented: “In all the countries of the West, at all the commercial ports, the consuls of other countries do not have jurisdictional rights. But the foreigners in China are different, with, for example, the Mixed Court established in Shanghai. Chinese and foreigners both participate in the Court. This is not a Western custom. The Western officials are keen to arrogate power to themselves and expect the Chinese officials to be slavishly dependent on them. Men of ideals and integrity can only feel anger at this.” (Li, *Zixu*, p.24.)

<sup>78</sup> For example, the mistreated wives mentioned in *Shu* 24 and *Hai* 91.

<sup>79</sup> Quoted in Hsia Ching-lin, *The status of Shanghai: a historical review of the International Settlement, its future development and possibilities through Sino-foreign cooperation* (Shanghai: Kelly & Walsh, 1929), p.56.

<sup>80</sup> Anatol M. Kotenev, *Shanghai: its Mixed Court and Council* (Taipei: Ch'eng-wen Publishing Co., 1968), pp.127-9.

the ground that, as the Mixed Court was closed by the Taotai and not yet reopened, it was unfair to keep an innocent lady in custody without any opportunity of proving her innocence. The Municipal Council released the accused but could not silently pass over a new violation of the established procedure on the part of the Diplomatic body at Peking. ... Meanwhile, the attitude of a certain part of the native community and press towards the foreign Government of the Settlement underwent a remarkable change. The arrival of young and hot-headed students from Europe, America and Japan, with half-formed ideas and half-educated, the premature discussion of the American Exclusion Treaty, and the effect on the Chinese mind of the Japanese success against Russia, may be said to have been at the bottom of this anti-foreign movement. After the Mixed Court fracas, untrue and malicious reports were circulated from the Court as to what actually occurred there on December 8th, and the minds of certain sections of the native community were poisoned thereby. The services of disgruntled students and of the Boycott Committee were enlisted, and several meetings of a violent character were held, in which threats of a general strike, of refusal to pay taxes, and of a general exodus of natives from the Settlement were made. As a result of the aforesaid propaganda, the mob attacked the Municipal Council premises and police stations, one of which, Louza Station, was burned down by the rioters. The manner in which the attacks were delivered, the class of people in the Settlement at the time, and the general organization, showed the work of persons of a higher class than loafers and beggars. Moreover, the points of attack were not valuable shops and banks, but police stations and markets, and persons molested were not natives, but foreign Police and foreigners. The mob was also not in the Settlement for purposes of loot, but for attack on Municipal property. As a result of inquiries it had been ascertained beyond doubt that the leading men of the so-called 'Patriotic Oratorical Society' movement were absolutely responsible for the printing of inflammatory pamphlets, for arrangements for the distribution of the circulars calling upon the shopkeepers to close their premises, and for the employment of men who went around and visited the market places and native shops on the morning of the riot, to see that the request, in the name of the Shanghai merchants, to suspend business in the Settlement was complied with."<sup>80</sup> Using Chinese sources, Elvin described the same incident: "In December ... there was a dispute in the Court as to where a woman accused of kidnapping fifteen young girls should be detained. The magistrate, Kuan, declared: 'There is no article in the 1868 regulations to the effect that female prisoners should be kept in the Western jail. I have no orders from the taotai. I cannot permit it'. The assessor, Twyman, answered: 'I do not recognise the taotai. I obey only the consul's order'. 'If *that* is how it is', returned the magistrate, 'then *I* do not recognize the consul'. There was then a fight between the Chinese runners and the Western police for the possession of the accused. The foreigners won. This was regarded by the Chinese in the Settlement as a direct attack on Chinese rights. The Chinese Chamber of Commerce asserted: 'In general [the Western nations] all have the intention of robbing us of our sovereignty'. The taotai regarded it as 'a matter of political

power', in which it was 'not expedient to permit any usurpation'. As soon as the Chinese saw that the assessor was not going to be dismissed, riots broke out. The Louza police station was burned down; two foreigners and eleven Chinese were killed. As a result of the riot, the Council agreed to allow the magistrate to keep custody of the Chinese women prisoners, on the condition that the Sanitation Department might regularly inspect them. At Peking, the Diplomatic Corps was persuaded to drop the attempted revision of the 1868 rules which it had been pressing on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and agreed (quite unrealistically) that the Court should return to a strict observation of the original regulations."<sup>81</sup>

This was to prove a turning point in the attitude of the Shanghainese towards the Mixed Court. The evidence seems to show, nonetheless, that the 1905 riots were initiated by "higher functionaries" and "certain conservative native elements," namely the Canton Guild. Their involvement may have been connected with the fact that Mme Li-Huang (referred to as Mrs Li Wang-chih in contemporary Western sources) was a Cantonese. The important point, however, is that the arrest of Mme Li-Huang was a mistake. Her husband had died at his post in Sichuan and she was returning to her home in Guangdong, bringing her domestic servants and maids with her. As she was passing through Shanghai she was arrested on suspicion of kidnapping the maids. It is not surprising that her case attracted a good deal of sympathy.

The third major change in attitude concerns the Public Garden, the garden which has often been quoted in twentieth-century nationalist literature as having had a sign at its main gate, "No Chinese or Dogs." To twentieth-century Chinese, this sign justified the Chinese hatred of foreign dominance and arrogance. If we look at nineteenth-century sources, however, we see a very different picture. In a guidebook to Shanghai written by a Chinese in 1883, we read the following: "The Public Garden is situated on the southern bank of the Baidaqiao Bridge. Inside, there are many types of unusual flowers and trees, most of them are from Europe. Reds and purples—I have never seen such fresh and bright colours; I have not even heard of them. As you enter the garden, a large expanse of lawn greets you, and there are flowers everywhere. On Sundays many Westerners come here with their wives and children, some of them strolling hand in hand. Some just sit there, chatting, and don't leave until the sun has set. The Public Garden is an oasis of serenity in a bustling city. The gates are strictly controlled, however, and not many Chinese go there."<sup>82</sup> In another guidebook, published in 1893, we read a similar description: "The Public Park is on the right bank of the river. The halls and pavilions are all Western-style. Flowers are abundant, and there are seats everywhere. The flowers come from different countries, and their colours and types are all different. Every Sunday, Westerners bring their families to come and enjoy themselves here, and they slowly stroll home, hand in hand, only after the sun has gone down. Sometimes Chinese passing by also go inside to enjoy it."<sup>83</sup>

Wang Tao described the Public Garden in the following terms: "[It is] in the area alongside the river-bank, near the large bridge in Hongkou. The

<sup>81</sup> Mark Elvin, *The Mixed Court of the International Settlement at Shanghai*, East Asian Research Center, Papers on China, vol.17 (Cambridge, Mass., 1963), pp.144-5. The footnotes in Elvin's article which refer to the Chinese sources have been omitted in the above quotation. For Chinese secondary source details see Kang Dichen, "Da nao gongtang an" [The Mixed Court riot], *Shanghai tongzhibiguan qikan*, vol.1, no.2 (Shanghai: Longmen Shudian, 1933), pp.407-9.

<sup>82</sup> Huang Shiquan, *Songnan mengyinglu*, [Dream-shadows of Songnan] (1883; reprint ed., Shanghai: Guji Chubanshe, 1989), p.133.

<sup>83</sup> Chi Zhicheng, *Hu you mengying* [Dream shadows of travels in Shanghai] (1893; reprint ed., Shanghai: Guji Chubanshe, 1989), p.163.

<sup>84</sup> Songbei Yushensheng (Wang Tao), *Haizou yeyoulu—fulu* [A guide to the night-life of Shanghai, with appendices], *Xiangyan congshu* (1879; reprint ed., Shanghai: Zhongguo Tushu Gongsi, 1914), *juan* 2.

<sup>85</sup> Zeng Pu, *Niehaibua* [A flower in a sinful sea], reprint ed. (Shanghai: Guji Chubanshe, 1980), pp.10-11. First five chapters translated by Rafe de Crespigny and Liu Ts'un-yan in *Chinese middlebrow fiction—from the Ch'ing and early Republican eras*, ed. Liu Ts'un-yan (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 1984), pp.137-87. The above quotation is taken from p.152 of this translation.

<sup>86</sup> Mrs Archibald Little, *Intimate China—the Chinese as I have seen them* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1901), p.14.

ground is covered in flowers; seats are located here and there. At sunset, Westerners take their families and children there for an enjoyable stroll in the evening breeze. Sometimes Chinese also go there for a stroll; there is no prohibition against this.”<sup>84</sup> A description of Chinese visiting the Public Garden during the Tongzhi period (1862–75) can also be found in the second chapter of the late Qing novel, *A Flower in a Sinful Sea*: “It was really a view of ‘terraces and pavilions clear and far, flowers and trees fine and strange’. The two men sat for a while in a small pavilion, looking at the passers-by, men and women, Chinese and European, with short coats and stiff collars, thin waists and long skirts, round fans and light gowns, painted and adorned, dazzling materials.”<sup>85</sup>

Mrs Archibald Little, who was a resident of Shanghai at the time, mentioned the Public Garden in her memoirs. After describing the trees, flowers and so on, she added: “The nurses introduce a Chinese element; for otherwise Chinese, were it even Li Hung-chang himself, are excluded from the gardens, as now from Australia, solely because they are Chinese. This can never seem quite right. The Japanese nurses add an extra element of picturesqueness, with their dark-coloured, clinging kimonos, and curious gait, as do also Parsee merchants with their high, hard hats.”<sup>86</sup> This information is not in accordance with contemporary Chinese material, though the guidebook of 1883 did mention that “the gates were strictly controlled,” and the guidebook of 1893 mentioned that “few Chinese went there.” There is no indication in the Chinese sources that Chinese were explicitly forbidden to enter the Public Garden. Mrs. Little’s book was published in 1901, and her reference to Australia presumably refers to the

**Figure 8**

1889: *The Yangsbupu Garden, containing a zoo—one of the most popular gardens in Shanghai*



Immigration Restriction Act of that same year. Perhaps by that stage the attitude towards Chinese entering the Public Gardens had hardened and been formulated into a set of regulations. Prior to that, entrance to the Public Garden may have been determined on an *ad hoc* basis by the guard at the gate. It would appear that, at least until well into the 1890s, there was no written regulation barring Chinese from the Public Garden. It seems that Chinese were much more interested in the Yangshupu Garden (in which there was a small zoo), and few of them paid much attention to the Public Garden.

Little more than a decade later, however, in 1907, the *Shanghai xiangtu zhi* (Local Records of Shanghai), which was used as a primary school textbook, contained the following description: "On the banks of the Huangpu river the foreigners have set up a garden; the green grass is like a carpet, and the flowers are like silks and satins. People from all countries of the world are admitted, even Indians who have lost their country the dogs of foreigners are admitted; only Chinese are not allowed to go there. Foreigners despise Chinese so much; they regard us as even lower than slaves, dogs and horses. They are like presumptuous guests, usurping the role of the host. We can but sigh. So it can be seen that in the modern world, only power counts. We should exert ourselves to obliterate this disgraceful humiliation."<sup>87</sup> It seems that by this stage, Chinese were denied admittance to the park, whereas foreigners could take their dogs in. Even this source, however, says nothing about a sign, "No Chinese or Dogs."

According to Chen Boxi, writing in 1919, there were six regulations issued by the police relating to the Public Garden:

1. Bicycles and dogs are not admitted.
2. Children in prams should be wheeled along the smaller paths at the sides.
3. It is forbidden to pick flowers or destroy birds' nests, or to damage flowers, grass or trees. Parents and nannies of small children should pay particular attention, so as to avoid such unlawful behaviour.
4. The music pavilion may not be entered.
5. Apart from servants of Westerners, no Chinese may enter.
6. [Chinese] children not accompanied by Western children may not enter the garden.<sup>88</sup>

The first four regulations are directed towards Westerners; the last two refer to Chinese. It was not long, however, before an 'impression' formed in the mind of the Chinese that the regulations could be summarized: "No Chinese or Dogs." This 'impression' became so strong that every Chinese knew about it almost from birth.

*The Inside Story of the Shanghai Settlements*, published by the Guomindang Propaganda Department in 1943, is rather different from other 'inside stories' about Shanghai. This one is fiercely nationalistic, and its main theme is the invasion of China's sovereignty by the imperialist powers. It also mentions the Public Garden: "At one time in the past, a sign was put up in front of the garden with many regulations, the first of which was 'This garden is only for the use of foreigners', and another one was 'Dogs are not allowed in this

<sup>87</sup> Li Weiqing, *Shanghai xiangtu zhi* [Local records of Shanghai] (1907; reprint ed., Shanghai: Guji Chubanshe, 1989), p.72.

<sup>88</sup> Chen, *Lao Shanghai*, vol.1, p.155.

<sup>89</sup> Guomindang Xuanchuanbu, ed., *Shanghai zujie de beimu* [Dark secrets of the Shanghai concessions] (n.p., 1943), p.21.

<sup>90</sup> Shanghai difangzhi bangongshi, ed., *Shanghaicidian* [Shanghai dictionary], p.435. There is a photograph of this famous sign in various museums in China, which is reproduced in the plates preceding the text of *Shanghai difangzhi ziliao*, vol.2. The photograph is very unclear and the text illegible. The caption states: "This is the sign in the park which says 'No Dogs or Chinese.'"

garden'. Put simply, this meant 'Chinese and dogs are not allowed in this garden'."<sup>89</sup>

Apparently the authors of such books did not see anything unreasonable in this conflation of six regulations into "No Dogs or Chinese," and this 'fact' became generally accepted. Even in the *Shanghai Dictionary* published in 1989, it is still stated as a matter of fact that there was a sign saying "Chinese and dogs may not enter" at the gate of the Public Park.<sup>90</sup>

The Mixed Court riot of 1905 was instigated by established merchants, particularly the Cantonese. The myth about the "No Dogs or Chinese" sign was spread by educated people in order to spread nationalist ideology amongst ordinary people. The author of *Local Records of Shanghai*, Li Weiqing 李維清, was the great-grandson of Li Linsong 李林松, the compiler of the *Shanghai Gazetteer of the Jiaqing Period*. In the preface of this local history, which was intended as a textbook for the new-style schools established after the abolition of the traditional examination system in 1905, Yao Zirang 姚子让 (Yao Wennan 姚文楠), a member of the Shanghai gentry, expressed the hope that the book would "foster a spirit of patriotism and a love for one's native place, and to stimulate lofty ideals."

### 3. Conclusion

<sup>91</sup> On this point cf. the argument in Lucien Pye, "Zhongguo minzuzhuyi yu xiandaihua" [Chinese nationalism and modernization], *Ersbiyishi* 2 (1992): 13–26.

The evidence shows that relations between Chinese and Westerners in nineteenth-century Shanghai were harmonious. The introduction of twentieth-century nationalism was connected with the development of a new élite—the established merchants (who had developed from the nineteenth-century compradors) and educated people. There were no really wealthy Chinese merchants in nineteenth-century Shanghai, nor were there large numbers of returned overseas students. There may have been certain individuals, such as Li Pingshu, mentioned above, who had a clear sense of national consciousness, but the rest of society had not yet developed a distinct identity or any desire to oppose the foreign powers. That was a development of the twentieth century. It must be stressed, however, that despite the large-scale anti-imperialist movements of the twentieth century, the effects of nineteenth-century Shanghai urban culture persisted. Nationalists from Shanghai, themselves the product of the Western-influenced urban culture of Shanghai, wanted to liberate China from foreign political domination, not from foreign culture. After 1949, the urban, cosmopolitan nationalists of Shanghai came under attack from a more primitive xenophobic nationalism, which developed in quite a different culture.<sup>91</sup> Despite the vicissitudes of the twentieth century, however, it may be argued that Shanghai is still the most cosmopolitan city in China.

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