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Eat, Drink, Man, Woman:
Modernity and Urban Lifestyles in China

by

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ABSTRACT

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Based on my fieldwork and research in Beijing and other Chinese urban cities in the 1990s, this dissertation focuses on urban Chinese lifestyles caught up in historical and momentous dynamics of continuity and transition. It is to study how lifestyles are embodied by urban men and women in the 1990s and played out in the bars, coffee shops, teahouses and Karoke halls in Beijing, as well as Shanghai and Zhengzhou. In general, this dissertation tries to explore how lifestyles become both reflexive and performative bodies in a complex of historical, political, social, cultural phenomena in a flow of fluxes and trends, a flow of information, a flow of history, a flow of modernity and a flow of globalization.
Acknowledgements

The pursuit of my Ph.D. has been the major part of my life in America which meant sometimes more to me, sometimes less, while the other part of my life constantly adding more meanings to my choice of coming to America six years ago. However, writing this dissertation projected an essential tone to my perhaps humorless but serene everyday routine. Since I have learned to appreciate the emptiness and the cost of the life goals in many other circumstances, I have found more meanings in this particular goal for an advanced degree, e.g., frustrations could become positive motivations, and life is often just fine with all the flaws.

Completing my Ph.D. program certainly demanded not only my own patience but also the support and understanding of others. I own my sincere gratitude to many people.

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Finally, I could never thank enough to my parents who have never given up their love, support and expectations for their two daughters. In return, we have carried the burden and joy of our lifetime self-cultivation.

This dissertation is dedicated to my husband, my best friend, Dennis B. Netherland, a man with peaceful nature, and a man of Ren.
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Introduction

Based on my fieldwork and research in Beijing and other Chinese urban cities in the 1990s, this dissertation focuses on urban Chinese lifestyles caught up in historical and momentous dynamics of continuity and transition. It is to study how lifestyles are embodied by urban men and women in the 1990s and played out in the bars, coffee shops, teahouses and Karoke halls in Beijing, as well as Shanghai and Zhengzhou. In general, this dissertation tries to explore how lifestyles become both reflexive and performative bodies in a complex of historical, political, social, cultural phenomena in a flow of bubbles and whirlpools of fluxes and trends, a flow of information, a flow of history, a flow of modernity and a flow of globalization.

When leisure “provides opportunities for recreation and personal growth,”¹ it becomes an essential element of the self-cultivation. From Confucianism, Daoism, Buddhism, Neo-Confucianism to Socialism, Communism, and the Anti-any-ism of the 1990s, self-cultivation with its changing contents has a long history in China and provides the guidance for the Chinese art of living.² The traditional lifestyles of Chinese literati, presented from the major philosophical texts, to the tea and wine drinking habits, from the refined music to traditional Chinese medicine, were carried on with strong consistency. When lifestyle is the “recognizable mode of living, attitudes, values, and


² As many foreign scholars have recognized that the strength of China as a nation comes from its sense of consistency and history. In the waves of globalization, China’s uniqueness is never ignored. Living in an ancient land of five thousand years of civilization, Chinese are carrying the glory as well as the burden of their traditions – their ways of thinking and living. In recent years, we witnessed the revival of Confucianism and other ancient Chinese philosophies. Among them, the self-cultivation has become essential in the study of Chinese mentality and their art of living.
behavioral orientations," it is often associated with individuality, self-expression and personal choices. So the *Mingshi* style is discussed in this dissertation as a highly individualized lifestyle both in Chinese tradition and its current presence. When lifestyles reflect the living conditions, environments and the vicissitude of lives, the phenomena and personas in contemporary China from the over-politicized 1950s and 1960s to the over-commercialized 1990s are demonstrated with the heavy wings of history.

Over two thousand years ago, Zhuangzi told a fable:

The spirit of the Yellow River, the Riverlord, found himself swollen so magnificently large at the time of the autumn floods that someone standing on one bank could no longer make out the difference between a cow and a horse on the opposite bank. He floated cockily downstream, till all of a sudden he caught sight of the sea and was struck dumb with astonishment. The ruler of the sea, the Northsea Spirit, told him: "One can't discuss the sea with a frog in a well, because all it knows is its own tiny scrap of space, and it lacks the imagination to conceive of the vastness of the sea. And now, my dear Riverlord, you have finally left your narrow riverbed and seen the immensity of the ocean. Knowing your own limits, you have indeed attained a higher level of understanding."

Current Chinese society has experienced earthshaking change that reverberates in the continual transformation of life views and lifestyles. From the flourishing age of Han and Tang to late Qing, never before has the Chinese world witnessed such dramatic change. This change contrasts with the consistency of life expressed in classic poems from previous dynasties:

May I ask where the wineshop is? The shepherd boy points the way of

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4 I could always find inspirations from the ancient wisdom which is as deep as ocean and as vast as sky. Therefore, the ideal of open-mindedness and difference in harmony become the key melody of this dissertation. Zhuangzi is a Chinese Daoist philosopher of the Warring States period (the 3rd century B.C.) See Burton Watson trans., *The Complete Works of Chuang-tzu*, p. 175.
Xinghua Village in the distance. (Du Mu)

The crows caw when the moon goes down in a frosty sky, /The outline of maple trees on the riverbank is accompanied silently by the lights on the fishing boats. /At the Hanshan (Chilly Mountain) Temple outside the Gusu Town, /The sound of bell welcomes the guest boat at mid-night. (Zhang Ji)

Withered vine, old tree and blind crow, /Small bridge, flowing brook and some village, /Ancient road, west wind and skinny horse. (Ma Zhiyuan)\(^5\)

These poems offer a clue of some of the most representative themes in ancient Chinese lives, such as pastoral, vagabond and frontier. However, in the modern Chinese moment, heaven and earth have turned upside down and mainstream life in China, especially in the 1990s, has changed without many people’s recognition. The fragrance of Xinghua Village is obscured by a flood of beer foam and “XO” wine commercials, the moonlight is blocked by the lights of the metropolitan city, the crows are dead from pollution, and the ancient road is paved by modern highways.\(^6\)

In spite of the tremendous change, the lifestyles in contemporary China from the 1940s to the 1990s have gone through a process of transformation. Three distinctions are 1) each household made a living on its own (before the liberation in 1949); 2) people made a living all together (1950s-late 1970s); 3) each household pursued a prosperous

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\(^5\) My fragmentary translation cannot do justice to the beauty of these three poems.

\(^6\) In the seventeenth, eighteenth, and even nineteenth centuries, traditional culture was much more intact in China and continuous with the past. Outside structures did not penetrate deeply and so did not alter traditional culture’s fundamental core... In contrast, China in the twentieth century has seen the revolutionary tearing down of old institutions and cultural reasoning, as well as the deeper penetration of outside logic through transnational circuits of media, commodity production, trade, and even warfare. See Spaces of Their Own, ed. by Yang Meihui, University of Minnesota Press, 1999, p. 16.
life on its own (1980s-Present).  

In the early 1980s, mass consumption was still under the pressure of political control and consumerism was criticized along with other Western ideologies. However, in the 1990s, a powerful consuming desire explodes after a long time of constraint and repression. Correspondingly, the changing lifestyles reflect the growing amount of choices in the Chinese society and the growing independence of Chinese individuals. Obviously, the transformation of the economy has been changing the living patterns of Chinese life, especially their leisure activities. We can see evidence of these changes in the interests of the media. In the past two decades, Chinese newspapers have initiated discussions on how to spend leisure time and lead healthy lifestyles. Before I came to the United States in 1994, swarms of soap-opera series littered television programming, depicting the fascinating, colorful lives of businesswomen and their even more colorful nighttime activities. Such shows were: Dajiudian (Grant Hotel), Goingguanxiaoxie (Miss

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In a Chinese article published in internet, we read: “After the crash of China-Centralism in late Qing Dynasty, Chinese have been forced to rely on a Western modernity as the parameter and reference to re-build their own mission of mass enlightenment and national salvation. In the past hundred of years, Chinese Modernity has gone through different stages. (1) The technology-orientated period was represented by the “Yangwu Yundong.” (Westernization Movement, late 19th century) (2) The political system reform period was practiced by Mingzhi Reform (1898). (3) The science-orientated period was presented by the promotion of Mr. De (Mr. Democracy) and Mr. Sai (Mr. Science) during the May Fourth Movement (1919). (4) The sovereign rights struggle period had been carried on from the anti-Japanese War in the 1930s and 40s to the Chinese Cold War against the Western Capitalist countries in the 1950s, 60s and 70s. (5) The cultural renaissance was seen in the 1980s after the end of Cultural Revolution. Chinese witnessed the tremendous development of the West and her Asian neighbors, such as Japan and Singapore. During the 1980s, common Chinese regarded the Western culture as a superior one in pursuing change and difference. (6) The period of heteroglossia in the 1990s implied the end of idealism and cultural zeal of the 1980s and the beginning of the new possibilities of China as a Third-World country joining the globalization.” See, “China in the 20th Century,” Chinese Reader’s Digest, December 5, 2000.
Public Relationship), *and* Haimawutung (Haima Cabaret). In the last five years, I have witnessed fortunes being made out of my friend's nightclub; I have heard of numerous bankruptcies and the widespread corporate debt of small Karaoke halls; I saw a neighborhood bar increasingly hiring pretty country girls; I was told that the most fashionable girl in the neighborhood being picked up by a Toyota each morning, knowing that she was a *zuotai xiaoxie* in different hotels' nightclubs. Then, I witnessed numerous vocation villages booming in Beijing's scenic suburbs.

With my personal experiences, this project looks to draw a set of identifiable changing patterns in Beijing's leisure activities, because of the ways in which one's leisure activities, as many have persuasively argued, may reflect a variety of ideological, symbolic, social or other concerns in contemporary Chinese culture. For instance, Dumazedier argues that "leisure is time that is separated from work, spatially as well as temporally, and over which the individual rather than society exercises control" (Manning 1983:5). Lin Yutang claims that "the progress of culture depends on an intelligent use of leisure" (Lin, 1938: 121). Belsky contends that a person's lifestyle has a direct relationship to the type or level of *activity* (See Khullar & Reynolds 1990). According to Tumin: Max Weber used the term "life styles" to refer to those modes of conduct, dress, speech, thought, and attitudes, that defined various 'honor' groups and that in turn served as models of behavior for those who aspired to be members of these groups. By extension, the term is often used to include the range of distinctive behavior patterns (Tumin 1970:179).

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8 Zuotai xiaojie are girls in bars, nightclubs or KTV halls, waiting to be picked up by men.
After my years of research on Western and Chinese cultures and urban ethnography\(^9\) and because leisure culture in contemporary China is still a lacuna, I, without hesitation, chose my hometown's bars, coffeehouses, nightclubs, KTV halls and teahouses as my comparative research sites. There are several works on Chinese and foreign urban study that I have found useful. Particularly, I learned a lot from Mayfair Yang's outstanding anthropological study on Chinese urban network *guanxi*, Anne Allison's ethnography on a Tokyo hostess club, Yingjin Zhang and Leo ou-fan Lee’s marvelous research on Beijing and Shanghai's modernity from literary and historical perspectives. Due to my sensitivity to the banality and subtlety, I have been interested in the dynamic transformation between the consumer culture and elite culture in the transformation of lifestyles.

*Some Notes on Lifestyle Theory*

This dissertation does not intend to elaborate any theories of leisure, lifestyles and modernity that have been brilliantly explored by numerous scholars from different angles. Rather, it is organized to draw a sketch of the lifestyle transformations in China, especially in the 1990s. All the historical and philosophical perspectives of Chinese life attitudes or mentalities serve as the background for a better understanding of the consistency and changes in modern China. The transformation of the lifestyles is

emphasized as an on-going process of the Chinese past, present and future, dealing with the basic issues such as the relationship between self and society, lifestyle choices, leisure activities, and the relationship between tradition and modernity. However, it is necessary for me to pay my respect to the long history of Western study on lifestyles.10

In general, the distinctive configurations of cultural identity and cultural activities have close connection to consumer culture. Lifestyles as the specific modes and distinctive features of life of a group or an individual, are the fragments of our modern society in which “choices,” “differences,” and “cultural possibilities” are practiced. Lifestyle is “eminently observable or deducible from observation.” It consists of “expressive behaviors that are observable.” Thus, lifestyle is a distinctive and hence “recognizable mode of living, attitudes, values, and behavioral orientations.”11

Max Weber argues that “classes,” “status groups,” and “parties” are phenomena of the distribution of power within a community.12 He writes: “In contrast to classes, status groups are normally groups... In contrast to the purely economically determined ‘class situation,’ we wish to designate as status situation every typical component of the life of men that is determined by a specific, positive or negative, social estimation of honor” He continues: “status honor need not necessarily be linked with a class situation. On the contrary, it normally stands in sharp opposition to the pretensions of sheer property.” Weber points out that “property becomes a status qualification in a long run.”

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10 For the sake of clarity, I put my notes on Western lifestyle theories together. But my study on Chinese lifestyle theories is scattered in the different chapters of the dissertation.


"In content, status honor is normally expressed by the fact that above all else a specific style of life is expected from all those who wish to belong to the circle."\(^{13}\) So, social status is represented by style of life, and the boundary of social status is marked by a circle of people with a specific style of life. "For the decisive role of a style of life in status whatever it may be manifest, all stylization of life either originates in status groups or is at least conserved by them. Even if the principles of status conventions differ greatly, they reveal certain typical traits, especially among the most privileged strata." (my emphasis)\(^{14}\) So, Weber associated class with the market position of the individual; status with particular lifestyles. He concludes that "with some over-simplification, one might thus say that classes are stratified according to their relations to the production and acquisition of goods; whereas status groups are stratified according to the principles of their consumption of goods as represented by special styles of life."\(^{15}\) As well, Weber states: "For all practical purposes, stratification by status goes hand in hand with a monopolization of ideal and material goods or opportunities... Besides the specific status honor, which always rests upon distance and exclusiveness, honorific preferences may consist of the privilege of wearing special costumes, of eating special dishes taboo to others...."\(^{16}\) This idea of Weber is exemplified in the fact that Chinese, especially the Chinese Confucian literati traditionally held labor and commerce in low esteem. Scholarship was highly respected and a specific group of shi (scholar and literati) was

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\(^{14}\) Ibid., p. 91-92.

\(^{15}\) Ibid., p. 9.

\(^{16}\) Ibid., p. 88.
one of the most influential status groups in Chinese ancient history. Weber’s theory of the relationship between lifestyles and status group may help the understanding of Chinese \textit{ningshi} which is not defined by their economic and political status but rather by their unconventional estimation of honor and their unconventional lifestyles.

In modern society, especially in modern consumer society, lifestyle is often connected with consumption. As Harold Perkin argues, “If consumer demands were the key to the Industrial Revolution, social emulation was the key to consumer demands.”\footnote{Perkin, Harold, \textit{The Origins of Modern English Society 1780-1880}, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969, p. 96.} The issue of social consumption for social identity thus transcends class boundaries and gains more modern characteristics of a consumer society. In the city, people of different classes all joined together, forming crowds of consumers.\footnote{See Bocock, Robert, (ed.), \textit{Social and Cultural Forms of Modernity}, The Open University, 1992.}

More optimistically, George Simmel argues that the modern liberalism and individualism play important roles as the moral encouragement for consumption. He considers that the most profound issue in modern life is based upon the demand for maintaining one’s independence and individuality under the control of social power. So, Simmel promotes an individual’s “resistance” in order not to be “tamed” by modern technology and social mechanics.\footnote{See David Frisby: \textit{George Simmel}, London: Travistock, 1984.}

Unfortunately, in a modern consumer society, we are often easily to be “tamed” by certain social mechanics. In cities, especially metropolitan cities such as Beijing, people often deal with strangers, for which it becomes necessary to leave others a good
impression in a very short period of time. Modern consumerism is certainly stimulated by this modern urban lifestyle, mentality and value orientation of modern urban individuals. Style, thus, is associated with choice and identity: you can become whomever you want to be based on the style you choose and perform. As Robert Bocock observes, “the processes involved in living in the city increase the awareness of style, the need to consume within a repertory or code which is both distinctive to a specific social group and expressive of individual preference. In Bocock’s view, the metropolitan individual is no longer the order type Max Weber analyzes in his work on Calvinism “who would not spend ‘foolishly’ on items of clothing or adornment. Rather the person in the big city consumes in order to articulate a sense of identity, of who they wish to be taken to be.” This produces a ceaseless striving for the distinctive, with the higher social status groups continually having to change their patterns of consumption as the middle class and working class strata copy their habits. For example, drinking champagne or malt whisky, once the preserve of the aristocracy, has moved down the social status ladder in the twentieth century, so that the upper echelons either cease to drink these drinks, or consume more exclusive and expensive vintages. Bocock also read Thorstein Veblen for his further argument: “This aspect of the consumption process was observed by Thorstein Veblen in the United States during the late nineteenth century. He was concerned, particularly, with one specific social class, the nouveaux riches — the ‘new rich’ — of the late nineteenth century. These groups, whose wealth was recently acquired, aped the European aristocracy, or tried to do so in order to win social acceptance. The middle
classes and the working classes, black and white, were not yet caught up in this process, which Veblen termed “conspicuous consumption.”

For Veblen himself, “conspicuous consumption is social display based upon a high surplus income, enabling people to indulge patterns of consumption which are designed to impress others in some way.” The aim, Veblen argues, was to show that the family possessed “good taste,” a good background, and an ability to pay for consumption beyond what most other people can afford. The social values of patriarchy produce the feature Veblen commented on here, namely that a husband displays his wealth and high income by keeping his wife at home -- this wife wears good clothes and is able to be a leisure woman. In this regard, Veblen defines leisure as the “non-productive consumption of time.” He argues that taste and fashion in modern society are dictated by a leisure class. The key feature of this class is the ownership of capital.

It is noteworthy that Veblen shared the widespread disdain for the nouveaux riches. For some, such disdain was based upon a secular version of Calvinism’s moral disapproval of worldly pleasures and a life without work. For others, it was based upon European aristocratic disdain for those who had recently acquired wealth and who displayed it in a vulgar, open and too conspicuous a manner.

Veblen’s outstanding contribution rests on his systematic analysis of the relationship between a specific lifestyle and a specific social class with a historical depth. Thus, leisure lifestyle becomes a key signal of power and control. Leisure, as spending

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time in an unproductive manner is the proof for one's control of money, enables him to live in the freedom of and beyond necessity. The leisure lifestyle is recognized by its emphasis on etiquette and refinement, by "conspicuous leisure." With the development of urbanization, the wealthy spend more money on material goods, which symbolize their superiority. Veblen's critique of "conspicuous consumption" offers a way to understand social stratification and social consumption, especially the conspicuous consumption in the study of lifestyles in China in the 1990s.

In his essay "What is 'Good Taste'?", Jukka Gronow elaborates on Veblenian theories on lifestyle and social taste: "Life style and etiquette became arenas of social competition and emulation." "Complex, small but expensive dishes, a complicated hierarchy of tastes and even the ability to discuss and argue about taste, cuisine and cooking methods made it possible to make more and more refined distinctions and to establish an elaborately differentiated system." 22 Gronow further contends that "the almost compulsory impetus to distinguish oneself from one's equals and inferiors" is offered "as valid explanations of changing lifestyles, fashions and tastes and even consumption patterns in general." 23 Thomas Eriksen also considers that "[t]he style of life is the observable symbol of income and prestige," and he points out: "Veblen has characterized the motivations of upper-class behavior as 'conspicuous leisure' and 'conspicuous consumption.' The members of different social classes in a society usually


23 Ibid., p. 282.
have distinctive habits, attitudes, ideas, and values. We may say that these classes have distinct subcultures."\textsuperscript{24}

In these distinct subcultures, consumer items of clothing, eating and drinking, music, furniture, cars, paintings, and home entertainments -- from television, video-games, computer-games to home decorating -- can be used by groups to demarcate a lifestyle, to mark out their way of life from those of others. Brilliantly, Pierre Bourdieu has conceptualized these processes in a study of France, carried out in the 1970s, published in English as \textit{Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste} (Bourdieu 1984). Bourdieu analyzed the ways in which status and class groups differentiate themselves one from another by patterns of consumption which help to distinguish one status group's way of life from another. Hence the focus on "distinction" and the analysis of how matters of taste may be used in this complex social process. Bourdieu regards lifestyle as sort of "constancy and coherence of his preferences over time/rational conduct."\textsuperscript{25}

In Bourdieu's ethnographic observations on "taste" in modern French culture, he reveals food preferences, table manners, and other apparent "trivia" to be among the most decisive indicators of differences of lifestyle and class.\textsuperscript{26} On the other hand, Bourdieu couldn't help but revealing his own preferences for a good taste based on formal education. He argues that "cultural needs are created by education: this demonstrates that


all cultural practices (museum visits, attendance at concerts, exhibitions, talks etc.) and preferences within literature, painting or music are closely connected with the level of education (which is measured as academic title or number of years at educational institutions) and social origins. Bourdieu stresses that knowledge of classical music is strongly correlated with education and class background, and argues that the very definition of good taste is a manifestation of power which confirms and strengthens rank differences, as well as providing a certain prestige in itself. In addition, Bourdieu makes a major distinction between groups with access to two different types of capital. The business, entrepreneurial, management, commercial and financial groups emphasize economic capital. Such groups seek to amass money capital, real estate, factories, shops, shares and bonds. Their way of life is akin in some ways to the theory of conspicuous consumption Veblen offered in his analysis of the American nouveaux riches in the late nineteenth century. However, “old money” families tend to be less flashy. They may use

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27 Chris Rojek argues that Bourdieu’s “habitus” refers to an imprinted generative schema. The term “generative” means a motivating or propelling force in social behavior. The term “schema” means a distinctive pattern or system of social conduct. For Bourdieu the socialization process imprints generative schemata onto the individual. We learn systems of speech, deportment, style and value from our families and local communities. The origin of these systems is the habitual way of doing things and viewing the world that prevails in the social positions occupied by our families and local communities—hence the root of the term “habitus.” The difference of habitus stems from both the material, economic level of capital in each home and also the cultural capital. See Chris Rojek, Decentring Leisure: Rethinking Leisure Theory, London: Sage Publications, 1995, p. 67-69.

In the view of Elias and Dunning, the excitement stimulated by sports such as football offered some solution for our “unexciting societies.” Chinese writer Wang Anyi expressed her incapability of understanding the sensations provoked by the American football. Wang was puzzled by her own indifference toward the game and the enthusiasm of American audience. Wang herself saw football phenomenon symbolizing the shallowness of American popular culture. See Yu Qiuju, Wenhua kulu (The Hard Journey of Culture), zuojia chubanshe, 1998. Like Wang, I also feel aloof about football craze, which might have something to do with the different “habitus” in which we become who we are.
appreciation of well-established art forms and other aspects of culture, as a key means of
distinguishing themselves from the self-made businessman, from those who have become
newly wealthy through some successful deal or business venture. Generally, the
nouveaux riches have what the older rich families regard as uncultivated taste. The
second meaning Bourdieu gives to the concept of "capital" extends it into the realm of
culture and education. He argues that there are forms of intellectual capital which are
distinct from economic forms. The educational systems in modern capitalist societies
generate another structure of capital, based upon being able to talk about, or to create new
cultural products. In universities the highest social prestige continues to be attached to
non-utilitarian studies, especially in Europe. In the period during which Bourdieu was
writing, philosophy and literary studies held the highest status in Western universities, in
the eyes of many elite groups, followed by pure, rather than applied, mathematics and
natural sciences. Since taste is based on a sense or feeling about the goodness or badness
of objects or forms of conduct and good taste is normally associated with someone who
knows the codes for decent behavior, "proper" speech, beauty in art and music and so on,
Hans-Georg Gadamer regards taste as an idea of education and emancipation and good
taste can be adopted by learning.28 This is what Bourdieu calls the capacity for an
"aesthetic adaptation" through formal education.29

Jean Baudrillard sees through the characteristics of consumption in order to grasp
the general nature of the capitalist society. In Baudrillard’s eyes, consumption is a


symbolic behavior: "We must clearly state that material goods are not the objects of consumption: they are merely the objects of need and satisfaction... Neither the quantity of goods, nor the satisfaction of needs is sufficient to define the concept of consumption: they are merely its preconditions."\textsuperscript{30} "Consumption is neither a material practice, nor a phenomenology of affluence." "It is not defined by the food we eat, the clothes we wear, the car we drive, nor by the visual and oral substance of images and messages, but in the organization of all this as signifying substance. Consumption is the virtual totality of all objects and messages presently constituted in a more or less coherent discourse. Consumption, in so far as it is meaningful, is a systematic act of the manipulation of signs."\textsuperscript{31}

So, Baudrillard points out that the purpose of consumption in a consumer society is not located in the materiality of the goods, but in the relations or the differences signified by the goods. As he further argues: "Consumption is not a passive mode of assimilation (absorption) and appropriation which we can oppose to an active mode of production, in order to bring to bear naïve concepts of action (and alienation). From the outset, we must clearly state that consumption is an active mode of relations (not only to objects, but to the collectivity and to the world), a systematic mode of activity and a global response on which our whole cultural system is founded." An easily available example of Baudrillard's theory is the world of the fashion. The goal of pursuing fashion trends is not much practical, but is useful for defining social distinction. What is consumed is not the object or its using value, but the relation itself to a particular


\textsuperscript{31} Ibid., p. 21-22.
distinguished group and its symbolic value. As Baudrillard concludes, this object “is never consumed in its materiality, but in its difference.”

In Baudrillard’s view, there is no way of fixing the categories of “fundamental needs” versus “media induced consumption.” Consumption for Baudrillard is no longer seen as an action induced by advertising upon a passive audience which belongs to a specific social class or life-stage. Rather, consumption is an active process involving the symbolic construction of a sense of both collective and individual identity. Because this sense of identity is no longer seen as given to us by our membership to a specific economic class or social status group, consumption becomes an absolutely necessary process to the construction or articulation of a sense of identity. As Baudrillard contends, the sphere of the symbolic has become primary in modern capitalism; the “image” is more important than the satisfaction of material needs. In the words of a famous contemporary poster, “I shop, therefore I am.”

Bourdieu and Baudrillard hold different emphases on their consumption theories. In Bourdieu’s work, consumption is linked to the making of distinctions and the making of difference between groups whose positions are established both by their socio-economic position in the system of relations of economic capital, and by their roles in the systems which transmit and reproduce cultural capital. These two systems are, however, regarded as linked, but relatively independent of each other. Baudrillard drops this linkage in his analysis of consumption. In Baudrillard’s approach, the signs or symbols of consumption become more significant than the material objects of consumption. Signs

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and symbols are not linked in any necessary, or even contingent, way with economic class or social status groups. Identities can be constructed through the desire for consumer goods as much as through actually purchasing them. Indeed, for many people, consumption is now their major means of establishing and creating who they wish to be. The different consuming grades and tastes of leisure also lead to the division of lifestyles.

From different angles, Colin Campbell and Chris Rojek focus on one of the most prominent features of “individuality” in a consumer society — the connection between consumer fulfillment and self-expression. According to Campbell, consumer culture intertwines narcissism with hedonism. It associates commodity consumption with life-satisfaction. Campbell links narcissism and hedonism to the inability to form deep, emotional relationships with others. The individual is fanatically enwrapped in daydreams of the perfect relationship and total consumer fulfillment.33 Similarly, Chris Rojek argues, “Instead of exploring leisure in terms of freedom, class domination, patriarchy or the civilizing process it should be approached at the level of specific interactions between people.”34 They all have in common “the individual’s assertions that this is where he really lives, where he suspends self-consciousness because the activity in itself provides an adequate opportunity for self-expression.”35 Rojek further argues that

33 Campbell, C., The Romantic Ethic and the Spirit of Modern Consumerism, Oxford: Blackwell, 1987. p. 85-91. In the twentieth century, Western scholars have analyzed the different syndrome of modernity and postmodernity in the time of consumerism, such as Heidegger on “homelessness”, Simmel on “restlessness” (Simmel, 1978), Lasch on “narcissism” (Lasch, 1979), Campbell on “hedonism” (Campbell, 1987), and Bromley on “nostalgia” (Bromley, 1988).


"leisure is seen as a system within the social system which contributes certain functions which are necessary to the stability of the whole social system. These functions include relaxation, exercise, innovation, education and preservation.\textsuperscript{36} For Max Kaplan and Richard Kraus, "leisure is viewed as enriching personal skills and producing happier people," and "leisure supplies us mental stimulation."\textsuperscript{37}

However, Norbert Elias and Eric Dunning refused to automatically associate leisure with the "good life" or leisure time and space with the experience of freedom, choice, spontaneity and self-determination.\textsuperscript{38} This is quite true in the case of China when leisure was either over-politicized in the 1950s and 1960s or over-commercialized in the 1990s.\textsuperscript{39}

Nevertheless, all of the theories and ideas I quoted and studied have bearing on a reading of modern China which is, as I mentioned earlier, witnessing a change like never before. Both the consistency and changes in lifestyle theories of the West are also relevant to the case in China. In China, cooking, eating, drinking, properly greeting friends, singing an opera piece, painting and calligraphy, collecting curios, and playing games are all part of the art of fine living. In the past, conspicuous leisure was at the very


Joffre Dumazedier writes:
I...reserve the word leisure for the time whose content is oriented towards self-fulfillment as an ultimate end. This time is granted to the individual by society, when he has complied with his occupational, family, socio-spiritual and socio-political obligations. See Joffre Dumazedier, The Sociology of Leisure, Amsterdam, 1974, p. 71.

\textsuperscript{37} Richard Kraus, Recreation and leisure in Modern Society, Glenview, 1987, p. 15-17.

core of this existence. Art, however, that once counted the interiors of the home, yachts, a master's studio, and teahouses as its special venues has now taken up residence in some bars, coffeehouses, and nightclubs in China. If Beijing's most prominent bars and nightclubs have especially become the favored hangouts of "status seekers," that is because they have become the leading contemporary theaters of the display of "taste." Many patrons visit them precisely for the purpose of indulging in and showing off the latest fashions, and learning news of fashions yet to come. They are widely perceived to be establishments not simply of entertainment but of "serious culture." They are also hotbeds of "inside information." They are thus not simply privileged sites of taste making; they are equally privileged sites of the promulgation and legitimization of new substantive codes and new substantive technologies of rank and stratification. In many senses, urban China has reached the stage of a consuming the latest things and participating in the most recently emerging changes. Some Chinese love to distinguish themselves by displaying new styles and tastes. They, like Chinese avant-garde artists but in different ways, help to legitimate and spread the new fashions or, more profoundly, the new cultural information in the society.

39 It is elaborated in later chapters.


42 The issue of "taste" is further elaborated in my dissertation, especially in chapter 2, 3 and 4.
In self-consciousness, the long past of Chinese history is not merely reproduced or mechanically celebrated. Rather, it starts to be expanded, treated, and enhanced. In this dissertation, the "nostalgia industry" is eagerly desired for the embellishment or recreation of the past by the use of artifice, regardless of all its commercial purposes. People use pastiche and charade to self-consciously "periodize" or "costumize" the past, as they do in cinema and television.\textsuperscript{43} No sooner has one fashion trend died away than it begins to return in nostalgia form, which is different from traditional nostalgia which centers on the long-vanished past beyond the reach of living collective memory. Based on his understanding of the nature of collective memory, Gaston Bachelard argues that, modernity is a universe of corners, private spaces, exterior spaces, nests, miniatures and cells. The boundaries of modern life are ambivalent and constantly invite transgression. Bachelard, then, is making a direct connection between the barrage of stimuli in modernity and the poetic return to the elemental as all the basis of nostalgia or other collective consciousnesses in a consumer society.\textsuperscript{44} In China, the uselessness of much social activity, including leisure activity, has poetic value, especially in an age still influenced by utilitarian philosophy. What leisure offers is the charm of fulfillment which the density of everyday life negates. For many, real life only occurs outside the workplace. It is here where their emotions and interests are genuinely engaged. Hence, we do not need to exaggerate the repression, alienation and woe in our leisure experience. We also do not need to torture ourselves in order to say something that the giants such as Weber and Bourdieu have not explored. Let me leave all the complexities of the issues of


\textsuperscript{44} See Bachelard, G., \textit{The Poetics of Reveries}, Boston: Beacon Press, 1969.
class and social distinctions to the masters. In the meantime, we also do not totally agree with Chris Rojek’s projection that “Postmodernity is associated with the aestheticization of everyday life. This is a corollary of the argument that the divisions between high and low art, elite and popular culture, have collapsed,” since we cannot ignore the ambiguous interaction and rejection between the “high” and “low” art or between the elite and popular culture, especially in the circumstances of contemporary China. In the 1990s, the great divide between so-called popular or mass culture and serious or elite culture is resurfacing, and together they highlight features of a culture that, as a whole, is openly entangled with the desires and frustrations provoked by rapid modernization.

In the 1990s, the Chinese masses have the opportunities to “pick and choose” among a variety of cultural products. They begin to enjoy, design and pursue their own style of life. In fact, the glory of the elite culture in the 1980s in which Chinese intellectuals played an influential role in the guidance of the masses’ cultural orientation has been fading in the tides of consumerism of the 1990s. Instead, the “pop culture” and “fast food culture” are dominating and a cosmopolitan leisure culture is especially “huo” (fire; hot; popular). Young people want to “play young”; the middle-age folks claim that “I didn’t meet the right time when I was young. So, I’d better to catch up”; and the seniors announce loudly, “I have dedicated myself to the Revolution most of my life. Shouldn’t I enjoy some fun now?” Hence, leisure time for the city dweller quickly turns into a busy search for entertainment and diversion. Consequently, some shrewd entrepreneurs and merchants have been enjoying the commercial value of a booming

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leisure culture in the 1990s. They fan the enchanting flames: the bars are *huo*, the bowling clubs are *huo*, and the urban folks play with a style of *huo*. These Chinese quickly adopt the Western lifestyle of excitement, adventurousness and hedonism, and much more.

*My Fieldwork*

I returned to Beijing from Houston before Valentine’s Day in 1998. While everything was spreading shades of the dusk of the Valentine’s night, I walked into a flower store, on the corner of the North Taiping Road. The girl told me with her shining face that she sold out all the roses in her store in two hours after she opened the door this morning. Looking at my smiling face, she further related that her customers told her all the roses throughout Beijing were out of stock. I asked her if this happened before. She said no. "Then, do you know why?" I smiled to her again. "Romance," she answered immediately in a young and delighted voice.

Beijing was still in the depths of winter. On College Avenue, the streetlights faded into the distance, yellow, hazy and solitary. I smelled the smoke in the air, a kind of polluted air, familiar to the city in this winter season. I liked taking a walk after dinner since the mood and dimness of night concealed the jumble, the filthy and the withered. The traffic no longer threatened. It was a good time to walk around the city and enjoy the peaceful end of the day. "Wu zhao tiao, ma zhao pao" (Dance as usual, horserace as usual): the lyrics of a song named “Hong Kong 1997” drifted pleasantly out of a CD store.

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Many things had not changed. My neighbors are still zhongyong (Confucian's middle-way) practitioners, and worldly wise. They obey the common morality and do not like to be radical or force their views on others. Walking home upstairs at dusk, I am still greeted by the delicious smell of food from the open doors of each neighbor's home. Listening to the symphony of cooking activities, TV evening news, chatting or even occasionally yelling, I still feel the peace of a solid life, which is warm and beautiful. The quality of Beijing's Niangao (New Year's cake, made of glutinous rice with layers of minced red beans, dates, and other dry fruits) was as good as always, which made me tolerate the saleswoman's extra-pushy way of conducting business. In the past, customers rarely saw smiles from a saleswoman; now I see smiling faces everywhere along with the eagerness of making a deal, thanks to a free and competing market.

Nevertheless, Beijing is changing. The bookstalls in Beijing flow and circulate an amazingly rich stock of publications. Every morning, a long line snakes around a new stockbroking agency near my neighborhood. The public bathhouses all set up foot or back massage services in order to attract customers because most of the families nowadays prefer their own showering systems at home. Zhang Ailing is still popular; however, a young writer Chen Chen is a recent hit. Her candid self-exposure style gives her readers the chance to identify and release guilt. Increasingly, foreigners work for the TV stations in Beijing. More and more foreign cars are whizzing on the street. The traffic worsens. Even in my neighborhood, which used to be very quiet, is plagued by oversensitive car alarms and over-crowded parking lots. Neighbors with faces both familiar and new are all busy working to get their driver's licenses.
The media also changes. I was told by friends and the film distribution officials that there were no sensational domestic films in 1997 and 1998. On the other hand, Hollywood made a huge fortune in the Chinese film market. The Chinese mass media had been flooded with the promotional ads and film commentaries for two Hollywood films -- *True Lies* and *Titanic*. During her two-week visit/tour, my critical sister claimed that the colorful TV programs in China were much more interesting than American TV shows.

Around the city, tourists with their cameras and camcorders are gazing around everywhere. The tourist buses freely pass through the old *hutongs*\(^{47}\) and some shabby residential areas because most of the foreigners show more interest in a "traditional China," rather than modern China. While pop singer Ai Jing dreamed of being reunited with her lover in Hong Kong after the Chinese takeover of the colony. Nowadays, her song "1997" is already passe and 1998 ushers in new hopes and expectations.

Indeed, China changes with complicated volatility. However, just like the certain awkward situation in a stock market, people do not want to miss the rally by taking their money out of the market during the most volatile moment, some foreign bankers also say that they can't afford to stay away from loaning money to Chinese companies even if they have recognized the risk. China remains a huge potential market that the government is opening slowly to foreign banks. The foreign bankers may have to retreat sometimes given the bad situation. But "no one wants to burn any bridges," says the U.S. banker.\(^{48}\)

\(^{47}\) The lane or alley in Beijing.

The chaotic and disorderly nature of recent Chinese economy reflects bigger chaos and disorder of the whole system in China. China has been a country in transformation with many opportunities yet at the same times many challenges. There are always shadows and darkness lurking behind the glamorous optimism in the atmosphere of global marketing and globalization. Chinese people pick up things quick sometimes in a sophisticated or adapted manner, but more often in a naive and awkward way. However, their seemingly ceaseless mistakes are inevitably connected with ceaseless hopes. The changes in China have also driven shifts in academic inquiry. For instance, fascinated by the changes in people’s mentality in the process of the remarkable social changes, Chinese anthropologist Fei Xiao-tong claims that he has shifted his recent research focus from a biocological level to a psychological level in order to change his academic tendency of "seeing society but not seeing social individuals (jian she hui bu jian ren)."

Lin Yutang argues that “We do not know a nation until we know its pleasures of life, just as we do not know a man until we know how he spends his leisure time. It is when a man ceases to do the things he has to do, and does things he likes to do, that his character is revealed.”

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49 Lin Yutang, My Country, My People, p. 322.

In “Liji:Zaji,” Confucius offers his view of the relationship between work and leisure: “Tension alternating with relaxation is the way toward the wholesomeness.” In Lunyu, we read, One day, Zilu, Zeng Xi, Ran You and Gongxi Hua were sitting in attendance upon Confucius. Confucius said: “Since I am a little older than you, nobody will employ me any more. You often complain among yourselves, saying, “Our merits are not recognized.” Now, suppose your merits were recognized, what would you wish to do?” Zilu without hesitation replied: “Take a state of a thousand chariots, hemmed in by great powers, oppressed by invading troops, and suffering repeated famine in addition. I should like to take charge of such a state. In three years’ time, I could make everybody courageous and strong and understand the right course to pursue.” Confucius smiled at him, and then asked: “How about you, Ran Qiu?” Ran Qiu replied: “Take a small state of seventy or sixty li square or, say, one of sixty or fifty li square. Suppose I were asked to take charge of it. In three years’ time, I could make its people live in abundance; but as for the promotion of cultural refinement in rites and music, I should leave that to a man of true
Folk custom is a synthetically cultural phenomenon, which represents the collective living activities of certain areas or nationalities. Confucius said: “There are three beneficial interests, and there are also three unwholesome interests. The interest in regulating yourself with decorum and music, the interest in speaking the goodness of others, and the interest in making friends with worthy men are wholesome to yourself. The interest in arrogance, the interest in extravagant pleasures, and the interest in feasting and dissipation are unwholesome to yourself.” Traditionally, the instruction of customs has been important in China. Confucius believes that the best way to transform social traditions is implying education in entertaining; and the best way to govern the mass is by the proper rites and etiquette. Guanzi: Zhengshi said: “observing the folk custom in order to foresee the state of affairs.” Zhanguoce: Zhaoce observed: “In the secular world, the common people are addicted to costumes, and the scholars are addicted to what they heard.” Therefore, it has been a long tradition that Chinese intellectuals paid attention to rites, classics, and folk songs from which the political atmosphere, folklore and masses’ likes and dislikes can be known. For instance, Karaoke has been quite popular in China in virtue.” Then Confucius asked: “How about you, Gongxi Hua?” Gongxi Hua replied: “I dare not boast of my actual ability, but I am ready to be trained like this: at the ceremonies of sacrifices or at the conferences of the princes, I should like to wear the ceremonial cap and gown, and be a petty master of ceremonies.” Confucius then asked: “And how about you, Zeng Xi?” Zeng Xi was just about to pause in his playing on the zither. Putting the instrument aside with a bang, he rose and replied: “I am afraid that my wishes are quite different from those cherished by these gentlemen.” Confucius said: “What does it matter? We are just trying to let each express his aspirations.” Zeng Xi said: “In the latter days of spring, when the light spring garments are put on, I would like to take along five or six grown-ups and six or seven boys to bathe in the river Yi, go to enjoy the breeze on the Wuyu Tower after bath, and then return home, singing all the way.” Confucius heaved a sign and said: “I appreciate your idea.” (Lunyu:Xianjin, p. 187-189)

In the above conversation, Confucius did not try to make his judgement on his students’ different personal interest and ambitions. However, he clearly appreciated Zeng Xi’s attitude of enjoying his own life: singing, spending time with friends, understanding the true meaning of life, which expressed Confucius’s positive sentiment toward leisure activities.

the last ten years, which came from a leisure activity in KTV bars. Nowadays, politics has become increasingly concerned with style, presentation and gesture. So even Chinese high officials might like to sing in public to show that they share the joy with the masses in order to establish a closer relationship with them. Therefore, the function of Karaoke is extended from pure leisure activity to other purposes and the study of a KTV bar becomes a good way to learn social customs in China.

During my fieldwork, some new friends chose me as a good listener once they recognized that I was an understanding person. At the same time, however, they recognized me as an outsider who would leave the country soon. Within six months, I was told a lot of life stories, which were a mixture of real or half-real, or lies. Obviously, people are interested to know each other for different reasons. Some encounters develop a positive relationship, while others do not. Because I came back to do my fieldwork and I was not going to stay for a long time in China, I expected more things happening in a very short period of time and I tried to get more information from any individual who might otherwise have his or her own different concerns. The process of life-revealing sometimes was dramatically uncomfortable. My functionalist's attitude made me a credulous fool sometimes, yet rational and practical user at other times. However, I did develop certain friendship with my informants and have maintained contact after my returning to Texas.
Dissertation Overview

The legend of "Eat, Drink, Men and Women" goes on from the theatres of Taiwan\textsuperscript{51} to the streets of Beijing, bearing all the "lightness" and "heaviness" of Chinese lives, their existential and ontological beings -- both ordinary and extraordinary.

This dissertation has several goals. In particular, I wish to map out the way in which a diversity of lifestyles in everyday practice of Beijing is "played out" on the stages of bars, coffee shops, nightclubs and teahouses, and to show the psychological adaptability and the spiritual struggle of urban Chinese which have not been fully explored by both American and Chinese scholars. My study on the possibilities for a healthier life for Chinese people in a healthier society sounds naive, but will be rewarding over time.

By the examples of two "Open Policies" in the twentieth century of Chinese history, chapter one gives a historical sense of the flow of Westernization and modernity. The continued transformation due to Westernization, I argue, is reflected in the Beijing's bar cultural phenomenon in the 1990s.

Chapter two deals with how Beijing bar cultural phenomenon is part of an ongoing historical process. As well, this chapter describes the people and their frequenting of bars and coffee shops -- two leisure institutions that are highly influenced by Western lifestyles and ideologies. Normally, a bar or coffee shops is a representative place in the sense of pursuing Western style of life (e.g., by adopting Western drinking habits). But, in fact, the matter is more complicated. Since the whole nation is in the process of

\textsuperscript{51} \textit{Liji:Liyun} (Ritual: Ritual Applications) says "Yin shi nan nu (Eat, drink, man, woman) is the basic desire of human beings." "Eat, Drink, Man, Woman" was used as the title of a film directed by Li An.
transition and transformation, we can rarely see something "pure." Instead, we see more "impure" or "hybridized" things, tangled with the transience of the "Hits" and "Pop" and the continuity of cultural routine and everydayness. Among many Chinese men and women, the meanings of foreign food are "symbolic, and communicated symbolically." \(^{52}\) Although bars and coffee shops are murky landmarks of a "space" in "temporality" which is not always easily deciphered, they are obviously illuminating sites of cultural density.

My informants in chapter two are portrayed as recognizable individuals who suffer defeats and win victories in their own social worlds. All of the people in this chapter are real people whom I met in the cafes of Beijing or Zhengzhou, the capital of Henan Province. However, I changed some of their names out of respect and consideration for my newfound friends. I wish that I could draw a simple sketch which leads to the answers of my inquires: Who are the "Status seekers" \(^{52}\) (Packard, See Gronow1991) in urban China? What is the nuanced relationship between life choice and social environment? What kinds of social factors can generate heterogeneous outlooks about life and how? And what are the sources of lifestyle differentiation, as defined in anthropological arguments, which come from "expressive" behaviors, \(^{52}\) (e.g., consumption), especially status-related conspicuous consumption, that are observable or deducible from observation in the bars, coffee shops and nightclubs? One of the charms of some bars and classic nightclubs in Beijing is they are not only entertaining establishments, but also cultural establishments in the sense of traditional Chinese delicate cuisine, latest international fashion and avant-garde artifacts. Then, what is the

new orientation of Chinese traditional art of living in the new historical conditions? How are the "cold" economic origin and political power internalized as social restraints and controls reflected by the "warm" wishes and fantasies in the aroma of leisure?

Chapter three begins with one of Chinese refined drinking styles "yayin" to generate the continuity and progression of Chinese "Refined Culture" in the 1990s, based on the concern of the vulgar tendency of "tradition for sale." Furthermore, I ask, is China a place of "fusion of [social] horizons" which embraces many of the synchronic/diachronic and spatio/temporal stratification of Chinese lifestyles, especially the state of minds of different generations of mingshi?

Chapter four intends to help the comprehension of the philosophical foundation of Chinese lifestyles and social taste. In this chapter, I outline the transformation of Chinese philosophy of self-cultivation from Confucian xiushen, qijia, zhiguo and pingtianxia to Neo-Confucianist combination between Confucian social engagement in a moral civil society and Buddhist/Daoist's detachment from secular allures and spiritual transcendence; from Communist self-denial devotion to the collective cause in the age of politicized passion and ideological homogeneity to contemporary Neo-Confucianists, such as Tu Weiming's cooperation between Confucian tradition and the ideology of modernity. The new trend in the 1990s, however, is the new combination between traditional self-cultivation and consumerist self-fulfillment.

Chapter five focuses on the transition and transformation of a traditional leisure institution -- teahouses, by which the Chinese art of living is performed on an everyday
stage. By describing the traditional style of teahouses in Beijing, this chapter elaborates the Chinese philosophy of "pinghe sandan" (peace and leisure).

Similarly, by discussing the Chinese understanding of the relationship between food and medicine, chapter six interprets the Beijing style of living as a search for serenity in a city full of stimulation and disturbance. This chapter elaborates upon the Chinese art of living by the practice of nourishing both body and soul through medicinal food. By the examples of Chinese local cuisine, this chapter also looks at the transformation of Chinese cuisine as part of Chinese culture based on a dynamic interaction among geographical elements, social migration, and cultural inheritances and changes. Therefore, it offers a background for the dynamic atmosphere of Beijing’s eating and drinking culture, and a way of interpreting eating and drinking habits that are still present and influential in China in the 1990s.

Chapter seven explores the gender issue. It gives an image of the floating world of the KTVs in Beijing with their female managers, waitresses and their male and female patrons, the social butterflies in particular. Seeing every commodified product (even a woman's body or image) as the product under a specific circumstance, this chapter offers a cultural critique of the colorful products displayed in the showcase of urban leisure activities. As well, this chapter deals with the gender issue both in its continuity and transition or transformation through the study of modern Chinese literature and Western salon culture. In *Shanghai Modern: The Flowering of a New Urban Culture in China, 1930-1945*, Leo, F. Lee analyses Liu Na'ou's collection of short stories, Dushi fengjingxian (Scenes of the City, 1930) with his own sensitivity and sensibility by emphasizing on the seductions of exorcism, eroticism, commodity culture; both "the
attraction and alienation he [the male narrator/protagonist] feels towards the city" (Lee 1999) Nowadays, I ask, what kinds of new commercialized recreational activities and forms for stimulation have been increased in the competition for patronage? What is the new attraction and alienation, the urban Chinese feel in the aura of "duhui ciji" ("metropolitan excitement")?

Chapter eight traces the history of the yuefenpai, a commodified product of modernization in China, which has been widely used in Beijing's nightclubs, bars and coffee shops as the "flair" of China's "good old past" under a new, specific circumstance, along with the discussion of another commodified cultural product -- old photos. This chapter also reveals the conditions of the conspicuous consumption in China, which is part of the reason for the rise and development of the leisure facilities including the nightclubs, bars, and coffee shops in the cities. By analyzing a "staged and commercialized" tradition and "Chineseness," this chapter focuses on the China in the 1990s as a contradictory place of (dis)continuity and (un)stability, where the everyday comprehension of history is both deconstructed and reconstructed. According to Smith, the global culture is "a true melange of disparate components drawn from everywhere nowhere," (Lee 1999:28); this chapter also raises the issue of the (dis)continuity of the deconstructed/reconstructed in the "Yellow Culture" and "Blue Culture," in an ancient country which has been "exposed to global chains of mass consumerism" (Yeung 1996:30).

During my six-month stay in Beijing and Zhengzhou, I visited the bars, coffee shops and teahouses, and interviewed people with different professions in these two cities. This dissertation is an effort to convey a "sense of national concern" about Chinese
Civilization in a new historical stage. As Confucius said: Whenever walking in a company of people, there must be someone worth my learning from. I can select the good qualities of one and follow them, and cite the bad qualities of the other and correct them in myself. Thus, as long as Chinese are open-minded, willing to learn the essence of the other cultures, and at the same time, to develop their own tradition and cultural uniqueness, they will own a brighter future in the new millenium. Life is like a river, which can only go forward. So is China.
Chapter One: Two “Open Door” Policies

It is quite impossible to explore the transformation of contemporary Chinese lifestyles without discussing the issues of Chinese modernity and Westernization since we simply cannot ignore that the lashing waves of the Westernization in China has been developed in the concrete, temporal-historical situations. Has-Georg Gadamer argues that "all understanding of the historical world is itself historical, and that "consciousness of history stands within the stream of history itself," since consciousness itself is "exposed to the effects of history." Therefore, our pre-understanding, prejudice, or "horizon" has constituted our being, and become the biases of our own openness to the world.

Contrary to popular belief, in the twentieth century, there were at least two “Open Policies” in Chinese history. These policies played significant, symbolic roles in the process of the modernization and Westernization in China. In 1899, China unwillingly signed the “Open Door Policy” enforced by American imperialists in an episode of national humiliation and national struggle for modernity in near modern Chinese history. In 1978, a new “Open Policy” was advocated by Chinese leader Deng

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54 The term "horizon" for Gadamer, implies the temporality and historicity in the process of interpretation. However, a horizon, according to Gadamer, should not been seen as a closed one; rather it is an open one. See Hans-Georg Gadamer, Truth and Method, ed. By Joel Weinsheimer, Continuum Publishing Group, 1993.

55 For Gadamer, the hermeneutic consciousness also involves continual mediation of the past and the present, a fusion of the historical horizon and the present horizon. The fusion of the present to the past results in a new horizon that involves a broadening of the present horizon.

56 1840, Opium War, ending with Treaty of Nanjing in 1842, Britain obtains Hong Kong. 1884, Sino-French War, France colonized Cochin China, as southern Vietnam was then called, and by
Xiaoping and practiced enthusiastically by millions of Chinese people.\textsuperscript{57} It has been a key step in the increased participation of the Chinese in globalized consumerism and globalized modernization. While this chapter explores the historical contexts of these open door policies, in my other chapters, I look at the transformation of Chinese (Beijingese in particular) urban leisure activities and lifestyles reflected in the transformation of leisure institutions such as bars, KTV halls and teahouses in the ongoing flow of Westernization and globalization in the 1990s.

\textit{A Brief History of Contact: China and "the West"}

Beijing has been home to famous individuals. Around Houhai, there are the former homes of Guo Moruo, Song Qingling and Lao She, and some areas such as the Miliangku area inside Qianmen were famous in the 1930s for the residences for several well-known modern Chinese intellectuals, such as Hu Shi, Fu Sinian, Liang Sicheng and

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1864 established a protectorate over Cambodia. Following a victorious war against China in 1884-85, France also took Annam. Britain gained control over Burma. Russia penetrated into Chinese Turkestan (the modern-day Xinjiang-Uygur Autonomous Region). Japan defeated China in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95. The Treaty of Shimonoseki forced China to cede Taiwan and the Penghu Islands to Japan, pay a huge indemnity, permit the establishment of Japanese industries in four treaty ports, and recognize Japanese hegemony over Korea. In 1898 the British acquired a ninety-nine-year lease over the so-called New Territories of Kowloon. Britain, Japan, Russia, Germany, France, and Belgium each gained spheres of influence in China. The United States, which had not acquired any territorial cessions, proposed in 1899 that there be an "open door" policy in China, whereby all foreign countries would have equal duties and privileges in all treaty ports within and outside the various spheres of influence. All but Russia agreed to the United States overture. See The Cambridge Illustrated History of China, 2000.
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\textsuperscript{57} Starting with the Third Plenum of the Chinese Communist party's Eleventh National Congress in December 1978, Deng reaffirmed the aims of the Four Modernizations, placing economic progress above the Maoist goals of class struggle and permanent revolution. Profit incentives and bonuses took the place of ideological slogans and red banners as China's leaders experimented with ways to modernize the economy. Deng's economic policy was first displayed as a model through the establishment of the "Special Economic Zone" in Shenzhen in 1979. Since then, China entered into the millieu of international bank loans, joint ventures, and a whole panoply of capitalist economic practices. See Modern Chinese History on line.
Lin Huiyin. Perhaps less notably, Beijing is also the eternal resting-place of certain foreigners. Outside the Fuchengmen, there is the grave of Italian Metteo Ricci, who played an important role in the Westernization of China.

Matteo Ricci came to China as a missionary in 1583, during the Ming Dynasty. Ricci was a very diplomatic person who knew how to make a good impression and earn the trust of the Chinese first, not to irritate them by forcing a foreign religion upon them. He learned to speak Chinese, eat Chinese food, wear Chinese clothes and read Chinese Classics. After painstaking efforts, he became the first missionary who gained the support of a Chinese emperor. Among the many gifts he received from Ricci, the Shenzong Emperor most adored the mechanical clocks. Thanks to those fancy clocks, Ricci was allowed to stay in Beijing and the Emperor supplied Ricci with a house and money to build up churches. Therefore, he was able to spread Catholicism and Western culture in China by way of the churches and Catholic colleges.

Before the sixteenth century, inventions flowed mainly from China to the rest of the world, but later the tide began to turn. An inventive spirit was stimulated by the new devices from abroad. Because of Ricci, the Chinese learned much about world geography and astronomy, perhaps most importantly that the Earth was round. Ricci thus became a saint from the West Land in the wide-opened eyes of the Chinese.

Ricci made friends with many upper Chinese officials since he was not only considered a xiru (Western scholar or learned man), but also successfully convinced those learned Chinese that his teaching was derived from Confucianism and Chinese

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tradition. Among Ricci’s “disciples,” Xu Guangqi was the most influential high-ranking official. Besides missionary activities, one of the fruits of their cooperation was the Chinese translation of the six books of Euclid’s *Elementary of Geometry*. These volumes of translations were the first pure scientific document introduced to China, bringing Western civilization with them. Another important achievement was the printing of the world map. In order to remain in keeping with the Chinese convention of centering China as the Middle of the Kingdoms, Ricci redesigned the world map and placed China in the middle of the map at the center of the world. While working on this, Ricci got help from another high-ranking official, Li Zhizao. Whereas Xu Guangqi was converted to Catholicism soon after he became Ricci’s friend, Li’s path to Catholicism was more twisted as he did not want to give up his concubines. At the time, many other famous Chinese officials such as Yang Tingyun and Yuan Zhongdao had the same dilemma as Li.

After Ricci’s death, the foreign missionaries in China consolidated their position through their knowledge of Western astronomy and the calendar. However, the missionaries rejected Ricci’s cautious strategy towards missionary work and began extravagant religious activities in China. The time was not yet ripe. In 1616, an anti-Western missionary and anti-Western astronomy agitation swept China and many missionaries were persecuted and expelled.

In 1629, an incorrect prediction of a solar eclipse by the Chinese calendar gave Xu Guangqi another chance to persuade the Emperor to adopt the Western calendar as a

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59 Astronomy, developed from divination in ancient China, was politically and militarily important beyond its significance as a science because the ability to predict such phenomena as
counterpart for the Chinese lunar one. As the result, a famous calendar book, "Chongzhen Calendar," which had more than a hundred volumes, was realized with the help of several returned missionaries who had previously fled persecution.

In the political competition between the old forces and missionaries with their Chinese supporters, the evidence of the power of science was recognized every now and then. The role of "Chongzhen Calendar" in the seventeenth century was such an example. Although Xu Guangqi died in 1633 before the final volume of the book was published, his idea of "an overall Chinese system combined with Western techniques" made possible a future of collaboration between Chinese and Western scholars.

In 1640, when the Chongzhen Emperor accidentally found the piano that Ricci left as a gift, he developed his interest in Western music. The missionaries were thrilled and hoped to bring Christianity into the Chinese palace through hymns and music. Unfortunately, Christianity did not save the Ming Dynasty. In 1644, the Qing Dynasty rose to power and the missionaries began to wear pigtailed, too.

Nevertheless, more and more Western music and religious paintings came into the emperor palaces in the seventeenth century. The perspective in Western painting brought fresh air into Chinese landscape painting. However, traditional Chinese understanding of the art of painting left little space for different methods. As Li Ao has argued, the exposed female bodies in Western painting further determined its short life at the time.60

Beijing was and remains a city with palaces and royal gardens. The most Western influenced architecture in the Qing Dynasty was Yuanmingyuan. It was a happy eclipses and control over the calendar were imperial prerogatives, so that accurate knowledge of the heavens serves as a tool of government.
combination of the Chinese, French and Italian style. In keeping with the Chinese belief that a day was divided by twelve shichen, which were represented by twelve different animals, twelve animal statues were placed on the two sides of a vast triangle pond, functioning as a continuous clock at the front of a European style place. They were on duty in turn. Each animal spurted water for two hours and the twelve animals together displayed the division of a whole day. It still remains a stigma on Western civilization that Yuanmingyuan was burned to the ground by the Eight-Power Allied Forces, the aggressive troops sent by Britain, the United States, Germany, France, Russia, Japan, Italy and Austria in 1860.

However, Chinese also began to realize their own responsibilities for their failures in international affairs. In the long history of China, especially at the end of Tang Dynasty, national defense had always been feeble. While the Chinese fear of the foreigner had been lingering behind the Great Wall from dynasty to dynasty, the Chinese social system was the product of peacetime. Unlike the sea-going Japanese who traditionally had the spirit of adventure and also inherited the ancient Chinese spirit of setting great store by martial qualities, Chinese, especially the Han Chinese, developed a false sense of peace and security. Eventually, they had to pay a heavy price for their physical and mental isolation and idleness.

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61 In the 1990s, the Shanghai Opera House, is a landmark building and source of national pride, and leaders and citizens alike seem perfectly at ease with the combination of French design, German construction, a Japanese stage and American acoustics.

62 It is one of the 12 two-hour periods into which the day was traditionally divided, each being given the name of one of the 12 Earthly Branches.

The Treaty of NERCHEM (1689) with the Russians, drafted to bring to an end a series of border incidents and to establish a border between Siberia and Manchuria (northeast China) along the Heilong River, was China's first bilateral agreement with a European power. In 1727 the Treaty of Kiakhta delimited the remainder of the eastern portion of the Sino-Russian border. In early eighteenth century, the Western diplomatic efforts to expand trade on equal terms were constantly rebuffed since the official Chinese assumed that the empire was not in need of foreign -- and thus inferior-- products. Despite this attitude, trade flourished, although after 1760 all foreign trade was confined to Guangzhou, where the foreign traders had to limit their dealings to a dozen officially licensed Chinese merchant firms.

During the eighteenth century, the market in Europe and America for tea, a new drink in the West, expanded rapidly. In addition, there was a continuing demand for Chinese silk and porcelain. But China, still in a pre-industrial stage, wanted little that the West had to offer, causing the Westerners, mostly British, to incur an unfavorable balance of trade. To remedy the situation, the foreigners developed a third-party trade, exchanging their merchandise in India and Southeast Asia for raw materials and semi-processed goods, which found a ready market in Guangzhou. By the early nineteenth century, raw cotton and opium from India had become the staple British imports into China, in spite of the fact that opium was prohibited entry by imperial decree. The opium traffic was made possible through the connivance of profit-seeking merchants and a corrupt bureaucracy.
In 1839 the Qing government, after a decade of unsuccessful anti-opium campaigns, adopted drastic prohibitory laws against the opium trade. The emperor dispatched a commissioner, Lin Zexu (1785-1850), to Guangzhou to suppress illicit opium traffic. Lin seized illegal stocks of opium owned by Chinese dealers and confiscated and destroyed some 20,000 chests of illicit British opium. The British retaliated with a punitive expedition, thus initiating the first Sino-Anglo war, better known as the Opium War (1839-42). Unprepared for war and grossly underestimating the capabilities of the enemy, the Chinese were defeated. The Treaty of Nanjing (1842), signed on board a British warship by two Manchu imperial commissioners and the British plenipotentiary, was the first of a series of agreements with the Western trading nations. The year of 1842 was the turning point in Chinese history. If China only had inland borders on the North and Northwest in the past, from 1842, the map of China was changed. In this year, China lost Hong Kong to the British. Later, in 1894, China lost Taiwan to Japan. From 1894-1903, China, one by one, lost her suzerainty of Vietnam, Burma and Korea.  

In addition, because of the treaty of 1842, five Chinese port cities were forced to open as business harbors: Guangzhou, Xiamen, Fuzhou, Ningbo and Shanghai. These

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64 Under the Treaty of Nanjing, China ceded the island of Hong Kong to the British; abolished the licensed monopoly system of trade; opened five ports to British residence and foreign trade; limited the tariff on trade to five percent ad valorem; granted British nationals extraterritoriality (exemption from Chinese laws); and paid a large indemnity. In addition, Britain was to have most-favored-nation treatment, that is, it would receive whatever trading concessions the Chinese granted other powers then or later. The Treaty of Nanjing set the scope and character of an unequal relationship for the ensuing century of Chinese "national humiliations." The treaty was followed by other incursions, wars, and treaties that granted new concessions and added new privileges for the foreigners.

See Cambridge Illustrated History of China, Patricia Buckley Ebrey, Cambridge University, 1996; also see Chinese History: Qing Dynasty, University of Hong Kong Library Online.
harbors were scattered in a relatively similar distance from each other along the prosperous southern areas of China (the Zhu River Valley and Yangtze River Valley) and outlined the new boundary line of the contact between China and the foreign countries. The five business harbors connected with each other and worked as the collection and distribution centers of Western goods. Shanghai was a small town before 1899. Foreigners helped to transform it into a booming business center and paradise for adventurers. Around the end of the nineteenth century, in England, Chinese student Gu Hongming\(^5\) published an essay in an English magazine, in which there were the following sentences:

- What is heaven?
- Heaven is the most comfortable foreigner’s house at the Jining Road in Shanghai.
- Who is a fool?
- The fool is the foreigner
- Who even can’t make a big fortune in Shanghai.\(^6\)
- What is the meaning of insulting the God?
- It’s when you even complain that
- The customs tariff system formulated by Hart’s\(^7\) Tax Bureau is not perfect.\(^8\)

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\(^5\) Gu Hongming was born in a very wealthy family in 1857, which offered him a full chance to get the best education. He went to Edinburgh University, majoring in English literature at age of 20. After he received his master’s degree, he transferred to Leipzig University in Germany and got his degree in civic engineer. Gu was fluent in Latin, English, German, French and Modern Greek. He studied in mathematics, philosophy of ethics, rhetoric, engineering and Chinese classics. He became a professor in Beijing University after he came back to China and began to promote classical Chinese culture. He was famous at the time as a Monarchist and a stubborn restorationist of Chinese culture. He was also well-known for his weird, funny but often lovely rebellion spirit.

\(^6\) After 1980s, several Western companies have been making great deal of money in China. The first three outlets that McDonald’s opened in China each set a new worldwide company record for opening-day sales. China is becoming a significant market for Motorola’s pagers and cellular telephones. Foreign shampoo, such as Pantene and Head & Shoulders, secured places in Chinese market.

\(^7\) Sir Robert Hart.
This satire expressed the deep anxiety of Chinese intellectuals towards the colonialism in China. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the Western merchants had traded opium at enormous profit for silk, tea, and silver in China which epitomized the unequal and humiliating character of foreign treaties and actions.

At the same time, the newly born Chinese comprador came to the stage of history. The Chinese comprador bourgeoisie comprised the Chinese middlemen between the local businessmen and foreign businessmen. The foreign businessmen transported the commodities to such port cities as Shanghai and Tianjin and the Chinese compradors distributed them to Chinese businessmen and made a huge profit from the transactions.

The Christian missionaries also introduced foreign goods to the interior of China during the course of their indomitable mission. The common Chinese showed more interest in the foreign products than in the Gospels. Chinese accepted the yang2huo4 (foreign products) because they were functional and enjoyable, or simply because they piqued their curiosity. These goods broadened their worldview and stimulated their desire for material goods. So, while the missionaries were trying to spread God's love, they helped to open the market for foreign commodities. Gradually, the Western flow was not restricted to the five harbors. It lashed at and infiltrated the nearby regions, then extended along the riverbanks and roads to the inland of China, where the yang2huo3 (foreign matches) sparked a prairie fire on the vast land of an ancient country, destroyed the peace, and woke up the people of the land.

68 See Beida Xuebao, June 5, 1996.
Facing the flood of Western commodities into China and the blind Chinese admiration of foreign products, many Chinese intellectuals began to criticize Westernization, and as part of their rhetorical strategies, they highlighted the achievements of their ancestors. Chen Hanzhang, a well-known scholar in Chinese classics, was teaching Chinese history at Beijing University around 1914. He wrote his own teaching materials in which he claimed that modern Western acoustics, optics, chemistry, and electricity were already studied in the books of the various scholars in the pre-Qin times. Another professor was joking with Chen: “To muse over things of the remote past, and to magnify the voice of Han nationality.” Chen explained to his colleague: “My purpose was to break from the nationally widespread dispirited sentiment of worshiping anything foreign and improperly belittling Chinese ourselves.”\(^{69}\) Despite the struggles to find a balance between tradition and modernity, Chinese nationalism and Westernizationalism, Chinese intellectuals began to bring a storm of new ideas and knowledge to the shattering Middle of Kingdoms.

In 1776, when Adam Smith published *On the Wealth of Nations*, he declared that China’s history and culture had come to a halt. He claimed that China’s stagnation was due to a lack of emphasis on overseas trade, and that closing the gate was tantamount to suicide. This book was first translated into Chinese by the reformer Yan Fu in 1890.\(^ {70}\)

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\(^{69}\) Zhou Mu, *Beida* (Beijing University), Beijing: Wujia chubanshe, 1998, p. 227-8. This reminds me of some of our overseas Chinese claiming Chinese as the original inventor for Derrida’s deconstruction theory.

\(^{70}\) Yan Fu (1854-1912), the first student sent by the Qing government to England to study their navy, in the end never became the captain of a warship; instead, he became an enlightenment thinker. From his extensive observation of the West, Yan Fu discovered that the great achievements of European culture lay in developing the potential of the individual, thereby providing a sort of social contract. This social contract ensured that competition and all the other functions of capitalism would all pay positive roles in accelerating social change. And similarly
“Yangwu Yundong,” also called the “Self-strengthening Movement,” was China’s direct response to the crisis in relations with the West.\(^7\) It inevitably involved yangwu or Western affairs. Gradually yangwu came to mean government business involving relations with Westerners as well as Western methods and machines. In its narrow sense, however, the term suggested the adoption and use of Western technological knowledge. Although this movement included the reform of internal affairs, its major emphasis was the imitation of Western technology. One of the representatives of this movement, Zhang Zhidong, offered his theory: “Zhong xue wei ti, xi xue wei yong” (Chinese learning as the essence, Western learning for practical use). Although the dreams and hopes of “Yangwu Yundong” were later dashed by the Japanese warships, Zhang Zhidong’s motto and Sun

he discovered that by employing the willpower of the individual, it was possible to create an energetic culture.

\(^7\) The rude realities of the Opium War, the unequal treaties, and the mid-century mass uprisings caused Qing courtiers and officials to recognize the need to strengthen China. Chinese scholars and officials had been examining and translating “Western learning” since the 1840s. Under the direction of modern-thinking Han officials, Western science and languages were studied, special schools were opened in the larger cities, and arsenals, factories, and shipyards were established according to Western models. Western diplomatic practices were adopted by the Qing, and students were sent abroad by the government and on individual or community initiative in the hope that national regeneration could be achieved through the application of Western practical methods. Amid these activities came an attempt to arrest the dynastic decline by restoring the traditional order. The effort was known as the Tongzhi Restoration, named for the Tongzhi Emperor (1862-74), and was engineered by the young emperor’s mother, the Empress Dowager Ci Xi (1835-1908). The restoration, however, which applied “practical knowledge” while reaffirming the old mentality, was not a genuine program of modernization. The effort to graft Western technology onto Chinese institutions became known as the Self-Strengthening Movement. The movement was championed by scholar-generals like Li Hongzhang (1823-1901) and Zuo Zongtang (1812-85), who had fought with the government forces in the Taiping Rebellion. From 1861 to 1894, leaders such as these, now turned scholar-administrators, were responsible for establishing modern institutions, developing basic industries, communications, and transportation, and modernizing the military. But the bureaucracy was still deeply influenced by Neo-Confucian orthodoxy and the modernization during this period was difficult under the best of circumstances. So, despite its leaders’ accomplishments, the Self-Strengthening Movement did not recognize the significance of the political institutions and social theories that had fostered Western advances and innovations. This weakness led to the movement’s failure. See Modern Chinese history on line.
Zhongshan’s will, “Peace, Hard work, and Save China,” were deeply embedded in the Chinese heart.

In the foreign concessions such as French and British concessions in Shanghai, some Chinese could enjoy relative freedom of speech and publication; therefore, those concessions became bases for several prohibited magazines. Students in Shanghai loved to go to Qifang Teahouse where they could join lively discussions about different issues. There were also many overseas Chinese publications. Among them, Liang Qichao’s “Xinmin congbao” in Tokyo played an important role in introducing Western ideology and modern science and technology.

However, the Chinese attitude toward the outside world is always multidimensional: hesitation, determination, struggle and change. For instance, after Japan defeated China in 1894, the Chinese did not develop hatred toward Japanese; instead, they felt admiration and even appreciation. They admired that Japan accomplished its reform and became a powerful country in fifty years, and they appreciated Japan’s victory as a wake-up call, spurring China to work with her whole heart to be strong.

At the same time, Chinese fights against imperialists never stopped. In 1915, people in Shanghai were boycotting American goods to protest the discrimination law against Chinese passed by the American Congress. In the same year, the Japanese forced the Chinese government to sign the “Twenty One Treaty,” which provoked a movement to boycott and resist Japanese merchandise. At this time, Chinese admiration toward Japanese turned into fear and suspicion. From then on, even when Japanese tried to foster
goodwill between the two countries, Chinese would still feel that they harbored dark
designs or intentions. In the next year, 1916, the gentry, students, and businessmen in
Jiangsu and Zhejiang Provinces joined in opposition against the British plans to build up
Su-Hang railroad.

But, like it or not, the change in China was inevitable. In 1917, “Shanghai was
already running after the style of New York.”72 In the cities, especially metropolitan
cities like Shanghai and Beijing, young women were no longer like their mothers. They
swept the shy manners behind and displayed their beautiful bodies by wearing their high-
heeled shoes. During the strikes in cities such as Shanghai in the beginning of the
twentieth century, the traffic and huge crowds of people made for total chaos, and even
the policemen in concessions felt quite helpless. Boy and girl scouts took over and
maintained order on the street. These scout girls with their short hair quickly became a
new sensation.73

Throughout the whole nation, Chinese society was in the process of transition and
transformation. In the introduction of Lin Yutang’s My Country and My People, Pearl
Buck argues that one of the most important movements in China in the early of
twentieth century was the discovery of their own country by young Chinese
intellectuals. Buck writes: “Where the fathers imbibed the doctrines of Confucius and
learned the classics and revolted against them, these young people have been battered by
many forces of the new times. They have been taught something of science, something
of Christianity, something of atheism, something of free love, something of

72 Jiang Menglin, Xichao (Western Tides), Taipei: Fuxin shuju, 1989, p. 111.
communism, something of Western philosophy, something of modern militarism, something, in fact, of everything." Many old-fashioned Chinese were shocked by the sudden changes; as Qiang Menglin recalled, "they found out that the youth that went to school were intolerable. They claimed that worshiping Buddha was superstition and burning paper for ancestors was stupid. They did not believe that there was a God of the Kitchen. They regarded the statues of Buddha in the temples as simply mud or wooden sculptures, which should be thrown into the river in order to do away with superstitions. They claimed that men and women should be equal. And the girls argued that they had right to choose their own husbands, divorce or remarry after their husbands died. They also criticized the cruelty of footbinding. They contended that foreign medicines were better than Chinese herbs. They maintained that there were no ghosts, no reincarnation since humans would not leave anything behind except for chemical compounds after they died. They promoted that the only immortal thing was to serve their country and their people." These rebellious young people were called the "New Youth."

After World War One, the free atmosphere was strong in Chinese intellectual circles. The goal for many magazines at the time was to cultivate an individual sound in mind and body and create a society in evolution. Among all these publications, New Youth magazine, which promoted democracy and science, was undoubtedly the most influential one. Since the May Fourth Movement, the new trends, such as Marxism,

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73 See Zhongguo Xiandaishi Yanjiu (The Study of Modern Chinese History), Beijing Normal University, 1996.


75 Jiang Menglin, Xichao (Western Tides), Taipei: Fuxin shuju, 1989, p. 118.
anarchism, capitalism, democracy and science-saves-China had swept across China, which influenced the future of the country. For instance, in 1919, two student leaders during the May Fourth Movement, Fu Sinian and Luo Jialun organized Xinchaoh She (New Trends Society) and published a magazine Xinchaoh (New Trends) whose targets were old conventions and ideologies.

One of the most influential leaders in the “New Culture Movement” was Cai Yuanpei. Cai took up the post of the President at Beijing University in 1916. Highly educated in both Chinese and Western cultures, Cai began to encourage students “to learn for the sake of knowledge.” This belief came from his understanding of ancient Greek culture and its spirit of free research, which was in conflict with traditional Chinese mentality of "xue yi zhi yong" (study for the purpose of application). Traditionally, Chinese regarded religion as part of morality. Cai, however, believed that the ability to enjoy beauty or one’s aesthetic capabilities were more important than one’s religious beliefs. Cai hoped to improve young people’s morality by cultivating their aesthetic abilities of appreciation of the beautiful, i.e., yujiao yule (to locate education in entertainment or to change the prevailing habits and customs by cultivating aesthetic enjoyments). Cai’s personal love of nature and art gave him a tranquil state of mind, lofty thoughts, refined tastes, and a simple lifestyle, which set a role model for his students. Having a mind as deep as valley, Cai was ready for any idea, criticism or advice. As a

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76 The May 4th Movement of 1919 was an anti-imperialist, anti-feudal, political and cultural movement ignited by patriotic students’ attack against the “Twenty One Treaty” and influenced by the October Revolution and led by intellectuals.
promoter of women’s education, Cai created a sensation in China when he invited the first two women to a classroom of Beijing University in the February of 1920.\textsuperscript{77}

Another influential leader in the “New Culture Movement,” Hu Shi also played an essential role in modern Chinese education. His promotion of “Wholesale Westernization” in 1929 and his “Wholehearted Globalization” in 1935 has been carried on by several generations, including the generation in the 1990s.\textsuperscript{78} Inevitably, the horizon of our past, “out of which our culture and our present live, influences us in everything we want, hope for, or fear in the future.” And “[h]istory is only present to us in light of our futurity.”\textsuperscript{79}

\textit{China and “the West” in a New Age}

In 1978, Deng Xiaoping began to promote his new “Open Policy.” After another thirty years of isolation from the Western world (1949-1978), China began to speed up her steps toward modernization, which is, inevitably, another process of Westernization. In November 1979, Beijing Foreign Enterprise Service Corp. was founded and sent its first employee to a foreign business office in the city of Beijing. During the reform and opening-up process in China, this agency has grown. In 1999, the company established contacts with more than 4000 overseas companies from over 60 countries and regions,

\textsuperscript{77} See Beida, Beijing University Press, 1997.

\textsuperscript{78} See Dagong Bao, 1935, June 30. Also see Beida, Beijing University Press, 1997.

offering them 23,000 qualified employees. Through them, China has established economic and business contacts with countries throughout the world.  

Since late 1970s, China has also abandoned the previous practice of developing state-to-state relations on the basis of ideology. Instead, she has furthered the relationship with all countries, both developing and developed, big or small, in a realistic style. Especially in the 1990s, China has accelerated her efforts to create a diplomatic framework for a more open future.  

China is open to the world.

Wade Brackenbury, an American adventurer, wrote of his strange experiences in *Yak Butter & Black Tea: A Journey Into Forbidden China*, which captures a portrait of open China: “I caught a minibus the fifteen miles to Dali, the little tourist town nestled in the mountains above a huge lake bearing the same name. Suddenly I was surrounded by Westerners. Pink Floyd and the Grateful Dead blared from little food joints, and pretty women of the Tibetan minority served pizza, beer, and hamburgers to backpack travelers clad from head to toe in colorful outfits purchased in little hippie boutiques along the streets. Eventually I reached a place called the Number Two Guest House. A British guy was talking to an Austrian about rugby. Two Canadian girls were having a lively argument with an Australian girl about the decision to hold the Olympics in Sydney and not China. Someone was bashing Clinton. Outside the Tibetan Freedom Restaurant, a long-haired Katmandu dude was blowing sweet-smelling puffs of grass into the air while

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81 Chinese has learned to turn the pain and anxiety of losing oneself in the irrational movements under the slogans of “Great Leap” and “Try hard to catch up the Imperialists” to the strong desire of learning from other countries.
he delivered what sounded like a discourse on Taoism and the spiritual evolution of the universe to three similarly stoned European women."\textsuperscript{82}

Surrounded by such an open air, China began the construction of her global stage. Yanni's piano pop music (1997) and the Chinese version of Puccini's \textit{Turandot} (1998) were all performed in front of the Ancestral Temple in the Forbidden City. Some well-acclaimed foreign journals, such as \textit{Newton} and \textit{National Geographic}, have begun publication of their Chinese editions. The increasing desire and increasing possibilities of consumption have brought numerous consuming tides. A consumer society has been taking shape in the 1990s. The rise of a consumer culture also has constituted the new lifestyles and cultural choices. The booming of consuming institutions, such as bars, coffee shops, Karoke halls and teahouses increases the temptation of consumption with the demonstration of new trends.

In the mid-1990s, there was an advertisement war between Coca-Cola and Pepsi in China, and in the late 1990s, wines from different countries were "fighting" against each other for space in the Chinese market. If some Chinese are still concerned about a wholesale Westernization in China, they simply failed to give enough credit to the magnificent assimilationism of Chinese culture. The fate of Coca Cola in China, perhaps, can relax us a bit. This drink is able to keep its authentic flavor everywhere around the world except in China. Coca Cola in China is not only converted into a hot drink, but also boiled with ginger in order to satisfy the Chinese affinity for hot drinks and love for ginger's taste and its medicinal function.

Not only were young folks eager to learn and make a change, but also some seniors, such as Mr. Shen. Beijing's local newspaper *Beijing's Evening News* reports: "Today, with China under assault by foreign fast-food chains, the trailblazing chef Shen Qing has cooked up China's first patented dish fit for franchising: baked pig's head." With China's refined cuisine losing ground each day to the patented, processed products of McDonald's and Kentucky Fried Chicken — McDonald's has fifty-five restaurants in Beijing, while KFC has thirty — the idea of fighting back with China's own patented food was Mr. Shen's ambition, which won enthusiastic publicity by newspapers and television.

However, Beijing has indeed become a showcase for international cuisine. If you want to try an Indian restaurant, you can go to the Taj Pavilion, Omar Khayyam and Asian Star in the Chaoyang District, or Spices in the Chongwen District, and Shamiana in the Xicheng District. If you prefer Japanese cuisine, you can try Hanamasa in the Haidian District, Fuji House in the Dongcheng District or Kiku Yo and Japanese Wine Shop in the Chaoyang District. If Korean food suits your palate, Han Yi Guan and Hepingmen Korean BBQ can satiate your yen for kimchee. As for Thai cuisine, there are Borom Piman, Phrik in the Chaoyang District and Thai and Burma Restaurant in the Dongcheng District. For French, try Blue Marine or La Place in the Chaoyang District; for German, go to the Paulaner Brauhaus or Schiller's #1; for Italian, go to the Adrea Ristorante Pizzeria Café, Metro Café, or Roma Risorante Italiano; for Spanish, go to the Baikal Café or The Elephant Bar; for Latin American, we have Havana Café, Parati Restaurant, and Churrascaria Beijing; for Northern American, there are Nashville Country Music Bar, Boss BBQ of America, and Texas Bar & Grill and so on.
Even outside of major cities, non-Chinese food entrepreneurs have successfully set up shops. Beidaihe, six hours from Beijing by train, is a summer beach resort on the Gulf of Zhili which used to be a favorite retreat of the Empress Dowager Ci Xi. After the end of Qing Dynasty, the Beidaihe area was taken over by foreigners. At the beginning of the twentieth century, German bakeries and beer halls, French cafes and pastry shops, British tea rooms, and American bars sprang up near the beautiful beaches.⁸³

In the 1920s, Germany, in its colonial territory Shandong Province, helped the Chinese develop Qingdao beer (Tsingtao Beer) which is now famous. By the 1990s, German beer companies came back to China to compete with American beer for the Chinese market.⁸⁴ Located to the south of the Zhao Long Hotel on the East Third Ring Road of Beijing, HOF Brauhaus is a high class bar and restaurant with an exotic atmosphere. It offers home-brewed beer, Bavarian specialties and Cantonese seafood. The typical Bavarian wooden structure and the country-style interior decorations make the restaurant cozy and elegant. A large variety of mellow HOF beers are brewed in imported brewing equipment, according to traditional German brewing methods. If Western cuisine was rejected in China along with Western opium and bombs at the beginning of the twentieth century, it was welcomed by Chinese at the end of the twentieth century.

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⁸³ Qingdao, in Shandong Province, another German colony at the beginning of the twentieth century, is the producing place of the famous Qingdao beer.

⁸⁴ China’s No.2 brewer, Qingtao Beer is facing the challenge from the more and more foreign breweries, such as Danish Carlsberg, and Australian and Canadian cooperation with Chinese for the largest malting plant in Pulantian, a coastal town in Liaoning Province. Even Yanjing, the No.1 beer in China, only accounted for 3.9 percent of the domestic market in China.
Grape wines are not unknown in China but have had little significance until recently. At the beginning, the emergence of bars was presumably reflecting demand by the resident foreigners following the reopening of China. Now, imported wine has gained cachet among chic young Chinese. However, quality foreign wines are available in China’s cities at a price four times as what they are tagged in a British or French supermarket.

But, the high price of Western liquors does not stop the booming of bar business in Beijing in the late 1990s. On the contrary, bar business in China has become a cultural phenomenon, and the high priced Western liquors have become the icons of Western lifestyles.
Chapter Two: Bars and Cafés

This chapter describes the people and their frequenting of bars and coffee shops — two leisure institutions that are highly influenced by Western lifestyles and ideologies. In the first part of this chapter, I keep argumentation or elaboration to the minimum in order to maintain the flow and character of the sensual worlds of bars and coffeehouses.

Yin/Shi (Drinking/Eating), Nan/Nu (Man/Woman):
An Ethnography of Bars and Cafe

The Mild Seven bar is located in the Weigongcun, Haidian District, a scant few hundred yards down the street and around the corner from the famous “Electronic Street” in Beijing which represents the high-tech explosion of the 1990s. At the Mild Seven, I was introduced to Shuzen’s Bible study group, run by my college friend who returns with her American missionary friends to China every year from the United States. This is a neighborhood where different things coexist comfortably. A small neighborhood temple’s door is open until midnight to give small-business owners or computer-chip venders, among whom countrywomen are the major labor force, a place to receive the blessing of the Money God, though they must pay two yuan to buy two bundles of incense.

It is no wonder that many people visit this area since they can taste the joy of body and soul in a single outing. But if you seriously believe in Buddha for His blessings or for your meditation, you may have to visit bigger temples, near the West Mountain or in other parts of the city, such as Fahua Temple near Gulou Street and Fayuan Temple (established in 696), which is still a fine place to gain peace and find Buddha. However,
even some of the biggest temples are no longer the place for serenity and transcendence. The Buddhist stories booming out of an amplifier sound like a sour song of love and flirtation from the Chinese Country West. The Splendid Tibetan Buddhist Temple Rongfugong has become quite a tourist shrine, especially for Western Tibetan sympathizers.

Since 1995, bars in Beijing with authentic Chinese names or exotic foreign names such as the Mild Seven have become shrines of Western taste and lifestyles.

It was around 10 o'clock in the morning of April 26, 1998, not a busy time for the bars in Beijing. That morning, Xiaohuang, the xiaojie [waitress] in Mild Seven Bar, was pleased by my compliments and showed me around. Xiaohuang told me:

"We are having a cool summer this year. Last year, after dinner, people rushed outside and the streets were full of people who were trying to enjoy the open air. Our bar business was especially huo [very brisk] that summer." Pointing to a group of European-looking guys at another table, she continued: "Those foreigners actually were living in places with air-conditioning, but they also liked to cou renao [join in the fun or add trouble to]. See, once they came to our country, they were assimilated by us."

When I was wandering around the bar, I saw three young girls come in, and speak in murmurs with Xiaohuang. After they left, Xiaohuang told me that they came here to look for jobs and they were going to start work tomorrow. This was a busy season for bars.

In Mild Seven, I often sat next to a group of middle-age Chinese men talking in English. I wondered who they were and why they were speaking in English. However, it

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85 This chapter is based on my diary during my fieldwork in 1998.
was almost impossible to know everybody in the bar and I might remain a stranger to others after a half-year's presence. Bars are a place for an urban style of life and people do not want to disturb the peace of others.

When I stepped into the Mild Seven one Friday morning, I saw a man doubling over a table, sound asleep. Waitress Xiaohuang told me that he was a customer, who was still here from the previous night of drinking. I watched him and wondered about his background. A couple of minutes later, he woke up and I said "Hi!" He rubbed his eyes, and asked Xiaohuang for a double-espresso. When he sat back in his chair, he began talking to me. What an unexpected, interesting conversation. He even allowed me to put our conversation onto a video. These were the curious circumstances of my first meeting with Pang, a graduate of Beijing University and an assistant manager for an advertisement agency in Beijing. And thus began an unusual series of events in my friendship with Pang.

Pang

On the evening of May 2, Pang called me and insisted that I should see some friends of his who were guaranteed to be interesting. So, I went to Beijing University to meet them. It was two days before the Centennial Celebration of Beijing University. I saw guards everywhere, especially around the entrance, which reminded me of the political tension in 1989. However, the inverted reflection of the trees in Weiming (Nameless) Lake was as calm and beautiful as usual.

At the dinner table, I met Yu and his girlfriend Miss Luo. Yu had his own color-printing business in Beijing. Pang told me that it was very difficult to track him down since he might not answer the phone and disappeared into his research for months, then suddenly reemerged with new ideas and new products. Yu's girlfriend Luo worked for
IBM in its Beijing division and had visited Austin, Texas twice. That night, from 8 p.m. to 5 a.m., I participated in another unusual conversation. Although I had, of course, brought my sound-recorder with me, I did not want to annoy my new friends in this kind of private situation. But, to my surprise again, Pang and his wife Mei recorded the whole conversation and gave it to me two days later. I translated the words in a very literal manner in an attempt to preserve its true flavor.

After dinner, Yu drove us to a bar named Dance With Dragon on Xinjiang Street.

In the Dance With Dragon, run by the alumni of Beijing University, the band members still sang Taiwan college songs, such as Liu Wenzheng's "Too Late" and "Grandma's Penghu Bay." Those songs were first popular on campuses throughout Mainland China in the early 1980s as part of the "gang-tai re" (a craze for Hong Kong and Taiwan, especially their music and films). The biggest attraction in this bar is not the flickering candlelight, or flowing music, even not the beer at half price, but the touching poetry readings by young people.

Pang and Yu ordered tequila, while the three ladies chose to drink Corona. In Beijing, Corona beer is associated with ladies, like long and thin More cigarettes.

One can get a variety of foods at Dance with Dragon. The popcorn is available at 10 yuan per serving and a pot of hot tea with chrysanthemum flowers costs 20 yuan. Desserts, such as cheesecake, are easily available in bars. The best cheesecake I ever had in Beijing came from the Sculpting in Time, a small cozy café behind a modest window with a filmmaker's clapboard, near Beijing University Southeast Gate. The owners are a Taiwanese couple, Zhuang Song-lie and his wife. Zhuang was a film-directing major
from Beijing Film Academy. He showed me his treatise on Russian director Tarkovsky, who directed *Stalker, Sacrifice* and other quite philosophical movies.

Most of the bars also serve spaghetti and different varieties of soups. For instance, the French style soup is a very light cream potato soup with minced chive and the Russian country-style soup is a very thick one with beets, tomatoes, lettuce, potatoes and Russian red sausage.

For a taste of the many libations available at the Dance with Dragon bar, here is the alcohol list.\(^\text{86}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cognac:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Remy Martin V.S.O.P.</strong> (&quot;Ren Tou-ma&quot;; &quot;Once Open Ren Tou-ma, Good Luck Comes To You&quot; is a well-known ads on the streets)</td>
<td><strong>Y 35</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Whisky:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Jack Daniels</strong></td>
<td><strong>Y 25</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>J. W. Red Label</strong> (&quot;Hong Fang&quot;)</td>
<td><strong>Y 20</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>J.W. Black Label</strong> (&quot;Hei Fang&quot;)</td>
<td><strong>Y 25</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Jim Beam</strong> (&quot;Zhan Bian&quot;)</td>
<td><strong>Y 25</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chivas Reyal 12 years</td>
<td><strong>Y 25</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canadian Club</td>
<td><strong>Y 25</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tequila: (Mexican Liquor)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cuervo Especial Gold</strong></td>
<td><strong>Y 20</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Jin Kuai-huo&quot; (Golden Pleasure)</td>
<td>(price subject to change)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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\(^{86}\) During my chatting with Wang, he told me his earlier experiences in bars: “It puzzled me that there was no basic consuming standard for a customer in some bars. You had to spend quite amount of money in order to keep a seat. So you planned to take a little time to enjoy the mood of leisure, but your mood was going to be ruined by the extremely calculating business atmosphere.”
Tequila Sauza

Rum:
  Captain Morgan (White)  Y 20
  Captain Morgan (Black)  Y 20

Gin: (Du-song-zi-jiu)
  Gordon's
  (price subject to change)

Vodka:

  Stolichnaya "Sulian Hongpai"

  Moskavaya "Sulian Lupai"

Liqueurs: (Tian liejiu)
  Bailey's
  Cointreau  Y 20
  Get      (a kind of mint-flavored liquor, Bohe jiu)  Y 20

Cocktails:
  Dry Martini  Y 30
  Gin & Tonic  Y 30
  Margarita  Y 30
  B-52  Y 30

Wines:
  St. Pierre Dry Red  (California)  Y30/180
  St. Pierre Dry White
  Cotes du Rhone AC 1995  (France)  Y35/200
  Ginephone Chianti 1993
  Italy
  Y30/180

Beers:
  Foster's  Y20
  Carlsberg  Y20
  Budweiser  Y25
  Corona  Y25
  Guinness Stout  Y25
While other customers were dancing to the campus songs, the conversation among the two couples and me turned into a night-long debate between Pang and Yu. I finally left them alone to continue their argument at 5 a.m., when the argument began to be very personal. As a result, I did not witness the final outcome of a quite interesting and very intense argument.

Two days later, I was on the phone with Pang again.

I said: "All day the wind has screamed and the rain has beaten against the windows."

"So that we are forced to raise our minds for the moment from the routine of life, and to recognize the presence of those great elemental forces," Pang answered in his regular philosophical manner.

As the evening drew on, the storm grew more intense and louder, and the wind cried wildly. Pang called again. He was talking about something metaphysical from the East to the West. But, I could recognize that he was in a great anxiety.

The weather had cleared in the morning, and the sun was shining with a subdued brightness through the dim veil hanging over the ancient city.

Another call drew my attention away from the book that I was reading. It was Pang who had just returned from the Mild Seven after another overnight stay. He wanted to see me. I hesitated for I already felt uncomfortable about his now constant late-night calls.
“It’s urgent, please let me see you,” he begged over the phone. “What’s wrong?” I asked. “I offended the bar owner. That bastard! But I might be in trouble.”

I agreed to see him since he needed my help. At the very least he needed somebody to talk to.

When we were in a taxi on the way to his home, he continued: “When I told that bastard’s wife that her husband was going out with the other women during his night shift, that bitch rebutted me coldly: ‘My husband will not do that’. You know, I can’t blame her since she was defending her husband. But I’m sure that she had a fight with her husband at home. Well, she would back her man against any outside offenders.” “Now,” he continued, “He has truly sworn to have vengeance upon me.”

“I can quite understand you thinking so,” I responded.

Our taxi barreled on towards the southern reaches of the city.

“Shit!” Pang shouted suddenly after he glanced at the left mirror of the taxi. “That bastard is chasing me. I saw his jeep.” “Are you sure that is his jeep?” I asked doubtfully. “Of course, the jeep was parked behind the bar when I left. I am sure that his wife called him and told him what I told her. So he is coming to catch me.” Immediately, I realized that he was serious when I saw the big drops falling from his forehead. He was sweating.

Pang asked the driver to change lanes and turn onto another road. The taxi driver was a bit nervous but unwilling to give up a good chance to make money. Almost an hour later, we lost sight of the pursuing jeep, which concluded the car chase. For some reason, it was quite like an awkward comedy to me. I felt uneasy.
A week later, I ran into Pang's wife — the third unexpected turn of affairs. She told me that she was asking for divorce and warned me: "Don't be fooled by that man. He is evil."

The gleam of the headlights of a taxi came around the curve of the path; I stared at Mei's pretty face and said: "Oh, I am sorry to hear that, but I think that I have recognized something. So, I am not completely in the dark."

"I just do not want to give him another chance to hurt other women," she smiled.

"He never got his chance here," I smiled back.

No matter whether Pang is evil, I still felt sorry for him. I knew he loved his wife and her picture was always sandwiched between two poems he wrote for her which he showed me once. Perhaps the end of his marriage rather simplified the matter for Pang since he needed to bring his current chaos of his life to an end.

It didn't surprise me that night when Pang called me and again talked in his philosophical manner.

"I met your wife today," I tried to cut to the point.

"Where? What did she say to you? Don't believe her. She has mental problem," Pang's voice was high-pitched on the other end of the line.

"She did not say much," I showed a little impatience.

"Yes, she threatened to divorce me. And she will do it. I know that she will do it. She has a soul of steel. She has the face of a beautiful and soft woman, and the mind of the most resolute of men." Pang continued: "My wife is just like all the great inventions by ancient Chinese, which were found by me but enjoyed by others." After saying this, Pang lapsed into moody silence.
I did not try to comfort him because I knew he was a very smart person. But he needed to be pushed into a situation that could etch a big “Stop!” sign in his mind. He had to cool down and live a most humble but solid life, at least for a while. His first consideration should be the pressing danger created by his foul-mouth and unpaid alcohol bills. He should realize that he showed his manhood in some of the most stupid ways.

On May 7, Pang claimed to me over the phone that he had quit drinking since he had realized the alcohol bungled his matters. I congratulated him and agreed to see a friend with him.

We came back from the Edgar Snow grave by the Nameless Lake at Beijing University and had dinner in “Lao Sichuan” (Old Sichuan) located in Xijiang Street. The huge Beijing Opera masks on the wall brought a bit of style to this otherwise average little restaurant. The owner Tang Cong was shrewd and reserved. I was told by Pang that Mr. Tang and his younger sister (Miss Tang Huan) who worked for the Central Multinational Song and Dance Ensemble were interesting characters. Actually, Mr. Tang’s words of praise for his sister -- "My little sister is an outstanding person" -- provoked my interest in seeing Tang Huan in the future. Although I only got a chance to talk to Tang Huan over the phone once before I left Beijing, I would like to see her in person sometime if there was yuan between us.  

After dinner, we went to the Listen Bar whose new owner Mr. Gao just came back from his visit to Houston and Dallas.

"Guobayinjiusi" (Die Once Enjoy Oneself to the Full), a song from the TV soap opera of the same name which was a sensation in 1994, was in the air.

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87 In this sense, Yuan refers to some lot or luck by which people are brought together.
The bartender was instructing a customer in a beer-drinking technique: “First, put some salt between your thumb and the index finger, take a piece of lemon. Second, lick the lemon once and lick a little salt. Third, drink the whole mug of beer in one breath.”

Pang introduced me to a 17-year-old Mongolian girl who was working there as a beer saleswoman.

I was joking with Pang: “You should encourage more customers to buy beers from your Mongolian little sister.”

The bartender smiled: “It’s good enough as long as he comes.”

The Mongolian girl agreed: “He has been keeping his beer drinking records in this bar.”

Pang continued, “We have a beer promotion sale every summer, especially in the beer hall in Saite and Yansha. There is going to be a global conference in Beijing in October, which is a good time for beer sale.”

Pang turned to the bartender, “Chivas Regal 12 years is my favorite. This is not right. They might have added water to this cup. This wine is mixed with water.” The bartender denied the accusation: “It’s impossible. I mixed the wine. It’s exactly what you drank yesterday.”

“Chivas Regal 12 years is only about $5. I don’t know how much your imported price is,” Pang asked, and then shifted to another topic.

“This band plays from one bar to another and they perform here on Thursday and Friday.”

“I want to sing a song ‘See You Off, My Comrade-in-arms’ for you before you leave for America,” Wang said to me.
The former owner was on the phone: “Oh, is that right, it’s popular in Australia again? Let me know if you have any new information. Oh, yes, my bar is in a not bad location. It’s very important. But, information is also very important. Don’t forget me here...”

I heard Pang talking about me to the Mongolian girl while I was chatting with the bartender some distance away:

“She walked into the bar with her camcorder. I’m not afraid of being videotaped as long as she is not going to use me in a porno film. She needed my help.”

“It’s such an easy job for you,” the girl laughed. Pang murmured: “Since I have plenty of time...”

When I came over to join their conversation, Pang told me: “My “Seventh Brother” is the seventh child in the family. He is a sheng player in the Central National Song and Dance Ensemble. He is riding in his “Mercedes 280” everyday. Well, that’s his Benchi brand 28 bicycle. In his mind, music is everything. It’s such an enjoyable thing to listen to his sheng and have a couple of drinks. His music is the sound of Nature.”

The singer was performing a song called “Last Winter.” Pang sniffed his nose: “You should go listen to Qin Shilong next door sing this song. These guys are driven to make 100 yuan everyday. They do not have time to practice or engage in advanced studies. One should focus more on the accumulation of skills, not the performance. Let me tell you a story: Emperor Zhuang of Chu had sat on the throne for three years. He entertained himself with good wine and pretty women day in and day out. A minister remonstrated Emperor Zhuang regarding his going to the court in the morning since

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88 He is Pang’s friend. Pang calls him “Big Brother” for respect.
Emperor Zhuang had not been conducting his day-to-day state affairs for three years.
Emperor Zhuang put his cup on the table and motioned to him to go to the inside room.
Emperor Zhuang Said: 'There is a bird who hadn’t flown for three years, soaring to the
sky in flight; who hadn’t cried for three years, crying to shock the people. Do you know
what it is? It’s called ‘Phoenix.’ Emperor Zhuang was one of the five powerful chiefs of
the Princes of the Spring and Autumn Period [770-476 B.C.]. He quit drinking, dispersed
the band, and began to read over the memorial to the throne at midnight."

The Mongolian girl cut in: "So, if you are going to quit drinking, the people
around you are going to be scared to death. You’re the one who will soar to the sky."

"Table 14 needs coconut milk!" The bartender waved to a waitress.

Someone was on the phone: "The post office is selling commemorative
stamps...Are there any more stamps left? Can you buy me a set?"

"Why do you like Linghuchong in Gu Long’s Smiling At the World?" the
Mongolian girl asked Pang.

Pang answered: "Linghuchong is a key figure and all the secular affairs are
happening around him. You can regard him as a tape recorder. Ten people who witness
the same thing may have different interpretations. How you interpret something reflects
your state of mind at that time."

The bartender visited our table. Pang turned to him:

"Where is Old Zhang?"

"Which Old Zhang?"

"That cashier."

"He left."
“Where did he go?”

“He transferred to another job.”

“Oh, our Party has another assignment for him.”

Mr. Gao’s cellular phone rang:

“What’s up? Bengdi [go to disco]? Where are you going? I thought that you were playing mahjong. What time is it now? It’s about 11:30 p.m. Didn’t you tell me that you were going to play mahjong? Where did you go then? Oh…Boyfriend or girlfriend? Oh…No, I’m not going to that kind of party…”

Pang went to the stage to sing. The crowd cheered for him. Pang told the bartender: “Bring some “Jin Kuai-huo [Golden Pleasure] for the band, but don’t tell them that it’s my treat.”

On the stage, a girl in her early 20s was singing some English song which sounded like Blues. She was chicly dressed, short, and my first impression was that she seemed like a Japanese girl. She was Min, a 22-year-old bar singer who voluntarily performed several songs for me. She impressed me with her unique musical style which expressed her anxiety, anger, and hope.

Min had been with a band for two years in Beijing. She had just moved to a so-called “Artists’ Village,” Beijing’s version of Greenwich Village near Yuanmingyuan (a ruined royal garden destroyed during the Opium War) two months ago. She was planning to move again to Tong County when the police chased all the artists away for the excuse of social security. High mobility was part of her lifestyle as a geti [self-employed] singer. Her band was scheduled to play a gig in early June but postponed until August to avoid the “sensitive” month (June 4, 1989’s Anniversary). Min later invited me to visit her and
her partners in a music studio, but they postponed yet again. Two days before I left Beijing, they were finally going to hit the road to Zhengzhou to join a famous rock & roll band from Beijing.

At 1 a.m., I left the Listen for the Dance With Dragon. Qin Shilong, one of the shareholders of the bar, came to chat with me. He performed an English song for us and I knew before from Pang that he was famous in Beijing University for his guitar-playing when he was a student there.

Between the Listen Bar and the Dance With Dragon, there is a chain of seamy restaurants, and tobacco and soft drink shops, which lead down to a darker flat building with dimly sparkling neon lights.

I paid the bill and stood on the dimly lit street. The clouds began to lighten. I inhaled some fresh air. I had some principal points about which I wished to be clear though I was often weary after any activity with Pang.

That night after I left, Pang's walkman was confiscated by the bar owner as collateral for his huge unpaid bill of over ¥10,000. His life was a mess.

However, I was in "Old Chengdu" with Pang again two days later because he lied to me, saying that Tang Huang was going to meet me in her brother's bar. Tang Huang was not there. Pang kept drinking and talking. I noticed that many people were disgusted with him, including most of his friends for his repetitive stories, bragging, and self-destructive habits. I noticed the twitching nerves on his face caused by his excessive drinking.

Before I went back to the States, I was busy with different things. Though Pang constantly called, I did not see him again. Eventually, he told me he buried himself in
preparation for the GMAT, and alternated from week to week between alcohol and his ambitions, the compulsiveness of his over-drinking and the fierce energy of his own keen nature. Although he claimed himself as an American at heart, he was still deeply attracted by the study of minority Chinese (his wife is of Hui nationality -- the Hui are mainly distributed over the Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, and share many of the beliefs and customs of Islam), and devoted his time and immense energy to developing friendships with different minority groups, collecting their legends, songs and mysteries.

Cheng & Russian Waitresses

My old friend Cheng also owns a bar restaurant on Xinjiang Street. One night, I stopped by on my way home from Beijing Women’s College and decided to have dinner there.

From behind the smoke of their lamb roasters, the Uygur men were whistling at passing women. The breeze wafted the heavy but delicious smell through the gray sky. The street is narrow and crowded; one taxi sometimes blocked the taxis coming from the other direction, which would provoke yelling and complaining.

Cheng hired two young Russian women as waitresses. They had charming smiles and could talk with customers in broken but understandable Chinese. I asked how he found them. He answered: "I went to the Northeast for wild mountain ginseng and met them in a bar where they worked as xiaojie, you know, half whores. I noticed that they were actually quite shy girls and had some sympathy for them. I tipped them heavily. The next day before I came back to Beijing, I ran into them on a street and they told me that they had left that bar but did not know where to go. So, I brought them back here." After
five minutes' observation, I was convinced that Cheng got two treasures. They were very strong and motivated girls. Later I learned Lida was nineteen years old, Nadasha was twenty-one. I watched them balance eight trays of food along one arm while carrying customers' drinks with another hand. Nadasha was a big girl with a broad face and big shining eyes. She told me she was thinking about going to school to learn Chinese some day. I was pleased by her desire to study and then mentioned some classical Russian novelists and their works. She did not know any of them and confessed that she did not read much and only brought one book with her from home. I smiled and said to her that she was so young and she had enough opportunities to learn and do different things. Before I left, she asked for my home telephone number and I left it with her, along with my best wishes.

A month later, I was told during a dinner gossip that Nadasha bang shang le ge kuanye (had become a rich man's mistress). Nadasha was standing by the counter, smiling at me. I stared at her fresh face and shining eyes, and responded to the person sitting next to me: "She will be fine."

My friend saw a ring on her left hand and asked her if she got married. She said no. He was then jokingly to her: "If you put a wedding ring there, men would not dare to chase you." Nadasha explained: "In my country, we put wedding ring on the right hand." After a pause, she murmured in a slightly cold tone: "If he is really interested in me, he will ask me out anyway."

That night after I came back from Cheng's bar, I got a call from Jennifer, who was learning Chinese with me in Houston before she was sent to China as a managing consultant. She was quite excited over the phone and told me that she and her husband
Jim were having a wonderful time in China. I already knew that she was being paid double her usual rate for her job in China. Her husband Jim is able to learn Chinese at Fudan University. Jim also travels around and has fun every day. Their two adult daughters can travel to China for Christmas at the company’s expense. I am happy for this wonderful couple who are both very intelligent and delightful individuals. I am sure that Chinese people will easily like them and always make them feel that they are valued. Later, I asked Jennifer if they had been in any bars or coffeehouses. She said yes and she felt like that they were quite similar to American ones.

Bars in Beijing

In the 1990s, more and more young Chinese men and women regarded foreign-owned or Chinese-owned foreign-style restaurants in Beijing as cosmopolitan, urban, and sophisticated. They described the experience and adventure of trying different foreign foods as an essential element in the lifestyle of a modernized metropolis, and they enjoyed adding more color to their "experienced" or "imagined" cultural pastiche.

Of the many kinds of new or revived commercialized recreational activities and forms of stimulation have emerged in the aftermath of Deng Xiaoping’s reforms; bars and nightclubs are surely among the most salient. Between 1996 and 1998, there were more than thirty bars established in one single area, Sanlitun, in Beijing. Fortunes were made out of even small bars, though their proprietors might complain occasionally about a bad business season because of a new turn in the anti-corruption movement.

Even in Beijing of the early 1990s, it was hard to find a good bar unless staying in certain expensive hotels. Now it is just a matter of choosing one’s price range and type of
atmosphere. The most popular bar areas are in the Sanlitun Embassy Area and the Beijing Zoo Area, where bars sit one by one presenting the Sanlitun architectural code of “cramped-and-stuffy.” The Sanlitun area even has a new official street sign: “Sanlitun Bar Street.” Many bars there have live bands that play everything from jazz to contemporary Chinese pop to American oldies. Since a lot of customers are foreigners, most of the waiters can speak a little English; at least the important words like "beer" and "whiskey!"

St. Mark’s Bar Street is a just-completed commercial complex behind the Friendship Store, close to Xiushui South Street. It takes the Sanlitun-style strip development to new, pre-fab heights. St. Mark’s Bar Street consists of fifteen brand new bars and restaurants, housed within the same colonnaded, neon-adorned building.

Just east of the 21st Century Theater, on the north side of Liangmaqiao Road, yet another fungoid-like strip of Sanlitun-grade bars has risen from the marshes to serve the needs of Beijing’s cultural elite. Its crown jewel is Hotline 1950, a schlock-filled, kitschy, TGIF rip-off that outdoes in tackiness and underdoes in food and service. Hotline 1950 has naught to do with any sort of hotline or the year of 1950. It features a smoke-enshrouded pool table on its mezzanine, and a long bar with two large TV screens for sports and government meeting updates.

Timbuktu Bar is on the second floor of New Ark Hotel at the Chaoyang District, just east of the Great Wall Sheraton. Jammed between a karaoke parlor frequented by Japanese businessmen and a canteen-style Chinese restaurant, Timbuktu is an African bar that offers some genuine taste of modern urban Africa; an African band plays there every Saturday. Timbuktu is the name of a city in Mali and a symbol of remoteness. At its
heyday, Timbuktu was the biggest trading center in Africa and renowned throughout the
African and Arabian world as a city of learning, a little like Alexandria. The chef, Titus,
is a young man from Nigeria. Although Titus is from West Africa, he has learned to cook
food from all over Africa with the assistance of chefs from various African embassies.

The Chinese word suibian describes well the attitude of Timbuktu Bar and its
owner: do as you please, help yourself, chill out, and be casual. Customers often come to
Timbuktu for the food, but they stay late into the night to dance and socialize. With a big
collection of African music, reggae, soul and hip-hop, the tiny bar gets packed soon after
10 p.m., and the tables have to be moved aside to make way for dancing.

Babylon is located across from the north gate of the Worker’s Gymnasium, on
Gongti Beilu. It is open from 5:30 p.m. until guests leave. “If a sculpture has weight, you
will be able to see that it resembles a person before you even sculpt the features onto it,”
says Zhang Zhaohong, owner and designer of Babylon. Trained as a sculptor, he brought
his mature artistic ideas to bear on the design of Babylon, the newly opened bar that he
hopes to transform into an artists’ salon. Zhang Zhaohong is adamant that Babylon is not
intended for the raucous Sanlitun crowd, instead envisioning it as an artists’ salon. He has
plans to have art exhibitions (an exhibition with four women sculptors is planned for
January 2000), live music shows and screenings of old foreign movies. In designing
Babylon, he has used balconies, hallways, and steps to fracture 500 square meters of
warehouse space into a mixture of enticing glimpses and satisfying panoramas. As you
walk in, the design grabs your attention with a huge bas-relief of tools and fish bones and
enough steps to break both ankles on. Straight ahead is the raised wet bar topped by a
pink VW bug and cluttered with design twitches like steel frames and a carved cement
post. To the left is a fully stocked entertainment center, with a stage, a piano, a movie screen and another bas-relief wall, this time of vegetables. The seating area to the right splits into a sunken area and a balcony, both of which are also broken up into more intimate spaces. The performance space is visible from the balcony, as is the more peaceful back area. This area contains street lamps, iron railings and a huge tile-covered lizard that wraps around a waterfall-fed stream of running water. Not only did Zhang design the interior, he designed everything from the chairs to the cups to the vases. To make the cups, he went to all but one of the ceramics firing centers in China, including the most-renowned one in Zibo, Shandong. The tiles for the reptiles were sent to him from Jiangxi. It was a weekend, after 11 p.m. The waiters and busboys in Babylon had pushed the tables to one side and make a big space that invited the customers to dance together. Outside the bar, the taxis with their red lights on formed a long line culminating at a small garden, waiting to ferry customers back home.

May Flower is just across the street from the Minzu Hotel on Beijing’s main drag, Changan Boulevard. The bar has just gone through renovations, so it is about half as big as it used to be. The tasteful wooden interior lends an air of seaworthiness to the place: the entire building was originally built to look like a ship. There are three bands that play in the bar nightly starting around 9:30 p.m. The music is mostly Chinese pop songs from the 1980’s, but the bands can play some English songs, too, and they all take requests. In addition, if you are a reasonably good singer, you can even get up and sing with the band!89

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89 See references from *Beijing Scene*, 1997-2000.
From the newspaper *Consumer Weekly*, the following lines from an advertisement caught my eye: "Grand Opening of Heaven Star Nightclub on March 9, 1998: Social gatherings, special events, bar and menu consultation (They know what you are drinking and they know to make it. Come to join them, you will not regret it), a schedule of club meetings and, of course, a personal relaxation place."

Heaven Star Nightclub is located at No.7, Jianguomennei Street, underground beneath Beijing Opera Theater, east of Beijing International Hotel, opposite the Old Beijing Train Station and newly-built Zhongliang Plaza. It is open from 8 p.m. with a flexible closing time until guests leave. Featuring two floors with separate and unique environments, plus splendid performances, Heaven Star quickly became another nocturnal destination in the city of Beijing. As you enter, you come upon the underground lounge. On the first level of Heaven Star club, customers find a welcoming and exotic environment: a big dancing pool and a large bar designed with colorful glass. As the commercial says, "You can either lounge around the edges or find yourself in the middle of one of the most exciting and expressive dance floors in the city." With admission, the customers can listen to the jazz or American country-style music and non-stop disco. Then as the customers move up the stairs to the Heaven Star Nightclub, they will find themselves in a peaceful and private space decorated to resemble the night sky and stars.

Another interesting nightclub on my visiting list is Red Capital Club. Red Capital Club on the ninth hutong of Dongsii is marked by an imperial red door. Walking through the doorway into a real Qing Dynasty courtyard house in immaculate condition, guests enter the south-facing courtyard. And then they will find themselves sitting in a
comfortable leather and wood chair, contemplating the dark brown wooden ceiling beams that a carpenter lovingly hand-carved more than 200 years ago. Red Capital Club offers the diner a sensuous experience of the best Chinese cuisine with the cost of 200 yuan per person. The meal is well-prepared, beautifully presented Chinese food of the style called “Zhongnabhai Cuisine.” Zhongnanhai is the massive villa-like complex of gardens, meeting rooms, underground tunnels and residences next to the Forbidden City where many of the Communist Party’s highest leaders have lived since 1949. The food in the Red Capital Club consists of both so-called Imperial Cuisine and a selection of favorite dishes of the People’s Republic first generation of leaders. After a tour of the restaurant’s wine cellar/bomb shelter, one of the redneck capitalists (a corporate party composed mostly of lawyers from Arkansas) toasted a glass of Red Capital Bordeaux (the house wine) and was overheard exclaiming: “I didn’t know Communism could be so much fun!”

There are also bars in some of sumptuous department stores in Beijing, such as Zhongliang Plaza and Changan Mall. In these places, high socioeconomic status mixes with personal taste and the availability of foreign goods to determine the appearance of a new generation of the trendy. Those individuals who can afford opulence tend to identify with trendsetters in the West. I talked with some teen-aged girls who were sipping coffee in the bar. They all came from moderately prosperous Beijing households, but they exhibited impressive knowledge of some of the prevailing fashions in the world. Obviously, those department stores offered them a channel, which connected to the world of fashion.
In Beijing, bars also are the places for social gatherings among different cultural groups. Opposite to the north gate of the Beijing Dance Academy, there is a paradise for photographers. Black and blue ceilings and walls are covered with photos. If you are interested in photography, you can have a heart-to-heart talk with the host, photographer Hei Bing. Not far from the Xinhua News Agency, there is a Play Bar. A clock always indicates the same time, 19:15 p.m., marking the time that the bar opens and the play performances begin. The owner of Genius Bar, Li Jixian, is one of the sixth generation of Chinese filmmakers. The bar counter is piled up with ammunition boxes and gunny sacks. Helmets, ammunition bandoleers, and engineer spades hang from the ceiling, creating an image of wartime. Genius looks more like a wartime trench than a modern bar. Every weekend, many long-haired boys and cool girls appear at the crossroads near Dongshishitiao, because there is a rock & roll bar, Busy Bee, for the vanguard of the art circles in Beijing. They have poetry readings every Thursday; experimental drama performances by the students from the Central Drama Academy on Fridays; rock and roll shows by old and new bands on Saturdays and Sundays. In general, the basic function of bars in Beijing is a public space for social gatherings among different groups of people who share the similar interests or hobbies.

Meeting Friends

I remembered that Chen's Club was located in a pocked and shabby-genteel area with some new buildings against a smoke-laden and uncongenial atmosphere. A corner house was the place where Chen carried out his business: some gilt balls and a brown board with "Chen's Club" in white letters above the door. Weigongcun Road was one of
the main arteries which conveyed the traffic of the city to the north and west. The road was often blocked with the immense stream of commerce flowing in a double tide inwards and outwards, while the footpaths were black with the hurrying swarm of pedestrians. However, behind the line of fine shops were the stagnant old residential areas.

Inside the hall, in addition to some scrolls of standard calligraphy, there was a Chinese water color painting with seven tigers on the wall since Chen's birth-sign was tiger. Chen's club was next to a Mongolian bar, "Yang Yi-wo" ("Lamb's Home"), and a Tibetan bar, "Xiang Ba-la," since Weigongcun Road was about two hundred yards from the Central Multi-national Song and Dance Ensemble. The proprietor of "Yang Yi-wo" was a close friend (so called "Tie-zi") of Teng Ge-er, a very famous Mongolian singer in China. Teng sometimes went there four times a week. That night, Teng was treating his girlfriends in a private room. The chanting Mongolian ma-tou-qin (a bowed stringed instrument with a scroll carved like a horse's head, used by the Mongol nationality) music was leaking out from that door and leading the other customers' imaginations to the vast grasslands of Mongolia. Some of my male friends frequented "Yang Yi-wo" and "Xiang Ba-la" often since they were interested in minority cultures. They also enjoying chatting and singing with their Mongolian sisters or Korean and Tibetan brothers.

When I came back to Beijing, Chen's club already changed owners. One night, Chen greeted me over the phone from Hangzhou. He said: "Qin, you might have just heard that I have been miserable these past few years." I could feel his forced smile on his tired but still resolute face. I was told after I came back that he and his family had been stuck in a law-suit with a small local bank that was supported by the local
authorities. This exhausting case had drained most of their business savings over the past fifteen years. Now he had to sell his villa in a suburb of Beijing.

One night — it was a Friday — I got a call from an old college friend, Sun. Sun and another college buddy Min invited me to go to Yang Yi-wo Bar on Saturday night. They were supposed to pick me up at seven in Sun’s car.

Five minutes after seven on Saturday, I heard a slow but light step upon the stairs and in the passage. It paused for about one minute outside the door. Then there were three soft, tentative taps. I knew that was Min. Sun might be waiting in the car. Min dressed in the latest style and his hair was fashionably trimmed. But, he had put on twenty pounds since I saw him last time, about four years ago. In the bar, I could see that Sun still bore every mark of being an average commonplace small town bull: cunning, and flexible. In the light, I noticed that there was an oil stain on the inside of Sun’s left leg of pants. I smiled because back in college, Sun’s old-fashioned and poorly-tailored baggy pants always reminded me of his humble origins in a small town close to Xian. Sun confessed that he felt depressed after his first visit to a bar in Xian five years ago. He felt the pressure to make money, and the embarrassment of being ignorant to the Western world.

“On the contrary,” Min cut in, switching to English.

And Min switched to Mandarin again for his listeners’ benefit. We began to talk about an old friend Li’s contact with his American boss.

“Oh,” Sun nodded his head: “Head Li is a learned man!”

“Oh the contrary of the contrary,” Min said with a laugh.

“That’s how Americans do things -- one means one, two means two, unlike the peddlers in our marketplace, who are always giving short weights.”
Min spoke with enthusiasm, drawing out each comment with studied slowness.

Min’s first girlfriend was his hometown high school sweetheart. She used to attend a military college in Beijing as a dance student. He was crazy about her while she was ambivalent. Several years ago, he met her in their hometown. She was married and had become a saleswoman in a department store. His second girlfriend was a poet and left him for a life in America. He shared his third girlfriend, a talented painter, with a married man. She left him, too, to marry the man (who eventually got a divorce) and to live in a European country as a diplomat. She did not choose Min because she eagerly wanted to go abroad like some other Chinese girls. Min has a much more tender and considerate heart at the age of thirty-three than he used to have when he was twenty and an arrogant, selfish, but very intelligent college student.

Owing perhaps to his major in a foreign language, even Min’s Mandarin had a decidedly Western tone. And the greater the intellect or educational background of the person to whom he spoke, the more he peppered his speech with words from English or French which made the people around him both envious and uneasy. Some women admired him for being a well-read young man. Most men chose to despise him for being a nerd.

We were talking and laughing with great enthusiasm. I joined the conversation every now and then. But I enjoyed being a listener more, though I was amused by Min’s peculiar desire to show off his good English and I had to endure the heavy smoke from their cigarettes. Sun’s face showed his satisfaction with his accomplishments. He had finished eight films as a scriptwriter and his new film, “Sleepless,” was also shooting in Anhui Province.
Then they told me stories about our old classmates: Hu made a big fortune by selling *cuan de* (self-assembled) Compaq computers. Ping chose *tingxin liuzhi* (give up his regular salary but keep the post in his workunit) and played the stock market via computer at home. His success allowed him to buy his boss's approval and keep his position in the work unit; his boss also asked for his favor for joining the stock game, which was very risky for him since he knew well that he had better not make his boss lose his investment.

The night had almost gone, and the dawn was breaking as we sat together over glasses of milk and orange juice for breakfast in the bar.

On a Thursday night in May, in a small bar close to my apartment, I was chatting with my old friend Yang. He told me that he needed money since his work unit asked the employees to pay the down payment on their houses. The money was due next Monday.

"Oh, then, you have three days yet," I said. "Let me know if you have difficulty in getting the money on Sunday."

At the end of our conversation, he suddenly asked if I wanted to go to Zhengzhou with him, as he would like to introduce some interesting friends to me." "Sure," I answered without any hesitation.

The legacy of Yang's generous dinners was well known among his dinner friends in Zhengzhou. He would mention the grand expanse of those dinners when he lost the small amount of money in playing mahjong upstairs at the home of his "mahjong friend."

On Friday morning, we were lying down on the hard sleepers on the train to Zhengzhou. Zhengzhou is the capital of Henan Province. I had been told about the
prosperous commerce and colorful nightlife in this old yet new city. When, the view outside the window became darker and darker, we were closer and closer to the city.

We passed through a sleepy valley and nestled among the lonely hills. On a nighttime radio show, a song from a Chinese rock & roll band was on the air: “I bear the chaos of the world, I'm used to the pressure, I bear the meaning of life, I spend my days struggling for cash.” I was thinking about visiting Bao, my nerdy college classmate, who was already a little celebrity in his city as a DJ for a pop music station in the city of Hangzhou.

About 8 p.m., we arrived in the city. The city of Zhengzhou looks more attractive under the veil of dusk which covers a lot in the shadow and gives prominence to the liveliness of the city's nightlife.

Pop music pounded through the café and flowed out through the open door into the street. A few young men followed the song out the door, humming through the Marlboros dangling from their lips. They came to the café every day to drink a cup of Nescafe or alcohol before strolling through town until well past midnight, talking loudly among themselves and, every so often, breaking into raucous song. They hoped that everyone on the street would notice them. The moist evening breeze carried a cacophony of voices through the air.

The streets were lush with light despite the late hour. Moonlight spattered across the ground, merging with the lamplight streaming out of the shop windows. Dense patterns of light and shadow blanketed the pavement, like the underside of a leafy wutong tree (Chinese parasol tree) at noon.
The next morning, I went to the most popular bar in Zhengzhou, "Qingxin" (Fresh), for breakfast. The bar's unique look comes from its artistic use of wood and logs, thus capturing the beauty and romance of a forest cabin. The logs hanging from the ceiling look like trees and one can imagine that the baskets on the tables sometimes would be filled with wild mushrooms from the woods. I could indeed smell the freshness of the place. The carved wooden artifacts were also quite lovely. The bell on the door tinkled. Two young couples came in and began to play cards at a table.

In the coffee shops of Zhengzhou, xiaojie, sweet or engaging but not vulgar, will greet you again and again. My male friends are easily cheered up by this show of respect and attention and then always order more than we can consume. In my impression, the xiaojie in Beijing's coffee shops, however, are polite but not too sweet.

Yang called to my hotel at noon on Saturday: "I got the money," he said relieved. He borrowed the money from his friend who ran an accounting firm. At night, we were invited to go to a bar built in a tunnel. Winding stone steps took us down a dark, earthy-smelling passage. Instantly, we were left in pitch darkness; And just as suddenly, the light came back on, illuminating a group of shining faces with cheers of "Happy Birthday!"

The birthday man was called Xu "Da xianr" which means "a celestial being who has supernatural power." He could diagnose any illness simply by looking at that person. Xu was just over twenty and looked like a very normal and somewhat chubby young man. He told us that he just took over a KTV hall from the former owner and remodeled the space. When he was talking about his success, he seemed as boastful as a little cock, not showing any of a master's reserved manner as people expected. Most of his customers
came from Hong Kong or overseas. Xu can also predict the future. When Yang first came to this city to build up his petrochemical company, he ran into Xu who warned him: "Go back to Beijing, you cannot succeed here." Yang did not listen to him. And indeed, he failed after two years of hard work and great financial investment.

Yang's friends said that he should never have used his own money to shore up his company. Yang was treating people every night with his own money or the money he borrowed with the expectation of being repaid by his company in the future. Yet, the new policy of restraining the investment for any new companies suddenly killed his dream bud far before it was able blossom. Yang failed badly probably because of his naiveté and gullibility. Maybe he was simply out of luck. Nevertheless, he was a loser in the economic chaos of China while many others made a big fortunes out of that same chaos. Yang made another crucial mistake. When a local governor sent him a message that he was interested in joining the company as a future president, Yang turned him down since he was not willing to be a vice-president. Therefore, he cut off an important guanxi, or connection, with the local government and lost its support during the stormy time. He was blamed for being short-sighted.

Yang's friends around the table were drinking tea or juice and waiting for the main course. The short guy next to me was flirting with a xiaojie with jokes and flattery.

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90 The night before we left Zhengzhou, Xu came to my hotel for a short visit. Yang asked him to give me a check-up. He agreed for the sake of his friendship with Yang. Xu turned the table-lamp toward me and scanned me with his bare eyes with some concentration. Five minutes later, he gave me his conclusions which sounded very convincing to me since they were consistent with my hospital records and personal experience. More convincingly, he later pointed out that I had a car accident a year ago which amazed me since I had not said a word about that accident to anybody.
Although there was a considerable amount of bullshit in his compliments, she enjoyed them and gave him many sweet smiles and a couple of soft touches on his shoulder.

The waiter bustled around the table. He built up the fire and set out platters of finely sliced meat. The fire burned in a small chimney that rose through the center of the brass pot. Around the chimney, water boiled. Everybody picked up a strip of meat with chopsticks; One plucked some from the stack and dropped it into the boiling water; the other fished in the boiling water and landed a strip of lamb. He slapped it into a bowl of sauces (jiucai hua, minced ginger, vinegar and sesame-oil), stirred, and popped the meat into his mouth. Yang told me when he first came here, he was invited by his future local partners. They would refrain from eating and instead examine Yang. They were seeing Yang for the first time, and they did not rush the inspection.

"Dry cup," Xu said, and the men around the table tossed one off. Xu poured again and relaxed himself to the armchair.

"Doing business is difficult these days, but along the way there will be some buying and selling for little fish like me," one man commented suddenly.

"Honest business people are being squeezed and even forced into undignified procedures," another man responded.

"Do you know the character for crisis? It consists of two characters (wei/ji) taken together. One means danger. The other means opportunity," Yang joined the conversation. The waiter set out cruets of hot wine for Xu. A couple of men chose Great Wall Dry White Wine or Wuliangye. One asked a small cup of Maotai. Yang picked up Erguotou as usual, a strong spirit, usually made from sorghum. He poured the wine into small light blue porcelain cups: "Gan bei!" (Dry Cup).
"Many so-called 'public servants' have opened bank accounts abroad," a slim man to my left whispered to me.

People chewed slowly and listened to the conversation attentively. Someone was talking about the economic future of Zhengzhou. His words had the rapidity, nonchalance, variety, and crude intrigue of a shrewd businessman.

"Timing is everything," the man next to Xu smiled. And everybody nodded in agreement.

Yang sighed and professed that his business timing was the worst and everybody agreed again.

Looking around the table, I was impressed by a well-dressed middle-aged gentleman sitting next to Xu. He did not talk much, but was very polite and modest once he said something. After the party, Yang told me that he was "heidao de" (local and unofficial forces or authority who often deal with illegal business) who owned his own clean business. Like other heads of heidao, he had complicated social connections in Zhengzhou, including close friends in the police service. He looked like a man with a gentle heart, but he was very resolute, even cold-blooded when he had to deal with "trouble-makers." However, he would offer real help to the people who worked for him. My friend later told me more about heads of heidao with obvious admiration.

Now and then people around the table wiped their mouths with hot cloths and gossiped. When the meat had vanished the waiter brought white vegetables, and we shoveled them into the simmering broth and ate splendid soup. The night was balmy now and the mutter and tinkle of the city were soothing.
Christmas

In the 1990s, people, especially young Chinese, began to celebrate Christmas. Some smart restaurant owners offer roasted duck and Sichuan huoguo (boiling dish in a brass pot with chimney) as well as shengmeng (very fresh) seafoods from the south instead of turkeys, which Chinese customers dislike because of their "wood taste."

Hotels, restaurants and bars all hang their signboards with big red paper cut "Celebrate Christmas" emblems. To most Chinese, Christmas is a holiday for the youth. It is a party time! “Young Turks” are wearing their best suits and the young chicks are wearing short skirts with their icy legs exposed to the freezing wind of the winter. They carry cakes, flowers and candles. They are young and beautiful. They are as full of hopes and dreams as their parents were when they were young and beautiful. They are the 1980s generation and their hopes and dreams are quite different from those of their parents who are the generation of the 1950s in a fresh-looking new Republican country.

A foreign journalist observed: Christmas has been imported to China practically lock, stock, and barrel from the West. However, a Christmas with Chinese characteristics is more fun to watch: stocking stuffers include high-heeled combat boots, fake fur-lined microskirts, cigarettes, and cellular phones. The Chinese Santa hails from Heilongjiang Province instead of the North Pole. He is dressed like a retired old cadre, his little helper is Cantonese instead of elves, and he drives a pedicab pulled by panda bears. The Christmas carols also sound more appropriate in China:

It was the night before Christmas, and all through Beijing
Not a creature was stirring, within the Fourth Ring
The wazi [stockings] were hung, all through the hutong [alleyways]
Laobaixing (the Masses) hoping this Christmas, would be more than putong [average]
The children were sleeping twelve to a room
In hopes that Saint Nick, would be there quite soon
And Ma in her qipao [cheongsam]
And Pa in faux leather vest
And Grandma and Grandpa, had settled down for a rest
Then what to my bloodshot eyes should appear
But a flying 1.20 taxi, belching smog from the rear
Neither lively nor quick, the chuzuche [taxi] did go
With the driver repeating, Zenmozou [Where do I go]?
So up to the apartment roof the taxi soon flew
Stocked full of guoji mingpai [international name brand products], shouji [mobile telephones] and the old geezer too
Down the staircase he stumbled, getting lost at each turn
Dressed in torn tattered greys, and hair sticking up firm
He spoke not a word, but went straight to the grog
Erguotou [rotgut] soon rendering his vision agog
And taking the gifts from his woven striped sack
He fell down the stairs, nearly breaking his back
He quickly came to and stood up on his feet
Thinking he’d really like something to eat
And remembering a hefan [box lunch] in the car that he’d saved
He climbed up to the roof for the food that he craved
But I heard him exclaim just before he was gone
Merry Christmas to all, and to all a wanan [good night]!\(^{91}\)

To many foreigners, a colorful night in a foreign land is like a carnival. Frank was often ushered by his Chinese friends to a bar, KTV hall or a local restaurant, drinking and singing in order to cheer him up. Frank was determined to find his way to the heart of an old civilization, China, where peaches smelled more delicious, and plums tasted better. Also, he was told that an older American guy could find a young and pretty Chinese wife. Though he was a little worried to be thought of as a foreign village idiot by Chinese, he sold his business in the States and found a job with an American company in Beijing as a finance and investment consultant. During his first year in Beijing, Frank was chosen to portray an American missile expert for a TV soap opera. He made a lot of Chinese friends who respected him and introduced him to a fascinating world. Currently, he lives

in a residential area with "funny and generous Chinese neighbors" as he told me, and with his Chinese wife. At age 47, he had a son.

In the 1990s, since there are too many foreigners to be noticed on the street of Beijing, they do not have to behave carefully to keep up a respectable appearance. A couple might quarrel or argue loudly on the street like everybody else. In the course of a long journey, far away from one's daily life, a man like Frank might feel different about himself. The foreigners who were younger were seeking for a legendary life: high motivations, romantic love and respectful social status. I saw a lot of young people in bars with their confident expressions on their faces though they were called "Mian gua" (soft melon), "Nen gua" (tender melon) and "xiao dou-dou" (small beans) by some arrogant Chinese Turks. Near my apartment in Beijing, Frank Sun, a Chinese-American, the owner and designer of the Glass Onion Bistro, has created a space that turns Beijing's Third Ring Road into performance art. The bar's all-glass façade filters out the sound of madding traffic, but affords a view of turn-of-the-century urban life that is quite beautiful.

Coffeehouses

All the coffee in China is a trifling amount. But now, after long being kept at bay by Chinese politics and poverty, the drink is making two inroads into this nation of tea drinkers. [1]In China's crowded cities, foreign coffeehouse chains are gambling that they can buck tradition and create a coffee culture in the land of the teahouse.92

Coffee, first condemned by nationalists as a foreign intrusion and later by communists as the "tail of capitalism," was deemed politically incorrect in China — until very recently. I remember that in 1993 and 1994, the instant Nescafé was one of the most popular gifts in China. One of my friends got twenty bottles of Nescafé coffee in one month from people who asked him for help. In 1996, as experts began predicting that China was the next big coffee market, government coffee traders imported 12,000 metric tons of coffee, almost six times the previous year's imports. That year, however, turned out to be the end of China's coffee-drinking growth period. But, this huge amount of imported coffee might have played a role in the burgeoning coffee bars in Shanghai in the early 1990s and in Beijing in 1996. Nevertheless, the coffee fever in urban China continued. In the beginning of 1999, the U.S.'s Starbucks opened its first coffeehouse in Beijing. If sitting in a coffee Shop in Houston, New York, Quebec or San Croix Island is just part of everyday life for everyday people, in China, the majority of customers of coffee shops are well-paid, white-collar professionals who want their life to be distinguished from the masses. They pay the high prices for different reasons. "Coffee shops have become popular meeting places and a $2 latte is a status symbol in China," an American journalist observed.

In Shanghai Memorabilia, Chen Danyan describes Shanghai's Time Café. It is worth quoting the following passage at length, for Chen is true to the character of coffeehouses in China, especially in Shanghai:

The coffee is fifteen yuan a cup, and the fruit juice or fruit tea imported from Southeast Asia twenty-five yuan. However, the customer can get a free meal of fried chicken, French fries, Time fried rice with soup, sandwich or noodles, which is enough to fill a stomach.
The hall resounded with pleasant music, especially foreign melodies, which are soft with an air of the exotic, not avant-garde. The young bus girl is polite and polished. She will greet a customer again and again even if she may be completely ignored. The white piano on a small stage automatically plays some light music — indeed, quite a foreign flavor! Actually the customers enjoy things with a style, of course Western style here, including the fragrance of coffee which is often associated with something different from China, yet still amenable to the mild tastes of Chinese. The customers all show a measure of dignity. They appear to make good money and also keep forging ahead. At the same time, nobody tries to look superior and threatening.

It is often said that a city's cafe is quite like the living room of the city. After 1 p.m., xiaojie men in Time Cafe know that the busy hours are coming. Those gentlemen and ladies who stay up late for the night life and sleep late in the morning; those chief managers who handle their small business in the morning and meet with their customers in the afternoon; those young and good-looking women who want to have a break after shopping and wandering around town — all are going to show up soon.

Young ladies come here for eating as well as chatting. They show their pretty faces everywhere along with their comfort with expenses. Lots of ladies smoke yet, with an elegant pose. They do not appear seductive in the way a prostitute does, neither do they think overly highly of themselves, as people might feel insulted by some intellectual women. They are modest yet modern girls who were properly brought up from their nongtang (Shanghai's small living compound, working-class neighborhood) and living in a tidy garret with a small wooden bed. These young ladies are building their future on solid ground and pursuing a life that is going to be much better than the life inside those nongtang. If you are sitting with them, you may have chance to see a look of shrewdness and perseverance on their soft faces, which make them quite like the freshest stick candy, incredibly resilient.

Gentlemen come here for business negotiations. They care about their appearances. Leaving a cellular phone on the table nearby sometimes claims their social status. The people from Shanghai's nongtang understand that only those who have a hundred thousand yuan may take a risk with their fifty thousand yuan since having a savings account for the whole family's security is an absolute necessity. The cards shown by the gentlemen will almost all tell you that they are the chief managers of international trade companies. They just do not tell you that normally they are very small companies, located in an apartment in a residential area
with the telephone and fax on the same line. They know that it is far more worthwhile (economical) to talk about business in a decent cafe than to rent a good-looking office. In the cafe, they can occupy a table for a whole afternoon with the price of several cups of coffee. This type of calculation also displays the restrained yet ambitious cultivation of the young chaps from the nongtang's style of life. Down to earth is the way.93

What a vivid portrait of men and women in a highly commercialized and cosmopolitan city -- Shanghai by Chen, a native Shanghai writer! If fabulous Shanghai nightclubs or show business had an influence on painting, music and literature before 1949, certain old songs are still performed in many other cities such as Beijing in the 1990s, for instance, "Rose, Rose, I Love You":

Rose, Rose, with your slender stem,
Rose, Rose, your prickly thorns,
Wound the tender stem and precious bud,
Rose, Rose, I love you.
The heart's vow, the heart's affection, a sacred and pure light shines
don earth
The heart's vow, the heart's affection, a sacred and pure light shines
don earth
Rose, Rose, I love you.

The Mandarin song "Rose, Rose, I love You" was written by Chen Gexin, with lyrics by Wu Cun. It emerged from 1930s Shanghai during the Chinese craze for Hollywood films and popular music. Then in 1940, it was one of the ten songs performed by "Golden Voice" Zhou Xuan, the most popular chanteuse in the twentieth century China, for the movie Tianya Genu (Wandering Songstress). This song had disappeared in Mainland China until the 1990s when it reemerged as a bar song. Although most of the singers and listeners do not know the history of this song, when the softness and

93 Chen Danyan, Shanghai Memorabilia, my translation.
sweetness of the words and lyrics echoes in the bar, a flair of Shanghai style and a sense of nostalgia haunt in the air.

Gradually, coffeehouses are culturally and socially changing the landscapes of China in more ways with their new trademarks of the time. In the late 1990s, the internet had been quietly eroding Beijing's control of the nation's media. Because the Internet was new, no government agency had clear responsibility for monitoring its content. However, China's legislature was expected to take up a media law soon that would include guidelines for internet publication. Until then, some online publishers are taking advantage of the current opportunities and are cautiously working toward a freer online press. Some coffee shops therefore set up internet service as another way to attract customers, especially college students.

Sitting in an internet bar Ting Chao (Listen to the Waves) near Taiping Avenue, I looked through the window: spring was over and summer had already arrived. The summer commodity fair across the street made people in the neighborhood forget about everything else and live in the excitement of the moment. They needed to change their lifestyle. They crowded together at the fair to browse, and crowded together to explore. During the daytime, they had to live in certain patterns; at night, most of them wanted to live for themselves.

Some Thoughts on the Beijing's Bar Culture in the 1990s

I. A New Social Gathering Place in Beijing

Beijing's nightlife and entertainment scene in the last twenty years offered much more than the karaoke and bland hotel bars. A trend for huge discos swept the city in the
late 1980s and they are still popular, packed every night with young, affluent Chinese, like the JJ Disco near Xisi. The fashion of the 1990s, however, is for bars. Originally aimed at the city’s foreign community, these bars have caught on in a big way and are now patronized by a cross-cultural clientele. Bars have been springing up like wild mushrooms in Beijing in the past two years, especially in 1998, and the competition has allowed new ideas to be tried out in practice. In some sense, the bars in Beijing in the late 1990s embody Habermas’s notion of “public sphere” because of their fast growing numbers and fast growing customers from a variety of social backgrounds.94 Yang Meihui points out that “the Chinese term gonggong kongjian (public space) emphasizes the spatial dimension and openness, in that kongjian suggests two compound words, air (kongqi) and outer space (taikong). Air conveys the sense of an uninhibited breathing space commonly available to everyone. Outer space suggests an open vista stretching out indefinitely, a three-dimensional, unoccupied, and unexplored space, which is therefore open to new possibilities.”95 If even in the 1980s, the bars remained a place for upper-class Chinese and foreigners or for artists, in the late 1990s, they reached out to people of all classes and have become a fixture of Western lifestyles in the popular imagination. Whereas many Chinese-owned bars seemed to showcase the hustle and bustle of the high commerce of the West (some of them even reminded me of the slogan of cheesy, sleazy American bar franchise Hooters: “delightfully tacky yet unrefined”), most of the

94 In his book The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere (1989), Jurgen Habermas traces the historical emergence of a public sphere of debate and discussion of cultural and political issues in eighteenth-century Western Europe. Habermas identified such sites of public sphere as the modern newspaper, the novel, the public library, the concert hall, the opera house, and the salon and coffee house as places of independence from the absolute state. See Spaces of Their Own, ed. by Yang Meihui, University of Minnesota Press, 1999, p. 1-3.

95 See Spaces of Their Own, ed. by Yang Meihui, University of Minnesota Press, 1999, p. 2.
foreigner-owned bars tried to cultivate an aura of culture — both high and low, but definitely native and even more exotic than their native origins. Unlike the compradorial class in China, most urban Chinese had little personal contact with Westerners. In bars, they felt free to talk with the foreigners and began to adopt more and more foreign lifestyles, at least sharing the same public space with them. Bars became an intermediary zone between the East and West.

For most of the bar-frequenters, bars, like KTV halls and teahouses, are a place for occasional friendly gatherings. For some bar-goers, especially the foreign diplomats, journalists, and Chinese white collar employees who work for foreign companies, going to a bar for a cup of coffee or beer is simply part of their daily ritual. Most of the owners of special motif bars intended to make their bars not only a business facility, but also a cultural salon, in which they would gather their customers and friends to discuss their favorite issues, such as drama, cinema, photography, rock and roll, or anything else. People who shared similar interests went there every weekend and enjoyed free and unconstrained discussion. Sometimes such gatherings would draw as many as twenty to thirty artists and their friends. Sitting in a bar was a sign of modern city life in the 1990s. While most Beijing residents still believed that the imperial palaces and traditional teahouses brought a sense of historical depth to this increasingly modern city, Beijing’s young intellectuals began to promote a coffee/beer/wine forum lifestyle. As weekends arrived, they all stepped into their favorite bars, such as Dance with Dragon. Compared to “outer-directed groups,” they might be considered the “inner-directed group.”

As they slowly sipped the thick-aroma liquid, they exchanged information and shared their love for art. There was a slightly narcissistic flair and a romantic atmosphere in these bars, where the hostesses trained in literature (two of them were college students of Beijing University, who worked on weekends for fun and extra money) would make the customers (a lot of them were Beijing University’s alumni) enjoy the pleasure of good conversation over drinks. Book café bars, on the other hand, offered the weary urbanite a rare commodity in Beijing -- serenity. The cozy hideaways were ruled by books and the sun shines through its lace- curtained windows and little seemed to move or make a sound, except the occasional cranking of the espresso machine, clicking of Chinese chess pieces, and the leisurely whisper of turning pages. In this sense, some bars, especially these profession-oriented bars, offered a comforting and soothing place for souls. They gave their customers a sense of bond, community, and the pleasure of mutual learning and cooperation. If lifestyle is the external expression/measure of our soul, who we are is how we live. These bars were practicing a smart combination of consumerism and old values. Many communities developed a sense of social solidarity and civic participation in leisure, art, and culture.

Bars certainly offer venues for Beijing’s popular live music. Although China’s rock music is commercially successful via CD, cassette and magazines, such as Modern Sky and Start from Scratch, their workspace and subject of music are basically underground. Beijing Bohemian style of painters and rock singers often frequent or work in bars. The income from bar performances became the basic financial support of a large group of Bohemian artists in Beijing. In the 1990s, rock has become commercialized and the performers want to make money by playing the same music. Yet there is also a
younger scene keeping the spirit alive, playing in fringe bars. So, if not all newborn bars and nightclubs in China have not won a good reputation with the public, they have been indirectly supporting and disciplining independent musicians and singers.

Many other bar-goers, like Pang, financially belonged to the middle or lower middle classes, living in a small one-bed-room apartment allotted by a husband’s work unit in most of the case, by a wife’s work unit, in Pang’s case. The reality of living offered a key index to their lifestyles (staying outside and longer for a larger space). In Pang’s special situation, I guess that he particularly tried to escape from his dwelling place because that place was no longer a real home and he was very afraid of being there alone. Bars, thus, became a place of forgetting.

A man of leisure by choice, Pang was a Beijing loafer who moved along the Beijing streets and arcades and interacted with the city crowd in an unending and yet ambivalent relationship. He still stood at the margin, as much of the fast-changing city as of the newly-rising middle class. Nobody had yet overwhelmed him. He felt confident in his intelligence yet awkward for lack of money. Nowhere was he at home. He sought his asylum in the crowd. He needed a listener for his stories.

When Pang’s life was in trouble, especially with his wife, for whom he cared most, he frequented bars for escape and release. However, he could not forget his past; neither could he forget his troubled present and uncertain future. He suffered from recognizing that the people around him in bars were less and less interested in his "showing off" his knowledge. He needed good and patient listeners for comfort. Telling stories also allowed him a reconstruction of what was lacking in his real world (attention and respect). He was gladdened by other people’s appreciation, but soon dismissed this
momentary happiness when he was reminded of the reality. He then turned back to alcohol and his "stale" stories again. In his stories, he often confused his identities. Pang, like lot of others who frequent bars, enjoyed telling stories which might not be just fiction. He talked about history, philosophy, and the customs of the Chinese minorities or his ambition in his advanced study and his fantasy of a peaceful life in America with his wife and their children. His act of telling became a remedy for his desperate feeling of estrangement and alienation. For Pang, the liquor was not medicine for the anxiety, but storytelling was a kind of cure and healing. In his stories, his intellectual, "magnanimous and tolerant" attitude toward life made him a stronger man.

In the city, the expression of the fundamental human craving for stimulation appears often to be dissociated from the normal routine of family and neighborhood life. While social interaction and exchange are key motivators of leisure behavior, the fundamental desire for intimacy or response of a community or imagined community, and for new experience and excitement, finds some satisfactions in a variety of bars. Social networks, such as artist groups, and social institutions, such as photographer’s show bar, provide powerful sources of expectations that impact the behavior of individuals -- bar-goers -- whether artists or not.\(^7\)

I tried to grasp the tremendous social change that has taken place in our leisure-time habits in the 1990s. Pang’s stories about himself and others allowed me to reconstruct a reality in their own terms. I tried to learn new social patterns and attitudes in Beijing. I tried to capture several snapshots of particular moments of cultural life in one

\(^7\) A customer who never visited the U.S.A. made an interesting comment: "Most of American frequent a bar by themselves (him/herself), Chinese on the other hand like to gang up to bars, which is also Chinese style."
of the fastest-changing capitals in the world. I tried to link local change with a corresponding global process. However, as an anthropology student, I fell into a dilemma: I really wanted to believe in something which I found difficult to believe. It was also easy for me to be submerged by fashions and fads, for what matters after all was superficiality, and as such I, every now and then, lost what I was really looking for.

Indeed, during the whole process of visiting bars, I indulged in every fragment of the moments. My enjoyment resided in the paradox that I was puzzled by the frivolous or even meaningless words/actions, yet got pleasures from the illusion of being a decipherer of certain behavior, as well as of certain details that I could “hold on to” and put into words for my future dissertation. My other friends, even Pang, also reminded me often that there was something which should be observed. However, I gradually realized that, like many others, I simply wanted to enjoy “a good time,” or several “good moments,” or experience a “new drink,” or a fragment of some stranger’s problems or hopes. However, I sensed “meanings” or “dynamics” in some bars which functioned like drama, cinema, or other arts’ shrines. Sun, my filmmaker friend, told me that he could be inspired by good ideas or motivated to make a good movie each time he visited those places.

After all, it is difficult to define what made Beijing in the 1990s into a cosmopolitan metropolis in cultural terms, for it has to do with both substance and appearances -- with a whole fabric of life and style of superstructure. While obviously determined by global economic forces, urban culture is itself the result of a process of both globalized consumption and localized communication. In Beijing’s case, the process of Westernization involves the growth of both socioeconomic institutions and new forms
of cultural activity and expressions made possible by the appearance of new public structures and spaces for Western urban, cultural reproduction and consumption. This consumption is also linked with leisure and entertainment. And the institutions of the latter equally deserve our attention: in particular, bars, coffee shops, disco and Karaoke halls. In a way, they provide an alternative to the traditional places of leisure and entertainment for native residents: local restaurants and teahouses in the city. Together these places of leisure and entertainment have become the central sites of Beijing’s urban culture in the 1990s. Leisure is an important indicator of social progress and the time spent on education, social activity, information, enjoyment of art, sports, sociability, and entertainment continues to account for a large part of leisure time. Bar culture in Beijing is part of the picture; in the meantime, the use of leisure has become an area in which the growing diversity manifests itself.

II. Some Analysis of a Chinese Social Stratum in the 1990s

In bars -- for instance, in the Mild Seven -- a group of foreigners were regular customers. They belonged to a “a privileged caste” in China who worked for the largest foreign enterprises. Their companions normally are the growing middle-upper class of wealthy Chinese as participants, adjuncts, agents -- compradores was the word on the Chinese coast -- of foreign enterprises. Some others were called Chinese white-collar employees who were making their living in both foreign and Chinese establishments.

In ancient times, there were active transactions between Chinese compradors and foreign businessmen in the different coast cities during prosperous times of commerce. They did not cause harm to their own country as long as the country was prosperous and
the people lived in peace. On the contrary, they played a positive role in nation's economy and people's life. However, the term “comprador” began to have a derogatory meaning in Chinese modern history, especially when it was related with the imperialist “running dog” during the first half of the twentieth century. It became a more political term rather than a commercial one. However, after the Open Policy in the 1980s and 1990s, a new generation of “compradors” has become a social stratum that cannot be ignored in urban China. Especially in Beijing, they are better known as the “white collar” stratum, a growing force that influences even the ordinary people's lifestyles and taste in culture. People usually admire their prestigious salaries (around $2000-4000 monthly), neat working environments and yearly overseas vacations, while at the same time, some discriminate against them for their activities, which may harm the national interest of their motherland.

This new generation of Chinese “compradors” is well-educated, usually having graduated from prestigious Chinese colleges or foreign universities. They are fluent in English or other foreign languages, skillful in computers and updated in the knowledge and strategy of modern commerce planning, advertising, and marketing. They turn the philosophy of “yang wei zhong yong” (make foreign things serve China) to “zhong wei yang yong” (make Chinese things serve the foreigners).

In bars, they preferred to speak in English even among themselves. Leo Lee has found a species of Homi Bhabha’s mimic man in the compradorial and commercial Shanghai elite in the 1930s.\(^98\) I also recognized a trace of mimic man in this group of

customers of Beijing of the 1990s who had close personal and business relations with Westerners. They could be willing colonial subjects even if they still carried Chinese citizenship papers, because of their desire for total Westernization.

If some foreign women preferred to choose Chinese scholars or artistic types of men as their potential husbands, this group of Chinese women compradors preferred wealthy white men for a sense of security. They also wanted to marry Chinese diplomats, scientists, scholars or well-known professors. Since most of these women are not only pretty and smart, but also well-off themselves, they are capable of putting a man's social status on the first consideration and putting the economic element in the second place. They will enjoy living both in China and foreign countries with their diplomat husbands or attending international conferences overseas with their scientist husbands. For instance, a thirty-five-year old woman married an associate professor of psychology. She would start her conversation with the words “from the perspectives of social psychology...” Her friends all teased her that she had become her husband's graduate student.

At the same time, such women were more interested in traditional Chinese culture such as cuisine, fashion, folk customs, drama and different folk arts. They knew to maintain their “Chinese distinctive national features” in front of their foreign colleagues. Some foreign journalists also liked to develop relationships with their informants in a casual public space like bars and even forged a kind of informal international brotherhood among foreigners and their native friends. And they often found their Chinese informants open-minded, well-connected, confident, yet modest.
In my college years in the 1980s, China had just begun to practice an "Open Policy" and the economic system was very immature. However, it became the golden time for a new generation of Chinese capitalists. Several of my friends retired from their military "service" and jumped to the adventure of commerce. Because of their fathers’ credibility, they could get a big loan from a bank with very low interest or even no interest and then invest in original stock (IPOs) and real-estate transactions. Since they had better social connections and information channels than the average Chinese, they could buy and sell at the right time. Twenty years later, when I reunited with Xu during my fieldwork, who was in his late thirties; he was one of the billionaires in Beijing’s real-estate business. As Tang Xiaobing observed, the "emerging urban bourgeoisie" or a "belated generation" has come of age in the 1990s.\footnote{99 Tang Xiaobing, *The Heroic and the Quotidian*, Duke University Press, 2000, p. 301.}

I remembered each time when I came back home from school and had a chance to meet my buddies, I did not feel the joy from my friends. They all looked quite exhausted. They did not wish for the outsiders to know that they took advantage of their parents, while they also felt distanced or surrounded by a swarm of people they did not trust. They tended to develop friendships within their own circles though they enjoyed having new artist friends, such as painters.

I was attracted by their circle not only because I was familiar with a couple of them, but also because of the variety of their leisure activities. At least, with their help, I got a special pass to watch foreign movies every Thursday. They are good bowlers, bridge players, golfers and horse riders. They are regular symphony, ballet, and other kinds of concert attendees. They tended to practice "mingzhe baoshe" (be worldly wise
and play safe) philosophy, or "Don’t worry about anything that does not matter to you."
Their deepest political concern is stability. And a lot of them hold at least one foreign passport "just in case."

Compared with the people who have strong family ties, some people belong in another category, who took advantage of the right opportunities. Such people built up their wealth by working hard in primitive country-style small business.

In bars, another group of customers was film and TV stars, directors, independent producers, singers, and book publishers. Film star Shi Ke’s drama bar, for instance, offered the artists a free and highly productive workshop. From the 1980s to 1997, the Chinese TV industry enjoyed a golden age, which also nourished generations of TV stars with fame and full pockets. Most of the geti actors graduated from the art academies and did not want to develop their careers in their native provinces. They were determined to "pitch a camp" in Beijing since once they are successful in Beijing, they are generally recognized around the country at the same time. This huge group of "artists on tour," especially girls who are young, pretty, and lively like angels, have been well taken care of by the "nobles" of every hue: the rich and the famous. Many of them had already bought their own houses or apartments at a cost of 5/600,000 yuan, or even several millions. They create a special "view" in Beijing and lead the most "colorful" life among the middle-class Beijing stratum. They play insignificant yet important supporting roles on the day-and-night-operating assembly line in the Chinese TV industry.

In the early 1990s, most of the new rich people lived lives of wanton extravagance. In the late 1990s, many of them seemed fed up with an exhausting lifestyle
they had fully experienced and turned themselves into "refined gentlemen." They still enjoy the fun in life while their definition of fun is often different. They like everything in their control. They went back to the lifestyle of traditional Chinese gentry. They began to cultivate gardens or balconies with goldfish ponds or tanks, raising exotic flowers, organizing film salons in their home cinema or in their book cafes. They exert a subtle influence on urban people's life, and scholars began to pay more and more attention to discuss Chinese middle class ideology or mentality. They also set trends for mass consumption. Their recent consumption psyche was approaching normal compared to their conspicuous consumption in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The consumption craze they led before was basically over in Beijing in the late 1990s. When talking about the interior design of Chinese family in late 1990s, An American journalist observed that "Rather than putting their money on display, people seem to be investing in a quieter brand of luxury, based on comfort and quality," which is different from the "over-design" of the early 1990s.¹⁰⁰

There were at least two social changes reflected in Chinese bar culture in the 1990s. The first change was the rise of a massive, college-educated, mobile, young generation for whom taste and cultural style were important emblems of identity and interpersonal information. The second change was the rise of the private patronage of frequenting bars and clubs and the eclipse of the institutional patronage of leisure activities by corporations and State-operated institutions/work units in the late 1990s.

Historically, wine gathering in China is a traditional *wenhua* (process of culturalization or cultivation) activity among Chinese literati. As we will see in chapter three, *yìyìn*, drinking in a refined manner, is above all an art of living.
Chapter Three: From Yayin, Mingshi to Yaren

Since we are socialized and educated into cultures, and practice with history, we interpret our object from a position that is influenced by our concerns, involvement, and traditional value systems. This chapter probes into the role of tradition in modernity, such as how the once politically-culturally dominating class – Chinese literati developed their own lifestyles that have influenced Chinese life to the present. By the discussion of the Wei-Jin mingshi with ancient glamour and dilemma and the modern mingshi with modern choices and responsibilities, it explores how lifestyles as expressive codes demonstrate the images of life and history -- economically, politically or, in general, culturally.

The discussion starts from drinking, certainly not as an activity per se, but as something more profound -- an art of living.

Yayin

In an essay called “The Allure of Wine,” Bo Yang demonstrates that “In Chinese drinking, the practice of qianzhen dichang” [pour a little drink and taste it slowly] is venerated. It is called “yinjiu” not “hejiu.” “Yin” means “slowly slide the taste of wine from one’s tip of tongue to the throat” while “he” means “pour the drink down to the stomach.” Yayin (drinking in a refined manner) is highly admired by Chinese intellectuals. When poet Li Bai\textsuperscript{101} raises the cup to invite the bright moon and his own

\textsuperscript{101} Li Bai is a famous poet from the Tang Dynasty. “Drinking Alone Under the Moon” is a famous poem in which Li expresses a poetic faith in union with nature that makes life itself pulsate with human emotions.

A pot of wine amidst the flowers,  
Alone I drink sans company.
shadow to be his drinking companions, it represents typical Chinese style and taste. However, there is another enjoyable way of drinking -- with three to five good friends and a couple of simple dishes, chatting leisurely. Another story holds the following view of drinking:

Su Dongpo was boating at the foot of Chibi Mountain, drinking a little, catching a simple dish, and enjoying a good night with Monk Fo Yin. It is supposed not to be perfect without a woman, so you could look for a lady like the boat courtesans on the Qinhuai River who could be compared with Japanese geishas, such as Miss Li Xiangjun. Alas, you could not only drink with her, but also transcend the relationship between a man and woman to reach an elated state beyond any physical domain. Probably, you would just sit face to face with a beauty, either playing a game of chess or cards, or appraising the mountains, rivers or historical figures. Or you may either float on the lake, or sit in the yard, by the river, or on the grass. This is called “Ya” (refinement). Outsiders cannot appreciate the fun of it, while these insiders enjoy it a great deal.

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The moon I invite as drinking friend,  
And with my shadow we are three.  
The moon, I see, she does not drink, my shadow only follows me:  
I’ll keep them company a while  
For spring’s the time for gayety.  
I sing: the moon she swings her head;  
I dance: my shadow swells and sways.  
We sport together while awake,  
While drunk, we all go our own ways.  
An eternal, speechless trio then,  
Till in the clouds we meet again!

Historically the courtesans and girl singers in Nanjing had been famous for their beauty and various talents. Nanjing was a cultural center in ancient China, and especially in the Southern Dynasty (420-589), Nanjing enjoyed one of its golden age. The Qinhuai River flowed across the city of Nanjing, connected with lakes with luxuriants lilies. The gaily-painted pleasure-boats on the lake looked splendid in green and gold and the colorful lanterns hung high on the poles. On each bank of Qinhuai River, row upon row of public houses and pavilions of performance with carved beams, painted rafters and bamboo curtains lined the river. The enchanting music and intoxicating fragrance would fly in the air. So, the pretty women, fine wine, beautiful song and graceful dance during that period were always haunting in the memories of poets and scholars through the ages. Li Xiangjun was a well-known courtesan in Ming Dynasty.

In his famous “The Orchid Pavilion,” Wang Xizhi describes a delightful day (A.D. 353) with his friends:

Here are gathered all the illustrious persons and assembled both the old and young. Here are tall mountains and majestic peaks, trees with thick foliage and tall bamboo. Here are also clear streams and gurgling rapids, catching one’s eye from the right to the left. We group ourselves in order, sitting by the waterside, and drink in succession from a cup floating down the curving stream; and although there is no music from the string and wood-wind instruments, yet with alternative singing and drinking, we are well disposed to thoroughly enjoy a quiet intimate conversation.\(^{104}\)

In Jiang Menglin’s memoir, yayín was also connected with friendship and conversation among Chinese intellectuals.\(^{105}\)

Drinking, eating crabs and enjoying the moon...we are talking about anything: books, poems, friendships, love, and life in general...The gathering lasts quite often from 6 p.m. to midnight without any break. Words are lingering and eyes are sparkling. The night is getting shorter, and we are getting younger.\(^{106}\)

From the point of view of Chinese literati, yayín also presents a circumstance such as this: Surrounded by flowers, a man is drinking under the moon. He floats down a winding river with his wine cup. He feels drunk slightly and the wine is flowing into his heart of poetry. When the moon is bluish white and the night breeze is cooling and refreshing, he is sitting on the serene grass alone, overlooking a brook, listening to the gurgling water and the frogs’ cries rising one after another. He is chanting poetry, thinking of the disappearing past and coming future.


\(^{105}\) The Chinese words “zhīyín” and “zhījī” refer to a bosom friend; a friend keenly appreciative of one’s talents. Chinese saying goes: “One can die for his ‘zhījī’” or “The rarest thing in world is one’s ‘zhīyín.'”

The image of moonlight is often associated with yayin. So, we read “to warm up a cup of moonlight to go with wine.”\(^{107}\) A Buddhist writer, Lin Qingxuan says:

Drinking has its philosophy. Preparing a lot of dishes, and leaving the wine cups and dishes lying about in disorder after a feast is the lowest-class way of drinking. Having a handful of peanut and a tray of dried bean curd, chatting wildly away about this and that with three or five good friends is the middling way of drinking. Drinking alone, inviting the bright moon and becoming three companions while looking at one’s shadow is the best-class way of drinking.

Lin further elaborates on the last way of drinking:

In spring, one can drink wujiaapi slowly in front of the azalea in full bloom. In summer, one may drink beer to his heart’s content among the carnival of flowers on the trees. In an autumn dusk, one may boil the chuyeqing with chrysanthemum, and get drunk with haitang (Chinese crabapple). In a chilly winter season, one can warm up a pot of daqu with winterplum in front of the flowers of honeysuckle by the fence. In this state, anything can be used to go with the wine.\(^{108}\)

Obviously, there has been always a connection between wine and poetry. For many Chinese scholars, when drinking light wine, it’s appropriate to read the ci of Li Qingzhao.\(^{109}\) When drinking sweet wine, it’s good to go with the poem of Liuyong. When drinking strong wine, it’s right to sing Su Dongpo’s “Dajiang Dongqu” (The Yangtze River Roll On to the East). Then, in yayin, a learned Chinese man with a heart of poetry becomes a yaren.

\(Yaren\) (Refined man)


\(^{108}\) Ibid., p. 42.

\(^{109}\) Ci, poetry written to certain tunes with strict tonal patterns and rhyme schemes, in fixed numbers of lines and words, originating in the Tang Dynasty (618-907) and fully developed in the Song Dynasty (960-1279).
*Yaren* is certainly a cultivated man with cultivated taste. In the address to the Moral Reform Society of Philadelphia in 1836, William Warkins ended his talk by evoking an image of the cultivated person: “The educated man -- the man of the cultivated taste, whose mind is enriched with stores of useful knowledge, has, within himself, an inexhaustible source of refined pleasure.”\(^{110}\) There might be a subtle difference between a Chinese *yaren* and a well-educated American gentleman whose mind stores “useful knowledge.” The knowledge of a Chinese *yaren* could be too poetic to be useful. Some people depicted their friends as imaginative, artistic, and intellectually stimulating. Refinement was often crucial to them. They liked refinement for subtlety of thinking and subtlety of being. As we may have observed, refinement is constantly associated with sophistication and sophistication is often defined through cosmopolitanism, i.e., as having had a chance to travel, to learn languages, to discover various culinary traditions, and more generally, to widen one’s horizons.

Furthermore, beyond the enjoyment of a good taste of food, wine, book and friendship, there is a long and profound tradition in ancient Chinese history that leads to a subtle association of *yayin* or *yaren* with the drunken men among Wei-Jin *ningshi*. Indeed, it would be deficient to depict Chinese drinking culture without looking back to the playful spirit of the Neo-Daoist. As Zhu Dake pointed out: "The playful vagabond belongs to a grand tradition...The tradition is one of posing an alternative, spurious goal outside the usual utilitarian ones in order to distract people’s attention from their

anxieties." Chinese literati, among whom *ningshi* group is most representative, is the core element in this grand tradition.

*Wei-Jin Mingshi*

According to a Chinese-English dictionary, *Mingshi* are the unconventional and self-indulgent old-style intellectuals who pick up whatever they like to shape their own lifestyles and who do not particularly pursue fame or fortune. They usually enjoy a colorful life.112

*Mingshi* tend to keep certain distance from politics and conventions in public affairs. Historically, an attitude of indifference to public affairs among Chinese could be traced to the history of Wei and Jin Dynasties, when scholars became admired for their indifference to national affairs, which soon resulted in the sapping of national strength and the conquest of North China by barbarians. It was the fashion for scholars of the Wei and Jin Dynasties to give themselves up to drinking, “qingtan” [light conversation], and dreaming about Daoist fairies and discovering the pill of immortality.

Toward the end of the Han Dynasty, the Chinese scholars were not indifferent. In fact, political criticism was at its height during this period. Leading scholars and their disciples, numbering over thirty thousand, were often embroiled over questions of current politics, and dared the wrath of the eunuchs and the Emperor in their intrepid attacks on government policies or the conduct of members of the imperial household.

However, because of the absence of constitutional protection, this movement

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ended in complete suppression at the hands of eunuchs. Two or three hundred scholars and sometimes their whole families were sentenced to death, exile or imprisonment. This occurred in the years A.D. 166-169, and was known as the "Dangku," or "party cases." Wealth, honor, and power could vanish in a flash. Many of the greatest aristocratic families were spared in this turbulent time. The effects of this event were felt over a century afterward. Then came the reaction and the cult of indifference and the developing crazes for wine, women, poetry and Daoistic occultism. Some of the scholars went into the mountains and built themselves mud-houses without doors, receiving their food through a window till their death.\textsuperscript{113}

The Wei-Jin era also witnessed a re-emancipation and great activity in the ideological domain where many questions were put forward and much progress was made. The Pre-Qin schools of Logicians, Legalists, and Daoists, suppressed for centuries by a decree issued by Emperor Wudi of the West Han banning all schools except Confucianism, again became the focus of attention and study during Wei-Jin period. As Chen Rongjie argues, "Many scholars of integrity refused to serve the corrupt governments, and others, looking for freedom and security, preferred to withdraw in search of transcendental values. Consequently, the whole intellectual movement was marked by a transcendental quality, with emphasis on non-being, vacuity, and noumenal world."\textsuperscript{114} Chen points out that there was a sharp reaction among Wei-Jin intellectuals against the intellectual trends of the Han. Since they believed that the minute and endless

\textsuperscript{113} See Li Zehou, \textit{History of Ancient Chinese Philosophy}. Also see \textit{The Path of Beauty}, Oxford University press, 1994.

studies of Confucian Classics had turned the study of Confucian thought into sheer scholasticism, Wei-Jin intellectuals had created a spirit of free inquiry, critical study, and independent thinking. In their light conversations "they avoided the vulgarism of politics or traditional mores and concentrated on the pure or light aspect of matters, whether sex or poetry, in such a way as to free the spirit and sharpen the imagination, and to display a lofty ideal and a philosophical wit. Many of them acted in the most unconventional and carefree manner." \(^{115}\) Being drunk is one of the common images of Wei-Jin *mingshi*.

In Chinese literature, there has been a close connection between drinking and poetry. Alcohol could make people forget everything and fall in pleasant sleep. So, Cao Cao would roar: "What can relieve me from anxiety?/ Only *Dukang* [a type of Chinese wine]!" In the same poem, Cao Cao writes: "Drink and be merry,/ For life is short,/ Like the morning dew,/ There is much to regret." \(^{116}\) However, "Taking out the knife to block

\(^{115}\) Ibid., p. 314-345.

\(^{116}\) Cao Cao (155-220), "Duan Ge Xing" (A Short Song), See, Xu Yuan Zhong, Golden Treasury of Chinese Poetry from Han to Sui (206 BC – AD 618), Beijing University Press, 1996. The whole poem is the following:

Drink and be merry,  
For life is short,  
Like the morning dew,  
There is much to regret.  
How can we be unbound  
By grief which weighed us down?  
Grief can only be drowned  
In wine of good renown.  
Talents with collars blue,  
For you I pine away.  
So much I long for you,  
My heart aches night and day.  
How gaily call the deer  
While grazing in the shade!  
When I have talents here,  
Let lute and lyre be played!  
Bright as the moon on high,
the water, yet the water flows./ Raising the cup to pour on the sorrow, yet the sorrow grows.” To Wei-Jin *ningshi*, their sentimental outlook consisted of a steadfast adherence to life while under the influence of a philosophical skepticism. But, inwardly, it was an ardent love of life, living, and the future, born of the questioning and denying of an ideology that had prevailed up to that time — the ideology of the old system that embraced fatalism, Confucian ethics, and the belief in ghosts. This doubting and refuting of external powers gave rise to an internal moral awakening and an inward search for truth. Its spirit of criticism and refutation gave the rebellious New-Daoists a sense of emancipation.

If only man’s mortality was real, why shouldn’t he enjoy himself while he could? Why shouldn’t he cherish his life and his own person? It was better to drink fragrant wine and dress in fine silk. Ostensibly, it was a call for indulgence, dissipation, and degeneracy, but in essence it was not so. It was a revelation, in the light of existing social

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How can I bring it down?
Grief from within comes nigh;
Ceaselessly it flows on.
Across the fields and lanes, you are kind to come here.
Talking of far-off plains,
You cherish friendship dear.
The moon’s bright and stars flight.
The crows in southward flight.
They circle the trees thrice;
There’s no branch to alight.
With crags high mountains rise;
With water the sea’s deep.
With the help of the wise,
And ordered world we’ll keep.
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117 Li Bai, “Bidding Farewell with Feast to Decreed Editor Uncle Yun on Xie Tiao Tower in County Xuan,” Li Bai Shiji, Beijing wenxue chubanshe, 1981.

conditions, to men who loved life and were eager to live. In the face of reality and given the fact that established traditions -- honor, learning, and beliefs -- were no longer reliable, the significance and value of the individual's existence now came to the fore. A pervasive question was how to live this short life with its numerous hardships in a conscious and meaningful way, to make life richer and fuller. In essence, this pointed to a kind of human awakening. People did not necessarily want to follow a life of dissipation or to indulge in wine and pleasure, but they were attracted by talent, character, appearance, and manners. Men were no longer respected for their accomplishments, or show of moral integrity and learning, as they had been during the two Han periods, but chiefly for their inner speculative attitude and spirit.\textsuperscript{119}

During this period, talent, temperament, ability, style and human bodies became the most important factors. This was in keeping with the aristocratic style of the great families and nobles, to whom refined manners and features represented ideal beauty. What people appraised, discussed, and acclaimed was not the general, the temporal, the superficial and external; what they valued had to be expressive of some inner, intrinsic, and unconventional style or quality. What was prominent in them was the revelation of an inner wisdom, a superior spirit, refined words and actions, and a beautiful style -- where beauty means the expression of a person's inner wisdom and character through an outward appearance as beautiful as some natural phenomenon. For instance, in the eyes of his contemporaries, Wang Xizhi was "as fragile as a floating cloud, as graceful as a startled dragon." Ji Kang, the man was "as lofty as a solitary pine. When drunk, he was as confused and disorderly as a jade hill about to collapse." "Zong Zi, a handsome young

\textsuperscript{119} See Li Zehou, \textit{The Path of Beauty}, Oxford University Press, 1994, p. 82-91.
gentleman, when drunk, looks like a jade tree in the breeze swaying.” The aim of such exaggerated description was to express a lofty inner character through an impressive outward appearance, this being the aesthetic ideal and interest of the Wei-Jin *ningshi*.

With a self-sufficient manorial economy and their social position and political privileges secured by a hereditary system, it was not surprising that the attention of the great families and nobility should be turned from their environs inward to the heart, from society to nature, from Confucian classics to the arts, from an externally oriented to subjective existence. “Watching the returning wild geese, playing the five-stringed fiddle, glancing around with self-satisfaction, mentally roving the mysteries of the universe” — this was their world outlook. They were afraid of an early death and so looked for ways to prolong life; they took medicine and made “pills of immortality”; they drank freely and then talked loudly about the philosophies of Laozi and Zhuangzi and studied the rites and abstruse learning; they indulged in pleasure on the one hand while thinking philosophically on the other. This seemingly aloof, careless and self-satisfied attitude, caring for nothing and for everything, constituted the style of Wei-Jin *ningshi*; medicine, wine, appearance and scenery, along with discussions of Daoism and the abstruse, were the necessary contents of such a style.

If the Seven Saints of the Bamboo Groves, such as Ruan Ji and Ji Kang, represent the playful spirit of Wei-Jin *ningshi*, Tao Yuanming, another well-known *ningshi* in Jin Dynasty, leaves us the classic flavor of the *ningshi* style — a person of *daguan*

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121 Ji Kang, see *Shishuo Xinyu*. 
(detachment) and a master of the art of living — xuandan jianyue (simple, elegant, and detached). Tao left the bustle and tumult of the city and lived in a remote village in front of the Mountain Nan. He built a bamboo fence and planted willow, plum and peach trees in his front and back yards. The yellow and white chrysanthemums were in blossom under the east wattled wall. His thatched cottage had eight or nine rooms, with bright windows and dustless tables. A non-stringed instrument was hanging on the wall and the books of Buddhism, Daoism and Confucianism were lying on the desk. He always kept his wine cup in his hand, drinking alone, plucking the instrument and whistling. He read good books leisurely and he could grasp the meanings while forgetting the words.\textsuperscript{122} Tao’s lifestyle represents the highest ideal of Chinese culture which has always been a man with this sense of detachment toward life based on a sense of wise disenchantment. From Tao’s disenchantment comes his high-mindedness (guanhuai), a high-mindedness which enables him to go through life with tolerant irony and escape the temptations of fame and wealth and achievement, and makes him take what comes. And from this detachment arises also his pride and nonchalance, his sense of freedom, and his love of vagabondage. It is only with this sense of freedom and nonchalance that Tao eventually arrives at the keen and intense joy of living. Or, at least, Tao’s legend and his poetry have become a comfortable remedy and poetic inspiration for generations of Chinese literati throughout the Chinese history since Jin.

\textsuperscript{122} Here is one of Tao Yuanming’s poems—Drinking: “I set up my cottage in the world of men, /Away from the hubbub of horses and carriage. /How can it leave on me no trace? /Secluded heart makes secluded place. /I pick fence-side asters at will; /Carefree I see the southern hill. /The mountain air’s fresh day and night; /Together birds go home in flight. /What revelation at this view? /Words fail if I try to tell you.” This poem expressed Tao’s sense of detachment toward life and his Chan-style love for leisure life.
Modern Mingshi

Although *tingshi* with a liberal mind dislike the will to establish the standards of honor and virtue, they still develop their basic ideas about honor and virtue through their education inside and outside school and family. *Mingshi* in the 1990s define themselves as the people who are “getting most out of life” by the availability of diversified and qualitatively rich experiences that are not solely defined by economic rationality.

While in the United States, the yuppies era of the 1980s ushered in the greater availability of cosmopolitan cultural goods (gourmet cuisine, fine wine, art, etc.), in China, the 1990s provided the living conditions for the new generation of *tingshi*, *yaren*, and *xinxin renlei*\(^{123}\) or, in other words, any Chinese capable of leading a good life. The nostalgia of the older generation about a caring Chinese society dissolved among the younger generations through the success of their vigorous self-invention where reality is what you wish it to be, as you wish it into being. Chinese biologist and sociologist Pan Guang-dan promoted his idea *bu tong er he* (enjoy the harmony and peace in differences or a peaceful coexistence in differences) half a century ago. His ideal has become part of the true living conditions of modern *tingshi* in the 1990s.

For these modern *tingshi*, a more natural refinement may transcend a superficial performance or competition, and thus become a way of living, not for other approval criticism or judgment but for one’s own innermost joy. Since to please oneself is not

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\(^{123}\) In Japan, the social critics use "the new human" to describe urban young whose values and life-styles their elder find so bizarre as to suggest another species. The media depict these youth as disrespectful, individualistic, selfish, uncommitted, and materialistic. See Tobin, Joseph, "Introduction: Domesticating The West," in Tobin, Joseph, ed., *Re-Made In Japan: Everyday Life and Consumer Taste In a Changing Society*, New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1992, p. 1-41,p. 23. Taiwan has been a place which closely follows the new trends in Japan and in Taiwan, "the new human" is called "xinxin renlei."
more important but at least equally as important as pleasing others, an outside image of oneself for others is a less important nature of gentility in the view of modern mingshi. If traditional mingshi tend not to fit in a conventional society and then to choose a hermit lifestyle, the modern mingshi feel more flexible and “fit in.” The young generation admires the spirit of Neo-Daoist mingshi and they scorn the conformists who are unable to create a lifestyle of their own and who have to follow formulas. To these young people, the purpose of life is the development of their mind or their thinking processes, and of their ability to reflect on things. They are courageous, bright, energetic, passionate, yet rational and practical. They are called the “Sunshine Youngsters.”

When lifestyle is defined as “the distinctive style of life,” it implies “individuality,” “self-expression,” and a “stylish self-consciousness.” It is connected with the concepts such as “taste” and “choice,” which emphasize “difference.” Only when faced with different choices, can an individual’s style of life be regarded as “expressive.” In the 1990s, lifestyles in China are more determined than ever by individual choices.

Beijing Mingshi

Gao Minglu observes that cynicism and ‘popi’ have many precedents in Chinese intellectual history, manifesting themselves especially in periods in which there is a high degree of political control. For example, “the scholar gentry class in the fourth century, between the Wei and Jin Dynastic reigns, was often portrayed as a self-derisive, crazed rogues who found a way to deal with tight political controls.” Gao further points out, “virtually all of the international Chinese exhibitions in Hong Kong, Australia, and
Europe since the early 1990s have presented Political Pop and Cynicism as the major non-official, avant-garde movements and interpreted them ideologically in light of the Tiananmen Incident of 1989. Further investigation and thought show, however that Political Pop and Cynicism are nothing more than a combination of ideological and commercial practices.  

A fool is someone still trusting after taken in a hundred times. We'd rather be lost, bored, crisis-ridden misguided punks than be cheated. Don't even consider trying the old methods on us, we'll riddle your dogma with holes, then discard it in a rubbish heap.

These were the words by Fang Lijun, a great artist and really nice guy according to his friends, dozens of art critics and fellow artists. One of them, art critic Li Xianting, declared Fang the most gifted of the nation's post-89 generation of artists he christened "Cynical Realists" because of their articulation of the mix of ennui and rogue humor that pervaded Chinese society in the first half of the 1990s. Fang moved out to Tongxian (known by some as the East Village to distinguish it from the "Artists' Village" near the Old Summer Palace in Beijing's Western suburbs) in order to pursue a quieter life. He

124 Cynical Realism's characteristics on the other hand were a more pedestrian attitude to everyday-life. Plays and essays produced during the thirteenth century Yuan dynasty are filled with examples of "popi" and self-derision. Sun Daya in his seminal work "Tian Lai Ji Xu" used "Cynical Farce" in reference to Bai Pu, a writer of ballads at the time. The sense of ennui and inner-emptiness expressed in this kind of dissolve and "popi" style seems to be a common way for China's scholar gentry class to find escape in dark political times. Another interesting comparison, is that of one of China's most popular Buddhist images, "Mi Le Buddha," which portrays this important religious icon holding his belly, reeling in good-hearted laughter, which for me is similar in terms of its expressive form and spirit to Fang Lijun's characters. They are often portrayed laughing in a similarly irreverent and almost impious way. Another artist Wang Guangyi successfully juxtaposed symbols of the Cultural Revolution with symbols of Western Pop culture, producing a humorous and ironic effect. This became recognized as the basic form expression of Political Pop. See Gao Minglu, "Inside Out," San Francisco Museum of Art, 1998. Also see Li Xianting on Chinese contemporary Art: "Introduction of China Avant-Garde Art Exhibition.

was joined by his former classmate Liu Wei who had also established himself in the international art scene. Since then, many of the artists from the Artists’ Village have moved out to Tongxian too, but because they are spread out all over the county, a Tongxian bohemian scene has not developed. "I'll paint, play with my dogs, dig in the garden," Fang said of his life. The once angry young man has now mellowed, and gone back to the land, which appears like a withdrawal from society -- the traditional response of mingshi to the complexities of public life. Fang's paintings have a comic book feeling. They depict the figure of a shaven-headed man, alone or with a group of clones. This enigmatic skinhead hunches his shoulders slightly, and smiles, sometimes idiotically, sometimes as though he knows something you don't. Fang smiles wryly often, slightly revealing his easygoing cynicism, which is grounded in the acceptance of a flawed reality.

Fang Lijun's baldheaded "popi" rogue image quickly became important symbols of Cynical Realism. Li Xianting Argues, both Cynical Realism and Political Pop as forms of "unofficial art" reflected a "Zeitgeist" of the 1990s, even if they could not be exhibited publicly and thereby gain public acceptance. Their exhibitions and essays such as "Mao Goes Pop" by "Gaudy Artists" or "Vulgar Arts in a Collapsing Culture" by Yang Wei, displayed the bored ennui, roguish humor, and political irreverence. All of the things appeared broadly in the literature, music, movies and television serials of the time. In the 1990s, the universal elitism that was once the core of Chinese enlightenment movements in the 1920s and 1980s has been transformed into true individualism. Never before have Chinese artists been so emotionally concerned with their private lives and individual interests. At the same time, the relationship between Chinese tradition and the West was
redefined in more rational and pragmatic ways: the traditional is seen as more malleable and the Western as more serviceable than envisioned by previous generations.\textsuperscript{126}

In the 1990s, the successful Political Pop artists have become a part of an upper-middle class in the changing Chinese economy. The artists no longer strive to produce a confrontation with authority and the public as their predecessors did; they have changed from elite/amateur avant-gardists to professional, careerist artists. An example of this dislocation was found on a New York Time Magazine cover in December 1993. On it was a reproduction of a painting by one of the Cynics and the title of an article on the Chinese avant-garde: “Not just a yawn but the howl that could free China.”\textsuperscript{127} Ironically, if you had visited the artist, you would have found him living in a big house in Beijing with a beautiful garden and a big gate between him and the ordinary people. Such new professional artists have been passionately involved in creating a Chinese leisure culture, which is an essential part of any capitalist society, rather than engaging in avant-garde culture.\textsuperscript{128}

When Dong Qiao interprets the English terms “sensibility” and “taste,” his view is smoothed by the wisdom of chan: “people who can see through weird things in a utilitarian society with an understanding smile are capable of knowing clearly the true meaning of ‘modern taste.’ With their modern sensibility, they can gain their footholds, enjoy their lives and feel at ease in a market society.” When Dong echoes William Empson’s “urban pastoral,” he exposes his middle-way philosophy: an “urban pastoral”

\textsuperscript{126} See Li Xianting on Chinese contemporary Art: “Introduction of China Avant-Garde Art Exhibition.


taste will not be seen in “a lonely soul who only admires his own purity” or in “an
effortless drifter who will flow with any current.”

Wu Liang, a young Chinese scholar, claimed, “I am currently living a secluded
life. But, I have been paying attention to the latest trends of world as before. So, I’m a
danbo (not seek fame and wealth) family man type of fashion-monger.” As an ardent
promoter of avant-garde literature and art, Wu has been recognized for his consistent
disdain of fashion, hedonism, consumerism and popular culture. However, Wu admitted,
“The value judgement of an object cannot replace its very existence. I join fashion in
order to play against it. At the same time, I’m trying to popularize my anti-popular
culture philosophy. So, at the end, I can’t run away from the control of this popular
culture.” In Chinese pop culture with a market consciousness, art is increasingly linked
with utility; art decorates our daily necessities, environment, ceremonies, and ourselves.
In order to be functional and widely purchased, art is replicated for a huge amount of
commercial copies. This is the irony that Wu and many others have to “play with.”

Fortunately, Chinese avant-garde art still functions as a way to explore, mediate,
express, and distillate the (un)consciousness of the urban dwellers. Most of the people I
met during my fieldwork regarded art as the nourishment of their soul. Some scholars I
interviewed publicly despised the dazzling world of commercialism and hedonism. They
tried to resist in vain the “superficial” temptation of this consumer society with their own
attitude of danpo (detachment). They were determined to believe that they had the

129 Dong Qiao, Our Generation, Beijing, Sanlian Shudian Chubanshe, 1992, p. 5-7.
130 Wu Liang, Pipingzhi Shuo, zhijiang wenyi chubanshe, 1996, p. 125.
131 Ibid., p. 124.
responsibility to overthrow the conventional value system of commercialism and re-build a free spiritual kingdom. Some avant-garde artists also claimed that they wanted to keep the dignity of intelligence, imagination and transcendence in a sensualized life and they wished to continue practicing this sense of immunity and resistance against consumer society. Although there was a skeptical air among puzzled Chinese intellectuals, they never stopped searching for new possibilities and new passions in their life. "They are quietly seeking for the poetic quality and intelligence in commercialism."  

However, in the 1990s, fewer and fewer artists kept their idealism as an increasing number of them jumped into a commercial market. Although they still had their own idealist circle and they constantly communicated with each other and exchanged information in bars and coffee shops, they found that the meaning of commodity was actually broader, richer, and more profound than they thought and they genuinely felt pleasant when they turned their intelligence and imagination into goods.

After several years abroad, another Beijing artist Chen Qingqing has returned to the life in the hutong. She lives and works in a small courtyard house next to the "lake district" in Beijing. She is currently busy on a series of small installations entitled "Black Memories." These glass-topped black boxes resembling little museum cases are filled with photographs, found objects and miscellanies like roses and rose stems, slippers for bound feet, newspaper cuttings, miniature hands and ears, and extracts from Chinese medical texts. The arrangements are thought-provoking even if one has no knowledge of the artist. Once Qingqing relates the memories behind "Black Memories," the small

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boxes seem to resonate with real and imagined impressions of the recent history of Beijing, which often parallel her own life. Qingqing’s works are not only well-acclaimed in Beijing’s artist circle, but they are also commercially successful. As an artist, Qingqing succeeds in balancing recollection of the past with contemporaneity of the present. Her lifetime of diverse experiences is starting to produce strange artistic fruit of increasing relevance to citizens of Beijing and the world.\textsuperscript{133}

Chinese musician and writer Liu Sola’s \textit{China Collage} was released in 1996. In this album, Liu makes references to Jimi Hendrix, African music, jazz, blues and rock and roll. She released another album in 1994. Titled \textit{Blues from the East}, the record is a fusion of Asian and African-American traditions, blending elements of funk, R&B, and techno with oriental opera and Chinese folk music. The album climbed to number nine on the Billboard world music charts in 1995, though many Chinese listeners criticized the pieces as “too noisy,” “not Chinese,” and “a bastardization of Beijing Opera.”\textsuperscript{134}

There is no surprise that modern \textit{mingshi} are still unconventional and self-indulgent. But, they are much luckier than the generation of Wei-Jin \textit{mingshi} since they are living in an increasingly more open Chinese society in the 1990s. They no longer have to live a hermit life unless they choose to. They have more opportunities to “play” with their free spirits in their selective social engagements and they have the necessary living conditions to cultivate their leisure activities and aesthetic tastes.

\textsuperscript{133} See \textit{Beijing View}, 1996-1998.

\textsuperscript{134} Ibid.
Xianqingyizhi (Leisure and Carefree Mood), Yaren (Refined People) and Yanxing (the Aesthetic Taste)

After Tang, Chinese intellectuals adopted a more broad-minded view towards life. They did not stick to their ideals like Confucius, neither did they indulge their passions and live unrestrained like Wei-Jin mingshi. Their political goal and life philosophy was: In power, one should help his people; In poverty, one should work on his own self-cultivation. On the one hand, they towed the line and conformed to convention in their official circle in order to practice their duty within the social hierarchy. On the other hand, they pursued their own individuality in their daily life and cultivated their own aesthetic taste in art, especially in guqin [a seven-stringed plucked instrument in some ways similar to the zither]. Thus, musical instruments, especially the guqin became adored companions for Chinese literati (or mingshi, in particular) on their journey of transcendence.\(^\text{135}\)

Sitting alone inside the secluded and restful bamboo grove,
Playing the qin and roaring.

To tune my jade-carved qin on the river, each string purifies my heart. When the seven strings are ready, all trees on earth are clarified to the deep and the serene.

With poetry and music to entertain myself,
I beg nobody.\(^\text{136}\)

In their spirit, the Chinese literati were willing to accept the Daoist's spirit of being “free and easy,” “doing nothing yet stopping at nothing,” and “being free from the yoke of common customs and conventions.” On the other hand, the dark reality of and

the disappointment in the social system forced the literati to choose another alternative -- returning to simplicity and sincerity. Hence, with the gentle halo of secluded serenity, they experienced the temperament of art in life, broke away from feelings of depression and restraint and obtained peace of body and soul.

When they played the qin, they required a certain atmosphere: to sit alone in a quiet room, burn incense while touching qin in order to purify and tranquilize their mind; or to play by the spring and under the pine tree, reach a carefree state, forget both the self and things, and enjoy alone the sounds of nature in the refreshing breeze and bright moon. For example, in the “Poetry of Leisure,” Bai Jiuyi wrote: “The birds all took their perches when the moon came out./ I sat still in the empty village./ In a mood of leisure,/ I might play guqin.”

They created, nourished and developed refined music -- yayue -- and took this style of music to the highest grade. However, this extremely exquisite style was limited to the literati. It was therefore too highbrow to be popular among the masses.

Traditionally, xianqingyizhi (leisure and free mood) has always been a kind of life interest, life attitude and lifestyle of the Chinese literati. Leisure is the necessary time and space constituted for spiritual freedom. Because of xianqing (leisure) and yaxing (aesthetic interest), the Chinese literati were able to escape from secular turmoil and pursued rich and artistic lives. As Zhang Chao said, “I’m clear even when the common people are all corrupted and muddy.” In leisure, one can read books, travel amid the scenery, meet good friends, drink, and write books. Leisure thus becomes the condition

for an aesthetic state of life and the condition of *xianqingyaxing*, in which Chinese literati concealed their different life attitudes. Some found their spiritual sustenance in mountains and rivers; some indulged in the world of *qin/qi/shu/hua* (music, chess, book, and painting); some fled into the mountain forests; some made the pills of immortality or sat in meditation of Chan. They either practiced their self-cultivation to purify their temperament, or capitalized their refinement and lived a solitary and vagabond life, or escaped from their failure and frustration in officialdom or love affairs. In Zhang Chaoyun’s work, we read:

The plum blossom makes one lofty, the orchid makes one secluded, the chrysanthemum makes one wild, the lily makes one indifferent, the Chinese flowering crabapple makes one gorgeous, the peony makes one proud, the bamboo makes one charming, the pine tree makes one at ease, the *tung* tree makes one fresh and the willow makes one sentimental.¹³⁷

This *xiaopinwen* (short essay) represented the Chinese literati’s tradition, which empathized the moral aesthetics in nature. As Lin argues:

This ancient geniality is best reflected in the Chinese familiar essay, *xiaopinwen*, which is the product of the Chinese spirit at play. The pleasures of a leisurely life are its eternal themes. Its subject matter covers the art of drinking tea, the carving of seals and the appreciation of the cuts and the quality of the stones, the training of potted-flowers and the caring for orchids, boating on the lake, climbing historically famous mountains, visiting ancient beauties’ tombs, composing poetry under the moon and looking at a storm on a high mountain—all written in a style leisurely and chatty and suave, as disarming hospitable as a friend’s chat by the fireside and as poetically disorderly as the recluse’s dress, a style trenchant and yet mellow, like good old wine. And through it all pervades the spirit of man happy with himself and the universe, poor in possessions but rich in sentiments and discriminating in taste, experienced and full of worldly wisdom and yet simple-hearted, a bottle of emotions and yet apparently indifferent to all the outside world, cynically contented and wisely idle, loving simplicity and good material living. This spirit of geniality is best seen in the preface to *All Men Are Brothers*, attributed to the author, but

really forged by the great seventeenth-century critic, Jin Shengtan. This preface, in itself an excellent example of the Chinese familiar essay on leisure, and the amazing thing is that it was intended by its author as preface to a novel.\textsuperscript{138}

For Lin Yutang, "The enjoyment of life covers many things: the enjoyment of ourselves, of home life, of trees, flowers, clouds, winding rivers and falling cataracts and myriad things in Nature, and then the enjoyment of poetry, art, contemplation, friendship,

\textsuperscript{138} Ibid., p.324-325. Also see translation by Pearl Buck in All Men Are Brothers, John Day, 1933.

Another genre "shishuo" was also developed by Chinese literati since the birth of "Shishuo Xinyu" by Liu Yiqing (403-444). Qian Nanxiu argues the cultural purpose of using the genre of "shi-shuo" under the changing intellectual circumstances. She says that in the late Ming, the Shih-shuo genre became a counter-play discourse against the Ch'eng-Chu Li-hsueh scholars' attack on literati, that they were "wan-wu sang-chih," squandering moral energy (intent) on trifling things, such as literary and artistic creations and art and antique collections. On the contrary, literati refuted, it was the Li-hsueh scholars who were squandering their energy on isolated, shallow contemplation of the so-called t'ien-li, Heavenly principle. The real knowledge that one should endeavor to achieve, literati believed, was embedded in the shih-li, all kinds of principles of myriad things which could be best comprehended through literature and art. The Shih-shuo genre, with its wide coverage of knowledge and literary elaboration of things and portrayal of people, fit perfectly literati's ambition of mastering shih-li. For late Ming literati, things, such as literary and artistic creations, and even the utensils for creating literature and arts, including the Shih-shuo genre, embodied their intent, hence their extended selves. Late Ming literati's seemingly "non-practical" indulgence in "things" and aesthetic gratification arose actually from a very practical reason -- to sustain their elite social status while parting from the mainstream system centered on civil service examinations and scholarship. For this purpose, late Ming literati built their lifestyle upon the then highly developed commodity economy, actively participating as artisans, connoisseurs, and consumers. Through producing, selling, and appreciating "things," literati fulfilled their intellectual ideals and satisfied their daily life needs.

Glenn Perkins argues that during the late Ming, Chinese prose writers developed a brand of leisure essay which celebrated connoisseurship of objects and travels, and espoused an overall concern with aesthetic refinements. This broader current of leisure prose which lasted into the Qing underwent significant changes during the Manchu invasion, changes which altered the delineations between personal and private aesthetics and led to a revision of both the genre of leisure writing and the very concept of prose literature. Zhang Dai, Qian Qianyi, Li Yu and Gu Yanwu all inherited an idea of the properties surrounding leisure from the late sixteenth century, that leisure writing expressed cultivated sensitivity and encouraged the self-perception of the educated elite that they were the guardians of an enlightened culture. See the online-conference proposals: "Frivolous" Discourses: Chinese Literary Heterodoxy from the Late Imperial Period to the 20th Century.
conversation, and reading, which are all some form or other of the communion of spirits.  

The aesthetic spirits of ancient Chinese are also embodied in their ways of dwellings, in which harmony, irregularity, surprise, concealment and suggestion are some of the principles of Chinese garden-planting, as they are of other forms of Chinese art. From the principle of irregularity in Chinese architecture they develop, with intricate human fancies, the principle of concealment and surprise, as capable of infinite development in the designing of the rich man’s country villa as in that of the poor scholar’s dwelling house. Shen Fu in his *Fusheng Liuji* (Six Chapters of a Floating Life) explains the philosophy behind the construction of spaces:

As to the planning of garden pavilions and towers, of winding corridors and outhouses, and in the designing of rockery or the training of flower-trees, one should try to show the small in the large and the large in the small, and provide for the real in the unreal and for the unreal in the real. One reveals and conceals alternately, making it sometimes apparent and sometimes hidden. This is not just “rhythmic irregularity,” nor does it depend on having a wide space and great expenditure of labor and material. Pile up a mound with earth dug from the ground and decorate it with rocks, mixed with flowers; use live plum branches for your fence, and plant creepers over the walls. Thus there will be a hill in a place which is without hills. In the big open spaces, plant bamboo that grow quickly and train plum trees with thick branches to cover them. This is to show the small in the large. When the courtyard is small, the wall should be a combination of convex and concave shapes, decorated with green, covered with ivy, and inlaid with big slabs of stone with inscriptions on them. Thus when you open the window, you seem to face a rocky hillside, alive with rugged beauty. This is to show the large in the small. Contrive so that an apparently blind alley leads suddenly into an open space and the kitchen leads through a backdoor into an unexpected courtyard. This is to provide for the real in the unreal. Let a door lead into a blind courtyard and conceal the view by placing a few bamboo trees and a few rocks. Thus you suggest something which is not there. Place low balustrades along the top of a wall so as to suggest a roof garden which does not exist. This is to provide for the unreal in the real. Poor scholars who live in crowded houses should follow the method of the boatmen in our native district who make clever arrangements with their limited space on the bows of their boats, making certain

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modification...When my wife and I were staying at Yangchow, we lived in a house of only two rooms, but (by such arrangements) the two bedrooms, the kitchen and the parlor were all arranged with an exquisite effect, and we did not feel the cramping of space. Yun once said laughingly to me, ‘The arrangements are exquisite enough, but after all, it lacks the atmosphere of a rich man’s house.’ It was so indeed.\(^{140}\)

Shen Fu shows his tender love for the small things of life, and give ingenious advice on the cultivating of flowers, the arrangement of flowers in vases, the use of courtyards, the art of perfuming, the art of making windows look out on a superb view that could go into a painting, the hanging of scrolls, and the arrangement of chairs.

Although this is different from the Chinese gentry’s conspicuous art of living, and Shen Fu himself did not really belong to Chinese gentry stratum.\(^{141}\) The art of living, however, indeed was cultivated on the daily base by the class of gentry and literati. Chinese gentry – shi-shen [people of both scholar and official] was a group that expressed a common heritage, a store of common traditions and sentiments. In fact, many of Wei-Jin mingshi were the members of this social stratum. Its style of life, aspirations, and notions of family indicated its outlook on life and values. Conspicuous leisure was the very core of the existence of Chinese gentry class since leisure means the freedom to choose one’s activities according to one’s own preferences and one’s own standards. In ancient China, gentry members who had emancipated themselves from daily work had plenty of time to extend social contacts, to form beneficial friendships, to travel to famous places and foreign lands, to enjoy games and recreations, to devote themselves to reading and learning, to value objects associated with tradition and antiquity, and to

\(^{140}\) Ibid., p. 331.
cultivate religion and morality. It was mainly members of the gentry class who made great achievements in such fields as public administration, literature, philosophy, and the arts.

As a lifestyle, the gentry's leisure influenced both the nobles and the masses alike. For the nobles, it was *fuyongfengya* (to mingle with men of letters and pose as a lover of culture); for the masses, it was, in the end, just the spice in life. The masses would not spend their hard-earned money on the "wind, flowers, snow, and moon" in books, or live in solitude and far away from other people. However, they had their own way of leisure. After a day's work, they enjoyed their wife and warm bed, sang some ditties in a small wine shop, played mahjong, smoked a pipe, or gossiped and shared dirty jokes. For them, the people who loved leisure and spent money on it were lazybones.

However, in the 1990s, there has been a leisure culture craze in China. Leisure was part of life of the people of all strata. The classical literati or gentry's leisure style has been eroded, sedimented, and became one level of the leisure of the common people and even has been practiced by the Chinese new rich. On the other hand, in the 1990s, the popular/commercial styles of leisure were in the mainstream. Regardless of being called "vulgar," they thrived around China.

The shift to popular culture as the mainstay of an entire society's aesthetic taste is a uniquely modern phenomenon. The boom of popular leisure was based upon the development of modernization, in which the traditional culture was reconstructed, new art forms were invented and people's cultural life and leisure activities were diversified. This popular leisure broke through the pattern of *qin/qi/shu/hua*, once enjoyed only by

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141 Shen Fu was a merchant of Suzhou. See Yu Pingbo, *This Is What Life All Adds Up To*,
the literati and gentry, and thereby created a variety of leisure interests. For instance, in the 1990s, singing in a KTV hall replaced the exchange of toasts, poems and songs among the literati. The various styles of teahouses and coffee shops provide an elegant environment for the refined taste of modern refined men and women. If the ancient Chinese yaren deeply loved and clung to the nature -- a mountain, a river, a leaf of grass and a tree, the modern Chinese yaren enjoy the secular life -- eating, clothing, dwelling and travelling as explorers -- in the constantly changing trends of their modern lives.

As Lin Yutang and many others pointed out, Chinese culture has been a materialism-based culture,\(^\text{142}\) in which the Gods were man-made and the human being was evolved from the animal. In China, Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism formed a delightful contrast and shined brightly with each other. Although the three philosophies did not have the same starting point, they reached their common point in the emphasis on man's life in this world. Lin recalls Chinese art of living: "There was taste in ancient China, and we can see what is left of it in beautiful old book-bindings, in exquisite letter-papers, in old porcelain, in great paintings, and in all the old knickknacks not yet touched by the modern influence. One cannot fondle the beautiful old books or see the scholars' letter-papers without seeing that man's spirit in old China had an understanding of tone and harmony and mellow colors."\(^\text{143}\) A life with peace, joy, harmony and leisure are also the common need of modern Chinese. Although the leisure culture in the 1990s tended to transform from the old literati style to the modern consumer style, popular leisure trends

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\(^{142}\) For further study, see the works of Feng Youlan, Mou Zongsan, Fu Weixun, Liu Shuxian, Li Zehou, Zong Baihua, and so on.

\(^{143}\) Lin Yutang, The Importance of Living.
and traditional leisure culture mutually permeate and transform one another. Traditional Chinese leisure culture and its specific taste often guide the exploration of the new cultural domain. The new cultural domain, on the other hand, embodies an important sign of modern life -- people always want full self-realization in order to present their specific existence, which is provided by the convenient conditions of modern life. Even in this convenient modern life, it is still only among the people who naturally rise to the conception of life as an art who are able to attain their full potential. The stage of heteroglossia in China of the 1990s offered urban Chinese possibilities for an enlargement of the role of taste and style in the construction of selves and gave them the possibilities for crafting themselves. Among the professionals (professors, computer engineers, book editors, filmmakers or painters) I met in the coffee shops or book cafes, I noticed that many of them kept up with information such as where recent books were published, and with weekly or monthly magazines such as Qiushi (Seeking the Truth) and Dushu (Reading) which extensively cover new publications and cultural events. Some followed professional conferences, seminars or the gossip of the Beijing intellectual microcosm. Furthermore, this group of people invested avidly in cultural goods, especially in books. They had many cultural and institutional resources around which they could organize their common identity and culture. Their “taste” was based on “acquired cultural capital” which was not necessarily set in an observed “canvas of structural relations.”144 They also indeed “generated high levels of demand for the

cultural goods with which social identities could be not simply ‘fashioned.’”

Gradually, they are exercising influence on events, products, and people around them: they conceive, advise, hire, promote, judge, select, and allocate. They are contributing to the macro-structural determinants and cultural repertories that play important roles in shaping tastes and preferences in urban China.

It is also quite notable that the emphasis on community interests in China is in some ways a valuable legacy, but, for a flower garden to dazzle, the individual plants must bloom -- and that is what is happening to China in 1990s. We began to see more and more signs of individuals and not just groups.\textsuperscript{146} Some people are starting companies and getting property of their own, so that they can thus cultivate a degree of autonomy. They will eventually be able to start publishing companies, media outlets, and other organizations. This is the start of a civil society. It’s also the birth of a Chinese middle class.

In order to have a fuller understanding of Chinese art of living, in chapter four, we shall open again the books of Chinese history and discuss further the Chinese philosophies of self-cultivation.

\textsuperscript{145} Ibid., p. 142.

Chapter Four: Self-cultivation and Transformation

Tradition should not be seen as something we passively get, but as something we actively seize. This is why for Gadamer there is no intrinsic opposition between reason and tradition. Reason stands within tradition, and tradition in turn supplies reason with reality and history.\footnote{See Hans-Georg Gadamer, \textit{Truth and Method}, ed. by Joel Weinsheimer, Continuum Publishing Group, 1993.} Many Chinese scholars have pointed out that Chinese culture is a humanist culture, highly concerned about human life and human morality. Emphasizing on this-worldly life and a full realization of one’s life and oneself, Chinese culture is also a realistic and practical culture.\footnote{For further study, see the works of Yu Guangzhong, Xiong Shili, Feng Youlan, Mou Zongsan, Fu Weixun, Liu Shuxian, Li Zehou, Zong Baihua, and so on.} Hence, Chinese intellectuals had the tradition of showing consistent interest in the art of living and self-cultivation. Confucianism’s constructing and safeguarding of the morality and an ethical social life was its keynote. In order to understand certain lifestyles in China, we need further to discuss Chinese philosophies, especially the philosophies that exert a strong influence on Chinese people’s daily life.

\textit{Confucianism on Self-cultivation}

Confucianism, both the “politicized Confucianism” and “popular Confucianism” emphasize self-discipline, education, learning skills and a responsible attitude towards work, family and obligations.\footnote{Politicized Confucianism: The tradition of Dong Zhongshu, Ban Gu, and others that served as the official ideology of the dynasties and had taken in ingredients from schools of thoughts such as Taoism and Buddhism.} It also emphasizes class differentiation and reciprocity in
relationships. Confucius put great faith in a man’s potential: “What the gentleman seeks, he seeks within himself; what the small man seeks, he seeks in others.”\textsuperscript{150} He taught us that it is only through tough discipline that the talent of the individual can be developed fully and a heightened sense of freedom of self-expression reached.

As a crucial concept of personal morality in Confucianism, \textit{ren} (more than benevolence, charity, humanity, love, and goodness, as Tu Wei-ming explained) is used to describe the highest human achievement ever reached through moral self-cultivation. It is not too difficult to become a \textit{junzi} (gentleman) but hardly anyone is qualified to be called a \textit{renren} (a man who embodies \textit{ren}).\textsuperscript{151} \textit{Ren} is both the moral and ontological basis of self-cultivation. \textit{Ren} is linked with the selfreviving, self-perfecting, and self-fulfilling process of an individual.\textsuperscript{152}

The drive to embody \textit{ren} implies a profound care for the practical affairs of the world. A Confucianist always carries out his moral self-cultivation in the social context. “His orientation is this-worldly, and he regards this-worldly activities as both intrinsically valuable and necessary to self-fulfillment.”\textsuperscript{153} The opening statement of \textit{The Doctrine of the Mean} reads: “What Heaven imparts to man is called human nature. To follow our

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\textsuperscript{150} \textit{Wei Ling Gong}, \textit{The Analects of Confucius}, Shandong Friendship Press, p. 266.


\textsuperscript{152} Ibid., p. 9.

\textsuperscript{153} Ibid., p. 12.
\end{flushleft}
nature is called the way. Cultivating the Way is called education." The Confucian assumption is that, "although man has always been conditioned by a given structure beyond his control, the ultimate ground of his self-realization lies within his own nature. Man has the inner strength to actualize the full potential of his being, and his creativity is inherent in his humanness. Man, therefore, is not a creature but a creative agent who gives meaning to "Heaven, Earth, and the myriad things." For Confucius, the inner demand for being truthful to one's human self is inseparable from the social need to care for others; and the yearning for self-realization is also the yearning for harmonizing human relations. \(^{155}\)

The Confucianist tries to embody ren through li and thus li is an externalization of ren in a specific social context. Concretely, li as a process of humanization is manifested in four developmental stages: (1) cultivating personal life (xiushen), (2) regulating familial relations (ajia), (3) ordering the affairs of the state (zhiguo), and (4) bringing peace to the world (pingtianxia).

According to the Confucian contention, the ultimate ground of man's self-realization lies in his own nature, and yet for man to attain his personal authenticity, he must undergo a process of self-transformation. Such a process involves more than the sublimation of instinctual demands. Far from being a kind of asceticism, self-

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transformation in the Confucian sense must be manifested in the context of human relations.\textsuperscript{156}

According to Tu, Confucian self-transformation is poised between spiritual individualism and ethical socialism. In order to be an authentic man, one must be truthful to both one's selfhood and one's sociality. So, the golden rule in Confucianism states that "Do not do to others what you would not want others to do to you."\textsuperscript{157} Without self-cultivation as a continuous effort to realize one's humanity, biological growth becomes meaningless.\textsuperscript{158} Through learning ritual, especially classics, which means through an ever-deepening personal knowledge about how to be human, the Confucian transformed his life into a meaningful existence.\textsuperscript{159}

Confucius's student, Zengzi, says, "The true Knight of the Way (shi) must perforce be both broad-shouldered and stout of heart; his burden is heavy and he has far to go. For Humanity (ren) is the burden he has taken upon himself; and must we not grant that it is a heavy one to bear? Only with death does this journey end; then must we not grant that he has far to go?"\textsuperscript{160} Once standing by a stream, Confucius was also moved to remark, "Could one but go on and on like this, never ceasing day or night!" The continuous flow of the water here symbolizes a ceaseless process of self-realization and


\textsuperscript{157} \textit{Lunyu} (The Analects of Confucius), shandong youyi chubanshe, 1992, p. 192.

\textsuperscript{158} Tu, Wei-ming, \textit{Humanity and Self-Cultivation: Essays in Confucian Thought}, Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1979, p. 35.

\textsuperscript{159} Ibid., p. 47.

\textsuperscript{160} \textit{Lunyu} (The Analects of Confucius), shandong youyi chubanshe, 1992, p. 132.
is therefore an apt description of the Confucian understanding of the authentic way of being human.\textsuperscript{161}

The Way of being human is never perceived as an external path. Instead, it is assumed to be inherent in human nature and thus a fulfillment of one's humanity. The Way can be heard, obtained, and embodied, but it can never be found by casting our gaze outward. The internality of the Way as an experienced presence is what accounts for much of the moral striving in Confucian self-cultivation. Since the Way is not shown as a norm that establishes a fixed pattern of behavior, a person cannot measure the success or failure of his conduct in terms of the degree of approximation to an external ideal. The Way is always near at hand, and the journey must be constantly renewed here and now. The Way then does not provide an ideal norm or a set of directives to be complied with. It functions as a governing perspective and a point of orientation.\textsuperscript{162}

For a person to manifest his humanity, it is not enough simply to model himself on the proper ways of life and conduct approved by society. He must learn to control his own course through experience and furnish it with contents shaped by his concrete action. And as the way cannot be fully mapped out in advance, he must, with a sense of discovery undergo a dynamic process of self-transformation in order to comport with it.

For the process of self-realization is so dependent on one's particular circumstances that it is, therefore, pointless to set up one concrete experience as the single most important archetype. However, Confucius recommended the study of poetry as a guide for harmonizing basic emotions. He felt that the odes of the classical tradition can, among

\textsuperscript{161} Tu, Wei-ming, \textit{Humanity and Self-Cultivation: Essays in Confucian Thought}, Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1979, p. 36.
other things, "serve to stimulate the mind," "be used for purposes of self-contemplation," 
"teach the art of sociality," and "show how to regulate feelings of resentment." Poetry 
then marks an initial but critical step on the Way.\textsuperscript{163} In practice, the Knight of the Way 
"always endeavors to 'rely on humanity and find recreation in the arts.' So that he can 
broaden himself with 'culture' (\textit{wen}) and refine himself with 'ritual' (\textit{li}), [he] is as much 
motivated by a duty consciousness as by an aesthetic need for self-perfection."\textsuperscript{164}

Confucius also promotes rituals. He believes that ritual is not thought to be a 
social imposition on nature but a refinement of nature according to well-articulated 
cultural values. It is perhaps in this sense that Confucius maintained that only through 
ritual could those human feelings that exhibit basic virtues be properly manifested.\textsuperscript{165} 
Confucius interpreted \textit{li} through \textit{ren}, which turned external social standardization into the 
individual's internal self-consciousness. Based on human psychological need, \textit{li} thus is 
turned from external stiff, and constrained rules and restraints into a human being's 
internal requirement, his self-consciousness in life, and the natural and normal daily 
human relationship with each other. In addition to the necessity of learning, Confucius 
also emphasizes the exercise of great restraint and control of one's will, and persistence. 
As a well-known Confucianist, Xunzi acclaims "Keeping on carving unflaggingly, metal 
and stone can be ornamentally hollowed out." (Xunzi:\textit{Quanxue})

\textsuperscript{162} Ibid., p. 37. 

\textsuperscript{163} Tu, Wei-ming, \textit{Humanity and Self-Cultivation: Essays in Confucian Thought}, Berkeley: Asian 
Humanities Press, 1979, p. 45. 

\textsuperscript{164} Tu, Wei-ming, \textit{Humanity and Self-Cultivation: Essays in Confucian Thought}, Berkeley: Asian 
Humanities Press, 1979, p. 38. 

\textsuperscript{165} Ibid., p. 46.
In ancient China, the prominent practitioners of Confucius’s ideals, especially *li* and self-cultivation were the people who belonged to a specific social stratum between senior officials and the common people — *shi* stratum, represented by *shishen* (Chinese gentry). The Spring and Autumn period and Warring States period (770-221 BC) were a time of free argument among philosophical schools. Thinkers and schools each set forth their own ideas and debated on an equal footing with other thinkers. In Chinese history this was a time of free thinking and free expression. It was an acme of scholarly activity. In the Spring and Autumn Period (770-481 BC), “the once-powerful aristocracy declined. The existing social order collapsed and society became fragmented. The specially talented people who had served the aristocracy lost their original position and gravitated toward the common people. They were forced to make a way for themselves by relying on their own knowledge and talents. They initiated their own activities and published their own ideas. Things went on this way until various thinkers and schools appeared, which led to the contending of ‘hundred schools.'”\(^{166}\) During this period, a new cultural group -- *shi* -- came to the stage, who brought a new concept to “ya culture.” With the flourishing of private schools, people who did not come from noble families joined the line of *shi* through education. This growing group was gradually no longer dependent on the court and developed its own independent style and power. One of the most important features of this group was the persistent pursuit of self-cultivation.\(^{167}\)


\(^{167}\) As in the Han period, appointing men imbued with Confucian values of loyalty to the ruler and duty to the people became an important means of strengthening imperial power. To identify true Confucians, the Sui (581-618) introduced written examinations of candidates’ literary abilities and knowledge of the classics. The Tang (618-907) expanded this civil service examination system and took other measures to promote Confucian education. In Chinese feudal society,
In his *Shi and Chinese Culture*, Yu Yingshi argues that long training in liyue shishu (ritual, music, poetry and classics) turned shi into learned and refined men. They were not only adept in ritual, ceremony, and music, but also the masters of all the classics, which made them the carriers of traditional culture.\(^{168}\) In order to keep their dignified status, shi highly emphasized their internal cultivation and external refinement.

*Ya* culture is regarded as a high-taste culture, which is created by the broad-minded yaren (high taste individuals) as we discussed in the previous chapter. Confucius says: “Isn’t it a pleasure to learn and then constantly carry into practice what has been learned?” (Xueer)\(^{169}\) “It is only when simplicity and refinement are blended harmoniously and complement each other that you have a gentleman.” (Yong Ye)\(^{170}\) Confucius greatly advocated the political-educational function of music (i.e., to change prevailing habits and customs and transform social traditions), especially “rensheng” (benevolent sound) and “yayue” (refined ode). Confucius himself had a very good ear for music. When Confucius heard the music “Shao” in the State of Qi, he could not for a long time even discern the taste of meat while chewing it, which prompted his officials and gentry were quite the same. An intellectual became an official by way of civil service examinations. Becoming a bachelor of letters may not have meant entry into officialdom but it did make one a member of the literati. It meant that one belonged to a cultivated elite. The attainment of the doctorate in civil service examination meant an entry into officialdom. He was an official in the place he held office, but when he returned to his place of residence, he was gentry. See Cambridge Illustrated History: China, 2000.

\(^{168}\) One *shi* claimed, “If I have not read for three days, I would disgust my own appearance.” See Zhongguo Wenhuaren, Beijing, Beijing wenyichubanshe, 1992, p. 56.


\(^{170}\) Ibid., p. 94.
exclamation, “I never thought that music could produce so beautiful an effect.” (Shuer)\textsuperscript{171}

Suave Confucian gentlemen are the men with refined manner, elegant, poised, knowledgeable and reasonable. So, he would reply to different people on different occasions with proper manners. Confucius himself was proficient in etiquette and rituals, and used them skillfully.\textsuperscript{172}

In “Da Xue,” self-cultivation includes moral cultivation and aesthetic cultivation, learning knowledge both from books, especially classics and historical references, and from society. As poet Du Fu experienced, “After reading ten thousand books, your brush will go with marvelous strength.” “One’s high style of poem comes from his knowledge,” Huang Tingjin agreed.\textsuperscript{173} Poetry and painting were all practiced by shi for molding their temperament. In the view of shi, there are different types of ya, such as gaoya (classic, elegant, simple and innocent), dianya (refined, well-organized and skillfully presented), junya (concise; thought-provoking; as clear as water in autumn), heya (calm and

\textsuperscript{171} Ibid., p. 110.

\textsuperscript{172} For instance, whenever Confucius saw a person in mourning dress or one in ceremonial robe and hat or a blind person, even if the person was much younger than he was, he would always stand up. (Zi Han) “When a drinking ceremony was held among the villagers, it was only after the elders with walking sticks had gone out that he would follow.” “Among his fellow villagers, Confucius looked very respectful and submissive as if he were not able to talk at all. However, when he was in the ancestral temple or at court, he always spoke distinctly and smoothly, although only few words. When waiting at court and talking with officials of the lower grades, he looked amiable and cheerful; when talking with those of the higher grades, he looked serious and upright.” “When he was receiving a guest from another state by order of the prince, his expression would be dignified and reserved, and even his steps would be quickened and dexterous. He would bow to those on both sides with clasped hands – cupping on hand in the other before his chest either to the left or the right – and with his robe swinging back and forth in perfect order. When he hastened forward, his manner was calm and at ease as a bird stretching its wings…. (Xiang Dang)

unperturbed) and *daya* (to epitomize all the essence from different schools and have a style of one’s own). Among them, *heya* and *daya* are included in *yazheng* (standard and upright) and the essence of *yazheng* is *zhongyang*. *Zhongyang* (Confucian doctrine of the mean) emphasized that going too far is as bad as not going far enough. In order to achieve this philosophy, Confucius promoted self-discipline, including proper manner, serious working attitude, and sincerity to others. After Confucius, *yazheng* became one of the crucial moral standards for Chinese *shi*, especially for Confucian scholars. The “*haoran zhiqi*” (imperishable noble spirit) of Mencius was the result of consistent practice of *yazheng*.

Confucian morality is often regarded as a conformist and standardized moral system, and a scholar-official morality. As Zixia said: “An official, when having discharged his duties, should devote his leisure to learning; a scholar, when having completed his learning, should spare his energy to secure an official post.” 174 Confucius himself was also an ardent promoter for etiquette and manners. For Confucians, rituals provide the opportunity to reveal the degree of one’s cultivation since the Confucian behavioral codes depend on attributes such as differences in age, kinship status, sex, and sociopolitical status. 175 Inextricably, Confucianism was linked with status and privilege and Confucius’ addiction to rituals is recognized as an intention to promote an exquisitizied noble culture.

Norbert Elias in his *Civilizing Process* analyzes the social behavior of the upper class and the standardization of behavior norms, that is, conformity of behavior in

Western court culture. In Elias’ view, the codes of etiquette and rituals were the shared or the assimilated if not identical social conditions for an individual and others. The knots of the social net depended on and conditioned each other.176

Thus, behind the veil of entertaining and leisure pleasure, there was the uncertainty combined with the social status, obligation and requirement. People in the upper class circle might suffer the embarrassment of not living within one's mean. Or they might suffer some sort of uneconomical rationality for another kind of practical consideration based on some prediction (foresight), calculation, and self-control. They lived in a trained daily life with a well-designed manner or refined behavior. They were highly self-controlling, self-reflexive, and self-contained.

In China, Confucianism has been criticized for its concern with moral philosophy, rather than being interested in individual freedom and destiny. Critics stated that Confucianism, as the aristocratic religion, that of the feudal class, considered the human being only in terms of his social role, codified in rituals which themselves expressed the entire feudal order. The Confucian conception of individual is “deeply imbued with a sense of duty or responsibility to others, not with any sense of individual rights or one’s


176 Norbert Elias sees social order as a structured yet unplanned process. “It is a consequence of the chains of interdependence which links people together in society. These chains refers to the intertwining that has arisen through the innumerable intentional actions of groups and individuals over time and space.” See Chris Rojek, Decentering Leisure: Rethinking Leisure Theory, Sage Publications, 1995, p. 50.
own self-worth.”

Therefore, a Confucian individual has only “obligations but no right.”

Different from Confucian strong consciousness of class hierarchy, Buddhism was in its very spirit incompatible with class distinctions. In a Buddhist’s mind, a human being is nothing but a “choupinang” (foul skin bag). Opposed to luxury, ceremonies, and parasitism of some corrupted Buddhist monks, another current of thought was preaching the return to simplicity, intuition, and nature. This was Chan,

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178 Ibid., p. 247.

179 For Confucianism, “Harmony is achieved only when all members of society identify their respective positions in the social order and behave accordingly.” See Tu Wei-ming, (editor), Confucian Traditions in East Asian Modernity, Harvard University Press, 1996, p. 218.

180 However, Confucius also declared: “In education there should be no class distinction.” The ideal of education is to become a junzi, that is, a gentleman, who is no longer defined by birth but rather by virtue. See Liu Shuxian, Understanding Confucian Philosophy, Praeger Publishers, 1998, p. 28.

181 I do not intend to simplify a rather complicated issue. In fact, the changes of Chinese Buddhism from “going out of this world” to “being in this world” and “building pure land in this world” manifested the humanistic spirit of Chinese culture. Buddhism, starting from its basic teaching “arising through causation,” believes that all things are naturally formed from causes and condition, man is also the combination from Five Classifications, under given conditions and the result of ignorance. As for “man is the result of ignorance,” it’s a bit similar to Christian “original sin.” But influenced by Confucius “goodness of human nature” and Daoist “return to nature and true,” Chinese Buddhism specially emphasizes the inner basis of “free from world,” and stresses that human nature, which is naturally pure and enlightened but dirty and befuddled because of being hoodwinked by desire. Only when man could see mind and enlighten nature by practicing Buddhism, then he is free from world and become Buddha. While starting from the theory of Karma, Buddhism lays emphasis on “suffering from one’s own actions” and believes being free from world entirely depends on oneself, which means “relying on self-reliance for salvation,” and there is not any external master for man’s fate. See Comparative Studies for Philosophy of Life of Christianity and Chinese Buddhism, Hong Xiuping & Sun Yiping, Nanjing University, 1998.

182 But, such an attitude as “With the wine and meat passing through my stomach, Buddha is still kept in my heart” was so much Chinese style of liberal Buddhism. The conservative Buddhist monks are not supposed to kill any life or to eat any meat. However, some Chinese schools of
practical, concrete, and above all Daoist, especially its teaching without words, and its spontaneity.

As we know, Daoists love natural beauty and acclaim that "simplicity is the best." In Zhuangzi’s view, the turbulence of the civilization had led to the alienation of human being and the destruction of human spirit. He despises the lifestyles of mediocre masses and feel comfortable with their independent and different styles of life. Hence, ya in Zhuangzi’s domain, was the opposite of su (vulgar) that was the feature of the mediocre masses.

In the previous chapter, we discussed that during Wei-Jin Periods, a full development of individuality became the wide pursuit of mingshi. They advocated unconventional behaviors and self-willed and uninhibited manner. Being bizarre and abnormal were highly promoted during this period of time. For instance, Ruan Ji, an alcoholic, would hold a cup of wine, screaming while playing music instrument. Therefore, in the view of Wei-Jin mingshi, Ya, was not yazheng, guya or refinement, but mingshifengliu, which was significantly different from the style of Confucian shi. Freed from vulgarity, they did not seek fame and wealth. They were unconventionally graceful and natural. Wei-Jin mingshi regarded themselves as upright as bamboo and as aloof as chrysanthemum. This attitude towards society led them to another way of life -- reclusion and hermithood. Yi was an essential part of mingshifengliu (Chinese word “yi” means 1) ease and leisure; 2) escape and flee.). Crane and cloud, two of their favorite images in their paintings, symbolized their spirit of yi.

Buddhism, especially Chan Buddhism have been influenced by the playful and free spirit of the Daoism.
Wei-Jin Neo-Daoists resented the fact that the traditional Confucian notion of “virtue” had been reduced to all kinds of pure rules and categories. They disdained any “power” that was connected to the insignia of ranks, names, and honors. Ruan Ji described a Confucian gentleman as someone

who cultivates only the (Confucian) principles and disciplines himself only with rituals. His hands hold the symbols of his rank and his feet toe the line of orthodoxy. In his conduct he wants to be a model to the present world; in his speech he wants to set up eternal standard...At best he desires to become one of the three highest officers in the central government, or at least, to become the governor of a province. Thus he clasps his gold and jade, dangles his patterned silk bands, enjoys honored position and his granted fiefs.\(^{183}\)

Juan Ji here, portrays a quite accurate picture of an order, norm, convention, and symmetry, created by the laws of ethical principle and social expectation. If Confucianists learned and cultivated themselves “within the square of the regulated ethical codes” and the "rule of propriety,” Daoists and Wei-Jin Neo-Daoists (\textit{mingshi}) allowed themselves “travel beyond the square.”\(^{184}\)

\textbf{Daoist and Neo-Daoist Transcendence:}

The first meaning of the character Dao is “way”: something underlying the change and transformation of all beings, the spontaneous process regulating the natural cycle of the universe. Dao, the Way, is a process of development and an inspiration for self-transformation through the total experience of learning.

\(^{183}\)Ruan Ji: \textit{Daren Xiansheng Zhuan}, Beijing Guji chubanshe, 1994, p. 78.

In Daoism, man’s virtue is obtained by cultivating oneself through *xiuyang*, a practice that enables him to acquire, based on his natural dispositions, exceptional qualities. *Xiuyang* means to arrange, to smooth down any roughness or irregularities by repeating an action many times in harmony with the cosmic order, until perfection is achieved. The perfect and complete body is thereby nurtured, its energies strengthened; it thus becomes totally integrated into the natural and cosmic environment. From there, the way is led — by repeated, cyclical movements — to spontaneity, which is the essence of the Dao.

In Chinese tradition, the Dao is seen as a practical wisdom in the sense that it combines the generality of the principle of the Dao with the particularity of perception into a given situation, context, or circumstance. Daoism is a kind of practical philosophy because its emphasis is on the changeable rather than the absolute.

Daoism tends to absorb and harmonize all its currents in order to overcome its contradictions and outlast the vicissitudes of the world. However, the dao is not far off; it is here in our very own physical bodies. Daoist body refers to a certain relationship between the physical body, the cosmic body, and the social body. The priority given to the human body over social and cultural systems may be seen in the predominance of the internal world over the external world and in the refusal to seek the absolute in our mind. Daoism is always rooted in the concrete, indeed the physical, and is at the same time universal and commonplace.

For self-liberation and self-salvation, Chan asks people to break the *zhizhuo* (attachment) to language, concept, analysis, authority and even the desire of cultivation in order to realize the Dao. Chan practices “*pingchangxin*” (ordinary state of mind) and the
peace with one's lot in life. It's a free and unrestrained attitude. Like the philosophies of Laozi and Zhuangzi, Chan Buddhism advocated oneness of self and nature and taught that people could free themselves of worldly cares and obtain emancipation of their souls by seeking the enlightenment in nature. Chan Buddhist meditation "emphasizes quick wit and insight, and aim at self-realization." Through meditation, one can broaden his vision and sensitize his mind so that he can see and grasp truth instantly any time and anywhere. "This type of training is utterly Chinese." For a Chan Buddhist, the Buddha-mind is everywhere so that anything can be an occasion for its realization at any moment and this realization can take place in any way. Since Chan Buddhism minimizes the whole Buddhist organization, creed, and literature and to reduce Buddhism to a concern with one's mind alone, it easily gets echoes from Chinese intellectuals, like Neo-Daoism.

Traditionally, there are three states in Chan: 1) "The falling leaves fill the empty mountain./ Where to look for the track?" -- One has looked for Chan but failed. 2) "No man in the empty mountain, yet, water flows and flowers bloom." -- One broke his zhizhuo and appeared to realize the Dao but actually not yet. 3) "The eternal vast sky and the wind and moon in one morning" (or fengyue, literally means wind and moon, can be interpreted as morning dew or a romantic moment) -- One got the eternality in the twinkling of eyes, the temporality became forever, and all things on earth became an integral whole. Intriguingly, there is always a poetic tenderness and the pastoral song's

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lingering charm in Chan. “Chan is in carrying water and cutting firewood.” “The grass will turn to green when the spring comes – you see chan.” The poetics in Chan, along with those of in Daoism, not only offered comfort, spiritual sustenance, and strength for Chinese shi and literati, but also inspired them to create the greatest poetry and paintings.\textsuperscript{188} In fact, the masses never had much to do with Chan and Daoism. Chan and Daoism were kept alive among Chinese shi and literati.\textsuperscript{189}

Although Zhuangzi romanticizes and beautifies nature and primitive life to the extreme in order to ask for the denial and abandonment of any culture and civilization, Daoism, along with the Chan Buddhist’s love towards nature, has profound influence on Chinese art and literatures. The “Four gentlemen” (winterplum, orchid, bamboo, and chrysanthemum) in Chinese painting have been the favorite images of Chinese shi and literati since these plants are imbued with their own spirit, as is suggested in the following line: “Orchid lives in the deep valley, who still wafts her fragrance with the absence of people.” In Chinese paintings on scrolls and porcelain, there are two favorite themes. One is the portrait of the happiness of family life with women and children in their leisure. The other is the interpretation of happiness of the rural life, with a fisherman, a woodcutter, or a recluse sitting on the ground under a group of pine trees. These two themes may represent respectively the Confucianist and the Daoist ideal of life.

\textsuperscript{188} This was why Chinese shi and intellectuals did not go for self-destruction or religion, but chose a secluded lifestyle, self-entertaining with mountains and rivers and minding their own business in order to keep out the trouble.

\textsuperscript{189} The influence of Chan is often limited within the class of literati and gentry since the enlightenment of Chan requires certain amount of intellectual capitals.
Another concept closely related to the Daoist concept of *xiaoyao* is “being alone” (*du*) which Daoists employ to propose their ideal of “non-dependence” (*wutai*) or “non-restraint” (*wulei*). For Daoists, non-dependence, a term often referring to the Daoist *wuwei* attitude, means detachment from personal desires, or a flight from political life to a simple life. Since the desire of transcending worldly misery and death could not be realized in the material world, Zhuangzi grounds his ideal in the spirit and centered it at the individual’s independence and spiritual freedom. Zhuangzi’s transcendence is an escape from human alienation. Interestingly, Li Zehou argues that Zhuangzi’s philosophy is a *transcendental metaphysics*.\(^{190}\)

So, for both Laozi and Zhuangzi, “being alone” stands for the Daoist independent spirit rather than the arrogant attitude of the literati elite. Daoist philosophers have created, for the literati elite both past and present, a new illusion that surpasses illusion in the quest for the transcendent Dao and the carefree wandering of Daoist immortals.

It is undeniable that in Neo-Daoism of the Wei-Jin period, “being alone” indeed sometimes denotes a notion of “above the mass,” and “above the ordinary people.” However, such expressions as “to transcend the conventional world” (*chaoshi*) or “to exceed the patterns and rules of conventional world” (*aoshi*) are often used as a direct negation of the Confucian moral order and value judgment. As we described earlier, the Wei-Jin period was a time difficult for one to settle down and establish one’s destiny, let alone to have a “carefree wandering.” So, in the powerful writings of the intellectuals of this period, we see the Daoist spirit of resistance and transcendence on the one hand, and

\(^{190}\) Li Zehou, *The Path of Beauty*, Oxford University press, 1994, p.127. Fu Weixun call Zhuangzi’s philosophy “the trans-metaphysical liberation from all fixations of language, thought,
the agony of impotence and depression in their constant struggle over a plethora of
dichotomies between palace and forests, engagement and detachment which can be
understood better against that specific historical time. For Neo-Daoists, the questioning
of life and death, which is simultaneously a poetic and philosophical exercise, is marked
by a radical disruption of the dogmatic superficiality and hypocritical ideology of the
Confucian moral paradigm. They thus relentlessly subvert Confucian institutions and
moral interpretation of things which are, in the eyes of the Neo-Daoists, mere fabrications
intended to satisfy society’s utilitarian purposes. However, their dream of freedom
remains a dream and their emancipation remains temporary. Most Neo-Daoist literati of
the Wei-Jin period attempt to cope with the fundamental problem of human existence, yet
fail to find a satisfactory answer. Probably, no satisfactory answer ultimately exists.\(^{191}\)

Nevertheless, for Wei-Jin Neo-Daoists, the arbitrariness of life is connected to the
never-ending dilemma between a Confucian ideal of virtues which are often associated
with service to the state and the Daoist vision of “good life” which is often associated
with seclusion, simplicity, and tranquility. This is a both ethical and existential dilemma.

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and reality.” See Fu Weixun, “Creative Hermeneutics: Taoist Metaphysics and Heidegger,” in
Philosophy and Culture, 1974.

\(^{191}\) In the Wei-Jin period, the intellectuals among the social elite had all been searching in a
variety of ways for a new direction in thought. They pursues the study of the signs of fate and
delved into the area of philosophy. Very open-minded in their thinking and valuing individual
freedom, they entered the realm of abstruse discourse. There was also an increased tendency
among the intelligentsia to combine the indigenous mystic doctrines with borrowed Buddhist
ideas such as transcendent wisdom and inherent emptiness. This became the style, so prevalent
among the landed gentry and the famous scholars, of fleeing from worldly life into Buddhism. In
fact, during Wei-Jin period, the Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism had been permeating into
each other, and influencing and complementing each other. For instance, many Wei-Jin mingshi
were seen as Daoist outside but Confucianist inside or vice versa. See, Chen Rongjie, Source of
Chinese Philosophy, p. 79.

Since Six Dynasties (222–589), Buddhism and Daoism have each supplied what the other
needed and even walked side by side toward their ideal place away from all the hubbubs.
The constant struggle between “carefree wandering” and “dwelling,” engagement and detachment, forms the paradoxical attitude of Neo-Daoists towards life, both as immanent and transcendent.

The Neo-Confucianist Concept of Body and Its Ethical Sensibility

In Chinese history, Confucianism and Daoism constantly accommodated and influenced each other. This had a profound effect on the evolution of Daoism, whose traditional mythological cosmology was gradually replaced by the abstract one of the Book of Changes. At the same time, the literati became interested in the arts of longevity and took up alchemy. During the whole second half of the Tang dynasty and up to the ninth century, Confucianism and Daoism coexisted and together prepared the great renaissance of the Song dynasty (960-1279). However, Confucianism and Neo-Confucianism, under the last dynasties, became the official ideology of the Chinese State, the only system of thought to be accepted at the state examinations, which provided access to public service.192 Facing the challenge of Buddhism and the severe corruption of officialdom and imperial examination, Neo-Confucianists recognized that they paid too much attention to the external Confucian dogmas (from State to the family order), while they did not give enough credit to an internal cultivation and self-introspection.

Different from the traditional Confucianist body, which is an individual or personal body, as well as a social collective body, the Neo-Confucian vision of body endows the body with an indispensable qualification for personal existence. Thus, the

192 The Song Confucian philosopher Zhu Xi’s commentaries on the Confucian classics, and made this the route of advancement for the gentry, via the official examinations. The Ming Dynasty political authorities also promoted Confucianism.
bodily form of the universal structure is heaven and earth and myriad things. Neo-Confucianism pays more attention to the transformations of heaven and earth, the mutual responses of the myriad things, and the mediating system that links body and mind.

Highly concerned with the relationship between mind/spirit/heart (shen 2) and body (shen 1) in philosophical language, the Neo-Confucianist ethos holds that we live our body in an everyday mode of existence, which is an alliance between Confucianism and Daoism. This is also seen in the Neo-Confucianist' key term “chengxin” (sincerity), which was borrowed from Buddhism. For instance, Song Dynasty Zhou Dunyi (1017-1073) stresses holding on to the mind with seriousness and preserving the mind as fundamental steps to moral perfection. Cheng Yi also argues: “Self-cultivation requires seriousness; the pursuit of learning depends on the extension of knowledge.”

Furthermore, Ming Dynasty Wang Yangming (1472-1529)'s "learning of body and mind" (shen-xin zhi xue) promotes "quiet sitting" as a method of self-cultivation for the "substance of human nature" (xing ti). After experiencing all the ups and downs in his own personal life, Wang finally realized that for the Dao of the sages, one’s own nature is self-sufficient, and that it is wrong to seek for Principle (li) outside of it in affairs and things. So for Wang, it is important to make existential decisions, to acquire wisdom, and to discipline ourselves so that we can live in a better world.

The late Ming saw a relaxation in the sphere of intellectual life and re-emergence of philosophical idealism based on the faith in human liangzhi (the original substance of

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the mind, the innate knowledge of mind).\textsuperscript{195} Neo-Confucianists laid particular emphasis on moral rigor, the pursuit of self-cultivation through education and study, and public-spirited activism. It successfully fended off the Buddhist challenge and remained as the orthodox ideology upon which the civil service examinations were based. Hence it formed the foundation of every ambitious young man' education until the examination system was abolished in 1905.\textsuperscript{196}

If the Confucianist tends to read ethical principles back into nature whereas the Daoist sees the necessity of following nature, in Neo-Confucianism, there is tendency to refute the dichotomies between the human body and the social or cultural system, the internal and external, the concrete, the physical, and the universal.\textsuperscript{197}

Feng Youlan is another representative Neo-Confucianist in modern China. Feng argues that "a process of self-cultivation can gradually overcome the barriers between man and nature, self and other, to arrive at a certain spiritual realm..."\textsuperscript{198} In his Xin Yuanren, Feng Youlan offers a theory of four different spheres of living. The scheme involves an advance from the innocent sphere where one does not know what he is doing,

\textsuperscript{195} Wang Yangming believes liangzhi is endowed in the individual as his mind as well as his nature. When one follows his essential nature as well as his original mind, he can follow his innate knowledge to act. See Liu Shuxian, Understanding Confucian Philosophy, Praeger, 1998, p. 221-222.


\textsuperscript{197} In the study of Heidegger and Chinese metaphysics through his effort for "creative hermeneutics," Fu Weixing concludes the essence of Chinese philosophy, including Daoism and Confucianism as (1) existential self-awakening, (2) ontological insight, (3) soteriological enlightenment. See From Western Philosophy to Chan Buddhism, Sanlian chubanshe, 1989, p. 266.

to the utilitarian sphere where one lives primarily for self-benefit, to the moral sphere of serving society, and finally to the transcendental sphere when one becomes a “citizen of heaven” and serves Heaven.\footnote{Feng Youlan, \textit{A Short History of Chinese Philosophy}, New York, Macmillan, 1948, p. 135.}

Tu Weiming also emphasizes that the Way in Confucianism is always a way of “becoming” \textit{(cheng)}.\footnote{The Chinese word “\textit{cheng}” is both a noun and a verb, the former signifying a state of completion and the latter a process of development. \textit{Chengzhang} means becoming and growing. In Confucianism, maturation is perceived mainly in terms of self-cultivation, human growth as a holistic process of realizing that which is thought to be the authentic human nature begins in early childhood and does not end even with old age. See, p. 40.} I may say, Tu’s interpretation of Confucianism and Neo-Confucianism consciously, or perhaps not, takes some inspirations from Daoism. Neo-Confucianism itself is also a conscious synthesis of traditional Confucianism’s \textit{xiushen} (self-cultivation), and social engagement (not allured by earthly desires), Buddhist meditation and \textit{yangxing} (cultivation of one’s heart and soul) and non-attachment, and Daoist transcendence. Like Confucianism, Neo-Confucianism does not give up its ambition to serve as a social guide for social participation. Tu’s promotion of Confucianism is an example of his ambition for an active social participation in the era of modernity.

Understanding that Asian modernity has complicated the common impression that “modernity is either a conscious rejection or an unintended departure from tradition,” Tu feels “the need for reexamining the whole idea of modernity.”\footnote{Tu Wei-ming (1996), (editor), \textit{Confucian Traditions in East Asian Modernity}, Harvard University Press, p. 2.} He tries to answer the questions: “How does the Confucian tradition, in belief, attitude, and practice, continue to
impede, facilitate, and guide the modern transformation in East Asia...? What Tu emphasizes is the common experiences of the past, and what he looks for is a cultural revival and renewal of the treasure house of Chinese culture. Consequently, Tu’s Neo-Confucianism has been criticized for its inherited idealism, double-play agenda as a Chinese American scholar and insensitivity to feminist’s anxieties. Mayfair Yang points out that Tu failed to offer any critique of male power exercised by the gentry class. Yang argues: “As a Neo-Confucian scholar, Tu Wei-ming’s ‘cultural China’ is informed by the importance he confers on the cultural and especially the intellectual heritage of the Confucian past as the glue that holds the dispersed cultures together. From a feminist perspective, it is difficult to share this celebration of traditional Chinese culture, especially the long tradition of male scholar-official discourse that is Neo-Confucianism.”

Nevertheless, Tu’s promotion of Confucianism or Neo-Confucianism, is a continued effort for a “cooperation” between Neo-Confucianism and the ideology of modernity. He tries to use the wisdom of Chinese tradition to complement and cope

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203 See Yang, Space of Their Own, 1999, p. 6-7.

204 During Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), the Chinese social elite, the educated gentry, had already devoted their energies to the tough task of rebuilding the social order and mostly focused on branches of learning connected to political administration and managing practical affairs. Especially in late Qing period, the social elite had to learn how to deal with a never stronger threat from the outside world and the power of modern technology along with all the other issues of modernity. The revival of Neo-Confucianism in Asia was a response to the stimulus of Western culture and thought. Many Confucianist scholars have been painstakingly seeking for the complementary power between the Chinese and Western Philosophies. As Liu Shuxian contends, “It is realized that mere emphasis on external human rights is not enough; only a change of inner attitude may bring about peace among religions—a necessary first step to world peace. For people to live together peacefully in a global village, the Confucian tradition certainly has rich
with Western ideologies. He chooses to desalinate Confucianism’s dogmas and emphasizes self-cultivation. Tu contends: Through an ever-expanding network of relationships encompassing the family, community, nation, world, and beyond, the Confucian seeks to realize humanity in its all-embracing fullness.\textsuperscript{205} This process of inclusion helps deepen our self-knowledge at the same time through ceaseless efforts to make our bodies healthy, our minds and hearts alert, our souls pure, and our spirits brilliant. Self-cultivation is an end in itself and its primary purpose is self-realization. That, according to Tu’s version of Neo-Confucianism, is what it means to be happy.

\textit{Communist Self-cultivation and Self-denial}

The issue that Chinese Communism has been criticized for its anti-traditionalist character is quite complicated. I was fully aware that when I tried to pick up pieces of history, I already risked having an over-simplified interpretation. However, this “anti-traditionalist” tone in Chinese Communism indeed had its social ideologies that were determined by the numerous political struggles in modern Chinese history. The thought of Mao Zedong, one of the most powerful men in Communist society, played an essential role in the formation of the Communist philosophies.

When young Mao Zedong worked on his fieldwork in the countryside in the 1920s, he was quite excited by the revolutionary actions of the liberated peasants. He wrote: “Forbidding superstition and smashing idols has become quite the vogue in


Liling." Mao enthusiastically defended for the violence in the countryside: "a revolution is not the same as inviting people to dinner, or writing an essay, or painting a picture, or doing fancy needlework; it cannot be anything so refined, so calm and gentle, or so mild, kind, courteous, restrained, and magnanimous. A revolution is an uprising, an act of violence whereby one class overthrows another." Mao continued: "It was necessary to overthrow all the authority of the gentry, to knock them down and even trample them underfoot." "To put it bluntly, it was necessary to bring a brief reign of terror in every rural area; otherwise one could never suppress the activities of the counter-revolutionaries in the countryside or overthrow the authority of the gentry."\(^{206}\)

Over the years, Mao had developed his thought on class struggle. In his view, the class struggle led by the proletariat attempted to do away with classes so as to arrive at a society with no classes and exploitation. Therefore, in Mao' era, the propaganda of the Communism self-denial was carried out in the ideological education among Communist members. It certainly did not promote personal wealth and individuality.

In "How to Be a Good Communist," another Communist leader Liu Shaoqi drew the Confucian sources in explaining the nature and significance of Communist self-cultivation.\(^{207}\) Chen Rongjie argues, "Confucian cultivation had attempted a delicate

\(^{206}\) "The Question of ‘Going Too Far’," in “Report On An Investigation of the Hunan Peasant Movement,” Selected Works of Mao Zedong, New York, International Publishing Co., 1954, P.26. Li Xianting points out that the May Fourth movement both materially and philosophically reformulated scholarly gentry culture. After the victory of the Communist Party, the re-distribution of land, brought to an end the basis of such culture. The aristocracy, country gentlemen, old-styled scholars, even the newly emergent capitalist class and the nouveau riche were all brought down. And, the material basis for their lifestyle was completely and utterly destroyed. See Li Xianting, “On Contemporary Chinese Art,” 1998.

\(^{207}\) "How To Be a Good Communist" is a basic text of indoctrination for party members, delivered first as a series of lectures in July, 1939, at the Institute of Marxism-Leninism in Yenan. It represents one aspect of the campaign for tightening Party discipline and strengthening
adjustment between the claims of the individual and those of his society. With Liu the adjustment is subtle and it involves the individual, but the balance is totally destroyed. The individual life has value now only in social terms (its value to the Party and state), not in human terms (its intrinsic personal worth or 'humanity')."²⁰⁸ However, the Communists had been promoting their own moral idealism which Confucianism always fostered. The dedication of the Confucian junzi to the service of state and society is matched by that demanded of Communist cadre to the Party and state. As Chen points out, these two forms of idealism rest ethically on very different bases, but Liu Shaoqi invoked for his cadres Fan Zhongyan's definition of the junzi as one is "first in worrying about the world's troubles and last in enjoying its pleasures."²⁰⁹ Such a lofty conception corresponded closely to Liu's idea of the good Communist, who accepts rigorous self-discipline and self-denial in the service of the revolution.²¹⁰

Confucians always emphasize the importance of examining moral and philosophical knowledge and practicing what one has learned. For them, knowledge is not important in itself; it must be practiced. Based on his intense study of Chinese history, his knowledge of Marxism and Leninism, especially his arduous revolutionary experiences, Mao Zedong had developed his own understanding of the relationship between knowledge and practice.

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In “On Practice,” Mao instructed his fellow people to discover truth through practice: “Practice, knowledge, more practice, more knowledge; the cyclical repetition of this pattern to infinity, and with each cycle, the elevation of the content of practice and knowledge to a higher level. Such is the whole of the dialectical materialist theory of knowledge, and such is the dialectical materialist theory of the unity of knowing and doing.”211 According to Mao, the learning and cultivation of an individual depend on real-life tempering such as going to factories or to the countryside. Just as thought and practice must be identical, intellectuals and workers must be united and knowledge must be reconstructed to practical problems for the benefit of the masses.

As a highly talented and knowledgeable individual, Mao respected knowledge212 and the opinions of the learned, but at the same time, distrusted intellectuals.213 The Anti-Right struggle of 1957 started with the criticism of the Communist Party from Chinese intellectuals with their intention of helping the Party to do a better job. This wave of criticism made certain Communist Party leaders feel that intellectuals were unreliable, and a latent threat to the communist Party. Unfortunately, this distrust in intellectuals turned into persecutions during the Cultural Revolution, such as isolated interrogations,


212 Mao was a highly well read Communist leader. He was particularly fond of reading history books.

213 Mao’s distrust of intellectuals had been interpreted in different ways, such as his unpleasant encountering with some professors in Beijing university while he was working as a young librarian there.

As a Buddhist Master, Nan Huaijin observed that down through the ages in Chinese history, most intellectuals have tended to look down on themselves and each other. The ones that have truly honored the intellectuals and been able to appreciate their talents have been, in general, the so-called non-intellectuals. See Nan Huaijin, Basic Buddhism, Samuel Weiser, INC, 1997.
ox-stall labor reform and even murderings. In 1973, Lin Biao, the Vice-president of the
time evoked the movement of anti-Confucius, including criticizing the scholars who
honored Confucius. As the result of constant cruel class struggles, during the Cultural
Revolution, Chinese society was flooded with lies, grand words and empty talks. This
social mentality was still breeding on the hotbed of the consumerism in the 1990s.

*The Ardent Idealism and Self-abnegation in the Mao Era*

With the launching of the ambitious second Five Year Plan (1957-62), the young
People's Republic declared herself at a new stage of peaceful construction. The strategic
objective was to rapidly modernize the country and to demonstrate the superiority of
socialism by catching up with England and surpassing the United States in the shortest
time possible. For a brief period, the imminence of a socialist paradise enthralled the
popular imagination and excited many a utopian fantasy. "It was apparently an age of
great passion and expectations, an age in which the boldest dreams about human
happiness were collectively dreamed, and the most ordinary moments in life gloriously
poeticized."\(^{214}\)

Reflect an uplifting Zeitgeist of the time -- the ardent idealism and self-
abnegation, young Chinese, as proud youth of the Mao Zedong era, were eager to live a
poetic life.\(^{215}\) They despised the inertia and banality of everyday life. They denounced the
narrow private world "that threatens to substitute for the global will and vision of a


revolutionary foot soldier.”

In the view of this generation, one’s personal happiness is fully integrated into a collective cause, which articulated an almost idealist fear of impurity, contamination, and unwholesomeness.

Li Yang argues the defining feature of a lyricism, from the mid-1950s to the eve of the Cultural Revolution in 1966, was “its fervent celebration of the populist identity of the nation. What enabled the lyrical subject to emote and rhapsodize was the joy of direct participation in a collective life and national destiny.”

During this period, self-cultivation had taken a homogeneous form. At the same time, the “bourgeois individualism” was rejected as incompatible with proletarian ideals and constructed as a Western infection and malaise. The pursuit of material satisfaction were frequently condemned as “vulgar and in bad taste.” In Mao’s own poem, we saw the image of Chinese women who were “unique and lofty,” and “who love battle array instead of gay attire in show.”

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218 This came from a poem by Mao Zedong: “Inscription on a Photograph of Militia Women” (1961)

Valiant and heroic in bearing, with rifles five-foot long,
They stand on the parade ground bathed in the morning glow.
In China how unique and lofty are the ideals of the young,
Who love battle array instead of gay attire in show.

Mao had begun to write poetry since 1920s, mainly aiming to give himself and others aesthetic pleasure or serve to boost his people’s spirit. However, since 1960s, Chairman Mao’s classical-style poems had been published or republished in *The People’s Daily* as part of the ritualized national salutation to the New Year. Here are several other poems by Mao Zedong during 1950s and 60s, which reflected the personality and spirit of Mao and his era. Based on the translation by Gu Zhengkun, in *Poems of Mao Zedong*, Beijing University Press, 1993.

*Beidaihe* (1954)
The northern land is bathed in a torrential rain,
Whitecaps in the Bohai Sea leap to the star-high domain,
While far beyond Qinhuangdao the fishing boat
Is not seen on the boundless main,
Where does it float?

Two thousand years ago just on this land,
The Emperor Weiwu, whip in hand,
Rode eastward to Jieshi, his poems of the autumnal sea remains;
Now the autumn wind signs again,
But the old world has changed its reign.

Swimming (1956)
The waters of Changsha just drunk is a good brew,
Now I come to taste the Wuchang fish stew;
Swimming across the longest Yangzi River,
Looking as far as my eye can reach to the sky of Chu.
Let the wind blow and waves swill,
To me, its better than having a stroll
In a courtyard at will.
Ah, today, how much at ease I feel.
"By the river Confucius is heard to say:
Thus do things flow away!"

Lo! Sails move with the wind,
Tortoise and Snake silently stand,
We begin a plan so grand—
To span the north and south a bridge we will lay,
The chasm will be turned into a broad highway.
A dam will be built across the upstream to the west,
Bringing Wushan Mountains clouds and rain to rest,
A lake will appear around the deep gorge’s crest.
Should the Wushan goddess be alive and sound today,
She would marvel at the world now in new array.

Ascent of Lushan Mountain (1959)
Towering above the mighty river the mountain seems about to fly,
Four hundred twists to wooded heights in a flash we pass by.
I now glance at the world across the ocean with a cold eye,
When hot wind blows raindrops onto the waters and into the sky.
Clouds sail over the nine streams with the Yellow Crane in flight,
Eastward billows sweep on to Three Wu area amid the foam white.
Where I ask does Tao Yuanming the Prefect right now dwell?
Does he in the Peach Blossom Land [Tao’s land of Utopia] till the fields well?

Re-ascending Jinggang Mountain (1965) (Partial)
Wind and thunder are heard to roar,
Flags and banners gaudily soar.
Thirty-eight years are past,
So quickly as if you snapped a finger fast.
Up in the Ninth Heaven we can pluck the moon,
The Communist social guidance and political authority over the spiritual cultivation of Chinese youth continued in the 1960s. In February 1963, top leaders of the nation, the Party, and the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) offered aphoristic sayings and calligraphy to urge every Chinese to learn from Lei Feng, an exemplary soldier and selfless giving person. Later the example set by Lei Feng was supplemented by that of the PLA itself. As one of the results, military uniforms turned into proud fashion statements.\(^{219}\)

In the 1960s, “what attitude a revolutionary youth should have toward the revolutionary cause, and how to inherit the revolutionary tradition and carry on the cause” were the central concerns of the Communist Party.\(^{220}\) As we mentioned earlier, when some intellectuals made their dissent heard, they were quickly accused as “bourgeois rightist counterattack” during the 1956-57 political season. By the early 1964, there was a full-fledged social movement to relocate urban youth throughout the underdeveloped interior (\textit{shangshan xiaxiang}), which was hailed as an act that would revolutionize values and practices.\(^{221}\)

Through Communist hegemony over the educational system and the media, the common Chinese people were ignorant and isolated from the outside world. From the

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Dow in the Five Oceans we may seize turtles soon,  
In triumph we return with laughters and songs boon.  
In this world nothing in hard to do,  
Try scaling the heights, success attend you!


mid-1960s to the mid-1970s, Chinese society was especially dominated by the constant political movements and the spirit of class struggles, which was played out by the “Red, Bright and Shiny” posters or by one of the Eight Model Beijing Operas — “The Story of Red Lamp.”

    Holding high the shining Red Lamp
    For my father fighting against the jackals and wolves.
    His children and grandchildren will carry on
    Never leave the battlefields
    Until killing all the cruel and evil.

    Such over-emphasis on the class struggle during the Cultural Revolution led to the de-constructive tendency in all domains, especially in culture of all forms. Even everyday things like a teacup, a book bag or a bed sheet would be imprinted with the national banner, the red flag, a political slogan or Chairman Mao’s quotations. In this age of politicized passion and ideological homogeneity,\textsuperscript{222} Chinese experienced the austere simplicity of the socialist modern during the 1960s and 1970s. As Tang Xiaobing argues, “With ideology or political identity as its sole content or depth, everyday life is organized, rendered meaningful, and effectively reduced in form.”\textsuperscript{223}

    When Deng Xiaoping took the power in the late 1970s, the idea of pursuing a life of “xiaokang” (comparatively well off) began to symbolize the formation of new social values and new lifestyles of harmony, peace and moderateness in Chinese society. A song in a popular TV melodrama “Yearning” (1990) expressed a more tolerant and moving-forward attitude of the 1990s:

\begin{quote}
    Gratitude or resentment,
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{222} Such as the socialist ideals of equality, use value, self-reliance, and homogenized social relationship.

\textsuperscript{223} Tang Xiaobing, \textit{The Heroic and the Quotidian}, Duke University Press, 2000, p. 278.
It is all forgotten.  
Leaving us with the true feelings  
To start afresh  
Accompanied by each other  
With a myriad twinkling lights.

_Self-cultivation and Self-fulfillment in the 1990s_

Disillusioned with altruism and Communist idealism,\(^{224}\) "Chinese society as a whole, is bidding farewell to a past in which politics dominated all details of everyday life." \(^{225}\) In the 1990s, Chinese saw the vitality generated by materialist pursuits as "a better alternative to ideological coercion or purity." \(^{226}\)

The chaotic economic fluctuation, naive craze for the West, and nationalism have constantly reminded Chinese people of the cycle of human history, as the Chinese saying sings: "ten years on the east side of the river and ten years on the west side." In the 1990s, Chinese tended to be aloof from politics but enthusiastic about their own individual lives. Consequently, there has been a combination of the Confucianist ethic of self-cultivation and self-control and a new consumer ethic of self-fulfillment and personal pleasure.\(^{227}\)

\(^{224}\) This can be read in a postmodern context. As Rejek argues, "Postmodernity is characterized by a crisis in knowledge caused by a generalized skepticism about truth claims. Postmodernism tends to present social life as 'irretrievably varied, contingent and ambivalent.'" \(^{224}\) See Chris Rojek, _Ways of Escape: Modern Transformations in Leisure and Travel_, London, Macmillan, 1993, p. 105-107.

\(^{225}\) Tang Xiaobing, _The Heroic and the Quotidian_, Duke University Press, 2000, p. 278.

\(^{226}\) Ibid., p. 300.

\(^{227}\) A Confucian sense of self-restraint implies disdain for extravagance and conspicuous consumption.
Some Chinese scholars argue that "Neo-conservatism" and Neo-pragmatism were the two important cultural orientations in the 1990s. In order to achieve stability, the Chinese tended to rely heavily on their traditions in order to pursue further development. This tendency showed a critical and negative attitude towards Western culture, put the nation and China's international role as the central concern, and treated world affairs pragmatically. A Neo-pragmatist cultural orientation leads to the emphasis on people's daily life and an individual's fulfillment.

"Looking for fun" became one of the dominating desires among Chinese in the 1990s. The spirit of individualism was actually in accord with traditional self-cultivation. In particular, it was the combination of traditional self-cultivation and consumerist self-fulfillment.

In recent years, Chinese magazines have been trying to teach people that differences in performance could be explained away by factors other than innate superiority: excelling in a given field is presented as a personal decision on how to "invest" one's time. For example, long-term planning is associated with the ability to approach life rationally, this being another dimension of competence. This trend toward self-investment in China has also been explored by foreign journalists. The author of "Asian Women Flock to U.S. for M.B.A.s" quotes Zhu Zhong-lan, a 26-year-old native of Shanghai, who attends Northwestern's business school. She expects her M.B.A. to be useful in China, "where people recognize that future economic growth rests with young

When Kim Kwang-ok offers his anthropological study on the Confucian culture in contemporary Korea, he argues: "The traditional value system which emphasized the refinement of emotion and control of physical and material desires gave way to the uncontrollable and competitive pursuit of material and physical comfort and satisfaction." See Tu Wei-ming (1996), (editor), Confucian Traditions in East Asian Modernity, Harvard University Press, p. 225.
management talent.” After graduating next year, she plans to work in the U.S. for awhile getting her training and earning promotions. She also has other ideas about how to round out her business training: she plans to take some golf and tennis lessons. Zhu and many others are the practitioners of self-fulfillment and self-cultivation among a young and well-off generation of Chinese.

However, social problems, including the new ethical issues such as consumerism and self-centered individualism, have never been ignored in Chinese society. In China’s increasingly competitive society, many people who pursue success only consider their goals, not the means, since they believe that heroes or losers are only judged by their success or failure. For them, morality is seen as unworthy of being developed, even as a burden, which they are eager to throw away. This social trend has provoked public discussions of the qualities of a good citizen, the balance between the first-rate product and fast-profit, and of professional ethics and national dignity.

In his study of the mid-Victorian professionals, Burton Bledstein analyzed the conventional ideal of good virtues that included being ambitious, dependable, self-reliant, disciplined, patriotic, and a responsible citizen. For Weber, who was more concerned with entrepreneurs, the crucial virtues are discussed as those that influence the ability to do business with others: sobriety, courage, perseverance, audacity, sincerity, reserve, self-

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229 At the same time, the “ Individuality” “self-expression,” and “privacy” all targeted at the new managerial class in the Chinese market of the 1990s.

230 Actually, it expresses the opposite philosophy in the Chinese saying that “Whether one is a hero or loser is not judged by one’s success or failure.”
mastery, humility, and long-term planning.\textsuperscript{231} From a particular angle, Veblen characterized the popular expressions of "civic virtue" among the rich: his elite struck a moral bargain with the public, and their hoarding of wealth was constrained by their paternalist good faith.\textsuperscript{232}

As Tang Xiaoping observed, "The market economy is an 'angel,' because it transforms the world into a colorful place; it is also a 'devil' because it puts existing values and social order in complete disarray."\textsuperscript{233} This might have intrigued the revival of the studies of the Neo-Confucianism and other traditional values. The Neo-Confucianist promoters such as Tu Weiming, Liu Shuxian, Chen Rongjie, and others, take their care to the unique characteristics of Chinese national cultures and the transition and transformation of Chinese civilization, which reflected the deep concern of social morality has been expressed among Chinese intellectuals.

In the 1990s, Chinese media also encouraged a public debate on civic virtues such as work ethics that has become an important issue for training programs in various Chinese industries. Chinese began to break up communist "daguofan" (Big Bowl) equalitarianism, and join a world of professionalism with competitiveness, dynamism, resiliency, long-term planning, and well-regulated ambition. In a society which values renqing, a good employee is more likely to be appreciated for his or her friendliness, conflict avoidance, team orientation, and flexibility. Moreover, when the whole nation of


China and her citizens are in a period of the transition and transformation, the issues of
gentility or good manners, refinement and vulgarity, certainly become very relevant to
the construction of Chinese spiritual civilization.

_Fuyongfengya_

_Fuyongfengya_ originally refers to the landlords, merchants, etc who try to mingle
with men of letters and pose as lovers of culture. It is no surprise that there is a struggle to
distinguish true gentility from vanity and superficial fashion or the proper way of dress,
speech and manners from those that are mere sham. In the early 1990s, there were visible
trends of _fuyongfengya_ and phony refinement. People’s everyday life and leisure were
influenced by the sense of ‘imagined otherness.” Identity came to be based on life-style,
on a shared recognition of similar self-images and existential choices. For example, in the
1990s, wealth began to make some of the poorly educated who were newly rich believe
that they could have a higher standard of living not only in a material sense but also at a
cultural level. The easiest thing that they could do was to send their children to the best
private schools and other special arts-training classes. Living a fast-paced lifestyle, these
nouveaux riches prefer laid-back or casual cultural activities to something that requires an
extensive historical and cultural education steeped in aristocratic or serious scholarly
knowledge.

Phony refinement reflects the superficial Western trends in Chinese consumerism.
For instance, a foreign name or a foreign-sounding name in China may give the
customers a sense of upscaleness and foreignness which is understood as good quality.
Such foreign names are “Roman” or “J. J.” Chinese companies simply changed the name
of their products to achieve these attributes. Concerned about the Chinese way of *jiejian* (using experience from others as a reference), I also believed in the influence of another logic: *jia* (fake) can lead to *zhen* (real) since once one forms a habit, it comes naturally to him/her (*siwen chengfeng/xiguan cheng ziran*).

In a discussion of culture and power, especially the utility of emulation, Richard Bushman argues: "In the nineteenth century, gentility spread downward through the social structure to large segments of the middle class and, in small doses, into the lives of working-class people. And besides spreading through space and the social structure, gentility entered hearts and minds, taking control of personality, establishing a standard of human worth, and defining large segments of personal identity." Gentility was spreading in the United States "from focal points in the cities down long, elegant avenues, into more modest side streets, through space to smaller country towns, out to prosperous farmhouses and estates in the countryside, and then across great distances to western cities and outposts on the frontier. Starting from the independent bases of plantation houses in the Tidewater, it moved westward to other southern mansions and perhaps in reverse of the usual direction into southern towns." I certainly saw a corresponding emulation pattern in China of the 1990s. If the people in a big city like Shanghai, Guangzhou or Beijing stamp the mark of the refinement on fashions originally designed in Paris or Italy, the people in smaller towns will take their cues from Shanghai,

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234 It often dwells on the superficial knowledge of another culture or becomes caught up the insignificant trivial matters of foreignness without learning or borrowing the essence of another culture.


236 Ibid., p. 402.
Guangzhou or Beijing. They follow the pattern of emulation but transfer the source. However, as Gordon Roe suggests, this is no small transference, for "[s]uch transfers, multiplied a thousand times, were the basic mechanism for the spread of culture."\textsuperscript{237}

In the 1990s, etiquette schools in Beijing become popular choice among many new high school graduates, especially girls.\textsuperscript{238} Some students in the Beijing Civilized Etiquette School told me that etiquette education not only trains them to become courteous people, but also to become competent cross-century personnel. Chinese society has realized that genteel conduct in China can help individuals make their way from a traditional society of entrenched personal connections into a world of constantly shifting relationships. In Chinese media, people argue that proper etiquette brings a measure of ordered security into the confusing melee of social and cultural practice. It also offers a convenient identity and a definition of position in the fluidity and confusion of a changing society. Indeed, the emulation of good manners, replicated at every level with every cultural good, has created innumerable networks of influence in Chinese society. The consciousness of living in good taste can be felt from the booming art workshops to the single rose that a Chinese husband presents to his wife on the Valentine’s Day.

In the meanwhile, foreign entrepreneurs and merchants use the force of emulation to sell goods for pure profit in the name of elaborating a good style of life. For example, the “ding-dong” of the Avon lady (translated into Chinese as the “refined and fragrant


\textsuperscript{238} In Korea, the way of drinking and table manners as well as other traditional behavior based on Confucian tradition are recognized as national trends toward a refined culture. See Tu Wei-ming (1996), (editor), \textit{Confucian Traditions in East Asian Modernity}, Harvard University Press, p. 225.
young woman") rings familiar in urban China. Based on the basic law of market, Chinese entrepreneurs and merchants are more concerned about the limited income of the consumer masses. They rarely pay attention to refinement in favor of lowering the cost and offering an affordable price. Consequently, in current China, the majority of people may have a chance to taste the flavor of numerous new styles, but have little opportunity to enjoy the refined cultural or commercial products that are made in China. This consumerism, including the commercialization of leisure, is a reality in China. And the dependence of building up a refined culture on an all-pervasive commercialism is inevitable because, in actuality, Chinese society is incapable of devising or propagating the culture of refinement all on its own.

The conflict between cultural refinement and commerce has its ancient origin in Chinese mentalities, in which there is no connection between refinement or good taste and commerce activities. Li Yu argues in his *A Tower for the Summer Heat*: "A market is the most vulgar of places, while flowers are supposedly the most refined of objects. And yet, incongruous as the terms vulgar and refined may be, these flower-sellers not only make good money, they also enjoy a tranquil life." Bookshops, incense shops, antique shops and flower shops are known as refined trades that might also be considered vulgar. There are cases in which the business itself is the essence of refinement but the merchants are at the height of vulgarity. These merchants spend their lives among books, flowers, and incense and not only fail to appreciate them, they loathe the smell of flowers and

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incense and are bored to death by the classics and histories. Li not only conveys the Chinese traditional dislike of the merchant, but also points out the subtle relationship between refinement and vulgarity.

In his critique about Taiwan’s culture in the 1970s, Bo Yang argues that “with the advance of Westernization, the fragrance of books is disappearing with their bookcases. Instead, the fragrance of wines is wafting in with their Western-style.”

Bo continues:

Mr. Bo Yang went to visit his friends, (to borrow money most of the time). In the parlor, he was always greeted by a bar counter. Yet, being modest, some of his friends placed the bar counters on two sides of the parlor. The bottles of wine with English tags “Whiskey,” “Brandy,” or “Napoleon” were quite intoxicating. Once he finally sat down, he began to look around. Although he didn’t find any scalps on the top of a pole [as he might see in a savage society], he didn’t see one single book either. — Not only no books, but in some houses also no newspapers. When he talked about the astronauts on the moon, his friend’s whole family looked at him with a sneer. They might be thinking “Don’t try to be smart by telling us a lie if you just want to borrow money.”

What Mr. Bo experienced in the Taiwan of the 1970s is still quite visible in current China. However, one could notice another transition in the Chinese market – books came back! Soon after I went back to Beijing, a karaoke bar at Xinwai Daxie abandoned the business of bad singing for the trendier world of books and turned itself into the Good Morning Book Coffee Bar. Two young women told me that their friends all wanted to spend some time and money learning more life skills, such as hairstyling, cooking, electrical engineering, plumbing, computer engineering, or foreign languages.

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241 Yang, Bo “Xieshu buhuan, tiandaleipi (Condemned by God if you do not return your borrowed books), Bo Yang’s Treatise, I, Xingguang chubanshe, 1978, p.137, my translation.
etc. They got together in this bar to exchange information about which schools would teach them the most at the lowest rate. They recognized that knowledge and skill mean opportunities. Since private enterprise took root two decades ago, Confucian traditions of scholarship have been trampled in the rush to get rich, especially during the late 1980s to early 1990s. However, in the late 1990s, Chinese people met the new century’s opportunity as a transformation from a “good-luck-go” economy to a scientific or knowledge economy. Liu, a 26 year-old woman I knew, who got most of her money and properties ten years ago as a self-employed clothes-seller, and like many, found herself in an awkward situation. She has been living off and exhausting her whole fortune little by little since it has been more and more difficult for people to make money without special skills or knowledge. So, in recent years, more and more people began to turn to books or night schools to enhance their knowledge and career prospects. Booksellers told me that topics like management, computers, and English lessons were among the bestsellers. Self-improvement ranked as the number one reason people bought books in a recent survey by the Horizon Research Group.

242 According to the Beijing Youth Newspaper, the leisure activities of Beijingers are becoming more and more colorful. Many young people are fond of tea culture, pottery, dough-figurine-molding, and kite-making. Usually one has to pay 300 yuan for a tea culture class, 100 yuan for a pottery class (the fee of the class I attended when I was in Beijing was 80 yuan per hour) and more for dough-figurine-molding and kite-making. Most of the students in teahouses are young people. The manager of the Wufu Teahouse has run 40 classes, with more than 15 students each time. In contrast, most of the students in a dancing class for adults of the Central Ballet Theater are middle-aged women. Meanwhile, the oldest student in a piano-training class of the Beijing Youth Palace is 79 and the youngest is 40. According to a teacher, more and more senior people are studying piano and working very hard. The diversified trends among different age of Beijingers reflects the diversification of values in Chinese society.

243 In 1999, the Horizon Investigation Co. worked in cooperation with the State Statistical Bureau and other government statistical agencies and investigation companies to draw up a survey on the issue of Chinese people’s major concerns in 1999. The 50th anniversary of the founding of PRC and Macao’s homecoming is listed at the top of these major concerns. Other important concerns are related to China’s macro-economic development,
In order to get more information of lifestyle transitions, I decided to visit Horizon Research Group. It was a pale gray morning that wrapped around the scenery with infinite tender feeling. A gust of wind blew the dust from a downtown street. The stairs of the building were dimly lit. On the steel gate, I saw the sign on the white board: *Horizon Investigation Group*. Much of the red lacquer had peeled away to reveal the original wood beneath. Horizon Investigation Group occupied about 1000 square feet of the sixth floor of a business building with four or five sparsely furnished offices. The people on the fifth floor who were the employees for three different advertising agencies and one propaganda office had never heard of Horizon. Two out of the three advertising agencies were going out of business and giving their office away to a travel agency for a new booming travel season in the Spring.244 As one of China’s best-known market

such as whether the *Renminbi* (Chinese currency) will be devalued; how the urban residents will be affected by the implementation of the welfare housing allocation; the share individuals will have to pay following the reform of the public health care system for urban employees; whether State-owned enterprises can weather the current difficult state of reform; whether the employment situation will improve; whether commodity prices will rise or fall following the government’s effort to stimulate domestic demand; how the local government restructuring will proceed after the reform of the government department under the State Council; whether the reform of institutions will lead to large-scale redundancy; and the cost of students’ tuition fees. Furthermore, Chinese are very concerned about their social environment, such as social justice and public security, and the anti-corruption campaign and building an honest government in particular. In addition, environmental protection has become a new focus of public concern. Many residents regard a clean and comfortable environment as a basic criterion for an enhanced quality of life.

According to a survey on residential consumption conducted by the State Statistical Bureau and Chinese Economic Index Center, 10 percent of Chinese personal savings are allocated for educational expenditure, 3 percentage points higher than that for buying houses. The Chinese have a long tradition of valuing education above all, and they will never hesitate to invest in education. Chinese parents want their children to enter prestigious schools, and give them expensive stationery, brain-strengthening food, and encourage them to learn practical skills like computers, or artistic skills such as piano or painting.

244 I tracked Yuan down by the help of a group of people who had chance of cooperation with Yuan. During my visit, I had a pleasant conversation with Yuan, his assistant Mss. Fan and got chance to read their survey reports in the recent three years. However, I had a better picture about the accomplishment of Yuan’s group when I recognized his photo in an article in the *Wall Street Journal*. 
researchers, Horizon recently helped makers of Jim Beam Bourbon understand why an average Chinese might sip sour mash instead of cognac. The company recently finished another survey to help the regime judge whether China's new entrepreneurial class might destabilize the country. Even the Communist Party's propaganda department hired Horizon quite often to conduct polls, usually about private entrepreneurs. "The government wants more details now," Yuan, the president of Horizon, says. "It used to ask 'What is their attitude?' Now it asks, 'What can we do better?'"245 Indeed, more and more Chinese began to live their own lives beyond the reach the Communist totalitarianism. Now, Chinese also enjoy far greater access to ideas. For instance, the hottest extracurricular book at Beijing University is by Friedrich von Hayek, the Nobel laureate whose eloquent condemnations of socialism were banned until 1998.

At the same time, after experiencing a shift from traditional agriculturalism246 to modern mercantilism, China began to take up the trend of an economy of knowledge or an information economy in the 1990s. Many former Beijing University or Qing Hua University graduates also played a leading role in turning Beijing into the center of the high-tech industry in China. A prediction came from Electronic Street: "If the glory of the 1980s was in Shenzhen (Special Economy Zone), and of the 1990s in Pudong (Shanghai’s new developed area), then the glory of China in the 2000s will be in

245 Horizon earned $400,000 in 1998 on revenue of $1.5 million, Yuan says. Multinational clients include Sweden's Telefon AB L.M. Ericsson, the U.S.'s Motorola Inc. and Britain's BP-Amoco PLC. Nowadays so much of Chinese life takes place outside party control, and the party needs help, especially in figuring out what foreign investors are up to. "The government doesn't think it will get straight answers on its own," Yuan says.

246 Its keys to success in an agricultural world are thrift, hard work, and determination, not instantaneous brilliance.
Zhongguancun.” In this high-tech trend, Chinese intellectuals also reconsider their social responsibilities. They still believe that they can contribute as intellectuals in a very important way to maintaining a diverse and rich collective life that is not totally subordinated to economic rationality.

This strong desire for a diverse and rich collective life is also reflected in a survey in late 1998 entitled “What We Dream About Today.” This survey, jointly made by Shanghai-based Hongqiao Friendship Department Store and Zhongheng Co. Ltd., covered 2,000 people living in Beijing, Shanghai, Chongqing and Hong Kong. It showed that Beijing’s residents are “the most natural, romantic and unrestrained people in China and they are full of dreams.” Beijing, the survey revealed, had the greatest number of people who were dreaming of true love, good friendship and the opportunity to travel to places outside Beijing or even overseas, while Shanghai’s residents concentrated their dreams on having better housing and providing a good education for their children. Hong Kong’s residents dreamed about good jobs and their health. Yu Wujin, a professional of Shanghai-based Fudan University, pointed out that the culture of Beijing is extremely colorful and diverse, and that this provides a good base for producing rich and interesting dreams. The rich cultural atmosphere in Beijing has a profound historical foundation. As

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247 Zhongguancun is the street where the Electronic Street is located.

248 The transitional quality of late twentieth-century Chinese culture can be observed as two related discourses: an anxious affirmation of ordinary life and a continuous negotiation with the utopian impulse to reject everyday life. See Tang Xiaobing, The Heroic and the Quotidian, Duke University Press, 2000, p. 341.
Lin Yutang describes, it is one of graciousness, humor, artistry and refinement.\footnote{Lin Yutang argues that “humor is an essential part of Chinese nature, deep, mellow, kindly humor, founded upon the tragic knowledge and acceptance of life.” See Lin Yutang, My Country and My People, New York: Halcyon House, 1938.} An old Beijing gentleman told me that the spirit of leisure in Beijing came from her glory in ancient times. As the capital of five dynasties, and of the Communist government after 1948, as the location of foreign embassies and the headquarters of foreign companies, especially after the 1980s, Beijing has been a city of refined culture, and of refined leisure again in the 1990s.\footnote{Foreigners living in China have been another important conduit for the entry of Western goods and practices. p. 13}

Nowadays, Beijing has also become the fastest changing capital in the world. However, in the shifting trends, most human basic and fundamental needs and values persist, for instance, the will to enjoy a good family dinner and live a healthy and happy life. Therefore, Martha Stewart's Living remains a soothing and comforting attraction in America. So, the Chinese, with their profound sense of vicissitude of life and deep appreciation of a simple cup of tea, understand that

Poetically,
Man dwells
on the earth.
Chapter Five: Teahouses

The history of tea in China is as ancient as China’s history of economy and culture. Most common people drink tea just for physical need – to quench the thirst. However, the Chinese literati have cultivated a cultural taste and aesthetic interest in tea, along with a refined lifestyle and the art of all forms.

Fu Weixun argues, “Chinese care deeply about their worldly life. They respect both history and reality. They like concrete lives and things. They have the rich flavor of the Earth.”\(^{251}\) Tea, with its unique flavor of the Earth has indeed charmed Chinese for thousands of years.

Teahouses in China started from Tang Dynasty. In Song Dynasty, the management of teahouses had already been quite flexible. Qing Danasty was the golden age of teahouses which had spread all over the cities and countryside, and reached the highest number in history.\(^{252}\)

From the birth of teahouses, they had been associated with a variety of lifestyles. For instance, there were different tea-culture circles in Tang Dynasty such as literati circle, monk circle, vernacular circle, and court circle. Among the literati, they built up special tea rooms and held the tea banquets. Changan was the center of this circle. Monks not only contributed to the development of the best-quality teas, they also wrote tea books, tea poems and promoted Chan wisdom in their witty, quick and subtle tea

\(^{251}\) See Fu Weixun, *From Western Philosophy to Chan Buddhism*, Sanlian, 1989, p. 311.

argumentation. The popularization of tea among the masses helped the boom of the tea facilities from the simplest tea stands, tea sheds, tea huts, to the elegant tea pavilions and teahouses. The court circle, on a more refined level, encouraged the competitions among the local tea centers for “The Best Tea,” “The Best Well,” and “The Best Tea Utensils,” which not only set up the national standards for tea, but also stimulated the development of an exquisite tea culture.

Since Tang, drinking tea has become part of average Chinese daily life. In the past, in most of China’s rural towns, there were at least a handful of traditional teahouses. Historically, they have been the center of social life for the men of the community, a place where, regardless of social status, one can enjoy a cup of tea, have a bite to eat and relax with friends. They also served as a gathering place for retirees; in fact, very much like a modern bingo hall in rural America. Yet they have not been just places to while away the hours with idle banter. Teahouses have also acted as forums where one might discuss affairs of the day. Merchants, brokers and lawyers meet their clients in them to discuss business.

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253 For instance, in *Wu Deng Hui Yuan*, we read, Master asked the new-comer: “Have you ever been here?” “Yes, I have been here,” he answered. Master said: “Let’s go for tea!” Master asked another monk: “Have you been here before?” “No, I haven’t,” replied the monk. Master said, “Let’s go for tea!” The backyard host asked the Master with puzzle: “Why were they all invited to go for tea regardless the fact that they have been here or not?” Master called the host, and the host answered. Master said: “Let’s go for tea!” This story tells us that just in a simple cup of tea, we can realize the spirit of Chanism, that is, *ping chang xin shi dao* (A heart/mind of ordinariness is Dao, *Mazuyulu*). See Chanzong, ed. By Chen Jingchun, Bihua wenyi chubanshe, 1993, p. 44. Also see Zhang Zhongxing, *Chan Beyond Chan*, Heilongjiang chubanshe, 1988, p. 145.

Numerous masterpieces, especially poetry, have been created by great scholars in Chinese history with their appreciation of tea.

For Chinese literati, teahouses are connected with the flair of intelligence. Qiang Menglin recalls in his memoir the waning of interest in teahouses with the rise in modernity:

In the old days, the scholars and intellectuals liked to visit the teahouses with an antique flair. They could enjoy the tea in a serene environment and admired the clear lakes and green mountains outside the window. Nowadays [1910s], these teahouses have been replaced by the irresistibility of modern civilization. Only a couple of old teahouses were there to recall things of the remote past. People still frequented these teahouses, which were full of ancient interest. They would make a pot of Longjing tea and read Tang’s poems or Song’s ci, which brought them back to the good old days.\textsuperscript{255}

Lao She, one of China’s great novelists and playwrights, captured the idea of the teahouse as the center of the community in his famous play \textit{Chaguan} (Teahouse).\textsuperscript{256} This play, called \textit{Teahouse}, is witnessing a revival as it plays nightly at the Capital Theater on Wangfujing Avenue.\textsuperscript{257} In \textit{Teahouse}, Lao She portrays the teahouse as the nucleus of Chinese society, a place where people from all walks of life come together. The story traces the changing lives of the some seventy characters who regularly frequent the Yutai Teahouse. The characters range from the manipulative pimp Liu and the aging court eunuch Pang, who buys his wife out of poverty, to the upright and honest teahouse owner Wang Lifa and his business companions. The characters struggle through progressively

\textsuperscript{255} Jiang Menglin, \textit{Xichao} (Western Tides), Taipei: Fuxin shuju, 1989, p. 123, my translation.

\textsuperscript{256} Appropriately enough, one of the first in the renaissance of authentic old-style teahouses to open in Beijing was called the “Lao She Teahouse” and came complete with old Beijing style drum players and folk singers.

\textsuperscript{257} Wangfujing Avenue is a well-known street in old Beiping (Beijing today). The well-known teahouses in Beiping were more than thirty. Among a variety of teahouses, some was run mainly by selling tea, some was also managed to sell refreshments and wines. Some teahouses were known for their storytelling performance, some for their gambling facilities, the other were popular for serving as a place of mediating in family or business quarrels. See Xu Mingde, \textit{Tea Culture in China}, Shanghai Guji Chubanshe, 1995, p. 38.
chaotic historical events, starting from the end of the Qing Dynasty to post-Liberation, and the teahouse soon becomes the battleground for the friendship, betrayal, bribery and hardship that beset their lives.

Such old-style teahouses as depicted in Lao She’s play continued to thrive throughout the 1950s and early 1960s in Beijing. However, during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) such places were attacked as being too “bourgeois” and having an upper-class stigma which was associated with the idleness of spending all day drinking tea.258 Once China opened her doors to the West in the 1980s, young urbanites started to view coffee-drinking as a more modern, fashionable pastime. But, despite a decade of non-stop modernization, traditional-style teahouses have started to reappear nationwide.

Teahouses today, however, are quite different from the ones Lao She describes. Now they are filled with the quiet buzz of leisurely chatting and are devoid of the unsavory characters that once lurked in many a teahouse corner. Locality determines entertainment, recreation and the custom of drinking tea. In Sichuan, where the practice of tea-drinking is thought to have originated, old men sit at long school-desks crammed into small halls. The men often shout over the opera performances taking place on stage. The waitstaff weaves its way between them, pouring water into large tea cups through long-spouted jugs. In Canton it is customary to hit the fingertips on the table to signify thanks after receiving your tea. In Fujian and Taiwan, the appreciation of tea, or pin cha

258 A simple-style Chinese teahouse indeed may slow down the life rhythm of urban Chinese. One middle-age man I met in a spotless teahouse confessed to me: “like cultivating a Chinese garden, one’s obsession for a Chinese teahouse can fritter away one’s ambitions.”
(imbibing tea), involves more ceremony. For instance, Oolong tea is sipped from thimble-sized ceramic cups, and strained at least twice before drinking.

Beijing is not only the locale of Lao She’s play, *Teahouse*, but also one of the best places in current China to enjoy the true charm of teahouses. There are many teahouses in Beijing, such as Da Wan Cha at Qianmen Xidajie, Beijing Qingxin Court Teahouse at Dogdaqiao Roar, Chaoyang District, Ji Gu Ge Teahouse at Liulichang, Xuanwu District, Tian Hai Teahouse at Sanlitun Road, Chaoyang District, Wu Yutai Teahouse at Dongsi Street, Bichun Teahouse at Wangfujing Street, Purple Vine Teahouse at Nanchang Jie, Xicheng District, Tianqiao Happy Teahouse at Tianqiao Market and Beijing Teahouse at Changdian, Liulichang.\(^{259}\)

In Chinese philosophy, living is an art and tea-drinking is an art of living. Relaxation, informality and utter simplicity are essential to Chinese tea art. Tea drinking involves traditional Buddhist virtues such as equanimity, tranquility, harmony, purity, clarity and simplicity, together with Confucian virtues such as decorum and "cleaving to the mean," in other words, avoiding extremes. However, coming to taste the sunlight, wind and clouds in a secluded teahouse on the top of a mountain is a Daoist sentiment.

Not only is the act of tea drinking artistic but, as Okakura Tenshin suggests, teahouses include artistic elements in their ambience. In the beginning of *The Book of Tea*, Okakûra Tenshin states: "Teaism is a cult founded on the adoration of the beautiful

\(^{259}\) See Appendix 4 about the teahouses in Beijing.
among the sordid facts of everyday existence." So, it is essential to the arts that they partake of the extraordinary -- of artificiality, abstractness, symbolism, and formalism.\textsuperscript{260} One traditional-style teahouse, Dynasty Teahouse, is an example of how teahouses incorporate the artistic and the philosophical. Dynasty Teahouse is located at the foot of the Fragrant Mountain. On the wall of Dynasty Teahouse, there is a huge Chinese character "Dao." Portraits of peaches, double-gourds and dragons hang on either side of that mysterious word. In Daoism, the peach tree resides in the garden of the "Queen Mother of the West;" its fruits confer immortality. The double-gourd is an emblem of long life and posterity as one of the attributes of the Daoist Immortals. The dragon soaring above the Daoist Isles of the Blest is the image of freedom.

Furthermore, Dynasty is surrounded by a lotus pond which one crosses over by way of a zigzag bridge. The south walls are of brick with windows, differently shaped so as to resemble a fan, a bell, a flower, a leaf, a vase, and a full moon.

Some teahouses in Beijing have movable screens. Made of translucent rice paper stretched across hinged wooden frames, these walls can easily be folded or unfolded to suit the weather at any particular hour of the day or night. In cold weather the interior might be warmed by a charcoal brazier so one can sit snugly inside, gazing out across the water at the landscaped rocks and trees, admiring bunches of chrysanthemums in autumn or moonlit snow in winter.\textsuperscript{261}

\textsuperscript{260} What Okakura Tenshin says is basically right in some aspects of both Chinese and Japanese tea ceremonies. But, it is not the case in most of Chinese teahouses which are ordinary, natural and informal.

\textsuperscript{261} See Sun Ming, Cha Wenhua, Shandong wenyi chubanshe, 1993.
The furnishings of teahouses are usually sparse: several finely carved wooden-framed couches, square redwood tables with matching chairs or fine porcelain stools. Red lanterns of silken gauze that hang from the beams are supposed to be elegant, not garish or ostentatious. The surrounding garden is supposed to be laid out to form a varied landscape with tiny hills, uniquely-shaped pines, bamboo groves, peach trees for springtime blossom or maple trees for autumn hues.\textsuperscript{262}

Confronted with the high waves of Westernization in China in the 1990s, traditional teahouses demonstrate vitality and adaptability. They seek modernization, not by rejecting all their traditional customs but by utilizing them, for the purpose of preserving national or local identities and exploring new business opportunities. In the cultural domain, this movement has rekindled interest in the Chinese traditional art of living.

In a traditional-style teahouse, the mood is usually tranquil, graceful, and haunting. This austere and serene beauty is a counterpart to the sumptuous and vivid beauty of other public spaces. It is a simple and reticent form of expression, which subsumes within itself the colorful and flamboyant. The five-thousand-year-old Chinese acquaintance with teas has led to a reverential attitude toward them. “Tea tempers the spirits, calms and harmonizes the mind; it arouses thought and prevents drowsiness, enlightens and refreshes the body, and clears the perceptive faculties”, so wrote the great authority on tea, Lu Yu, over a thousand years ago.\textsuperscript{263} In the art of drinking tea, Chinese enjoy the tranquility of the tea, water, tea utensils and a simple and serene environment.

\textsuperscript{262} See \textit{Tea in China}.

\textsuperscript{263} See Lin Yutang, \textit{The Importance of Living}, Quill, 1965.
Unlike Japanese tea which is normally powdered, not strained, leaves of Chinese green tea are not broken, but dried into buds. In a Chinese tea ceremony, a master puts the tea in the teapot with finely pointed chopsticks. He then pours the boiling water into the teapot. As he does this he holds the pot over a large bowl, letting the overflow run into the bowl. Bubbles, when mixed with the tea, form foam that is not aesthetically pleasing. He sets the teapot down and covers it. Less than a minute later, he pours the tea into customers’ narrow cups, not pouring one cup at a time, but moving the teapot around in a continual motion over the cups, so they are filled simultaneously. Also different from the Japanese tea ceremony (chado), the Chinese tea ceremony (chadao) emphasizes the tea, rather than the ceremony itself. In addition, to Chinese, different teas have different personalities. For example, Tieguanyin is steady and dignified, wulong is gentle and delicate, and longjing is mild and elegant. In general, Yuqiancha (before-rain/qingming or the 5th solar term tea) is regarded as the freshest tea, which should be picked at early dawn on a clear day, when the morning air on the mountain-top is clear and thin, the fragrance of dew is still upon the leaves, and the tea is associated with the fragrance and refinement of the magic dew in its enjoyment. With the Daoist insistence upon return to nature, and with its conception that the universe is kept alive by the interplay of the male and female forces, the dew actually stands for the “juice of heaven and earth” when the two principles are united at night. This idea is that the dew is magic food, fine, clear, and ethereal, and that any man or beast that drinks enough of it stands a good chance of being immortal.\footnote{See Lin Yutang, The Importance of Living, Quill, 1965, p. 225.} Tea is then symbolic of earthly purity, requiring the most fastidious
cleanliness in its preparation, from picking, roasting and preserving to its final infusion and drinking, easily upset or spoiled by the slightest contamination of oily hands or oily cups. According to Chalu by Cai Xiang (1012-1067), “the essence of the enjoyment of tea lies in appreciation of its color, fragrance and flavor, and the principles of preparation are refinement, dryness and cleanliness.” Therefore, an element of quiet is necessary for the appreciation of these qualities, an appreciation that comes from a man who can “look at a hot world with a cool head.”

Lin Yutang argues that “there are special books about tea-drinking as there are special books about incense and wine and rocks for house decoration. More than any other human invention of this nature, the drinking of tea has colored Chinese daily life as a nation, and gives rise of the institution of teahouses. Chinese people drink tea in their homes and in the teahouses, alone and in company, at committee meetings and at the settling of disputes. They drink tea before breakfast and at midnight. With a teapot, a Chinese is happy wherever he is.” Influenced by a long tradition of Daoism and Buddhism, especially Chan, Chinese are masters of suggestion and leaving off at the right moment. For Chinese, the best tea is mild and gives a “back-flavor” which comes after a minute or two, when its chemical action has set in on the salivary gland. Such good tea puts everybody in good humor. It prolongs Chinese lives by aiding their digestion and maintaining their equanimity of temper. The superb and exquisite techniques that are unique to the Chinese tea culture and practiced in teahouses allow patrons to experience

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265 Ibid., p. 234.
266 Ibid., p. 342.
267 Ibid., p. 342.
Chinese tea art at its best.

The Scholar’s Teahouse is situated in the Bat Hall of Prince Gong’s Mansion. Covering over 400 square meters, it was constructed in 1777. He Shen, Grand Secretary during the reign of Qing Dynasty Emperor Qianlong, used the building as his study. To the south of the building stands a stone tablet inscribed with Emperor Kangxi’s calligraphy “Fu Zi Bei” meaning Tablet of Fortune. In the summertime, the yard is carpeted with lush grass and blooms, and birds and cicadas chirp within the ancient trees above. Sipping tea here to the melody of a traditional Chinese lute makes one understand better the old Chinese saying: “A superficial hermit lives in the wilderness, but a master finds his peace among mortals.” In such a tranquil place with its relaxing atmosphere, the Scholar’s Teahouse provides visitors with peaceful moments.

Teahouses, like the Dynasty Teahouse and Scholar Teahouse, truly play a unique role in preserving tradition. The decorations and paintings on the walls of these traditional teahouses are very different from the ones in bars. The statues of a Smiling Buddha or the Daoist Immortals in a teahouse express the Chinese ancient longing for tranquility and longevity. We also see the paintings with either a traditional Confucian secular themes -- family, or cattle and horses -- or Daoist hermit-style themes -- landscapes, trees and rocks, flowers and bamboo, or birds and fish. The most ancient and at the same time most enduringly vital ideas of the cosmos are expressed by the yin-yang sign which often appears in teahouses. The sign is a circle divided by a S-line into dark and light halves. Chinese believe that after drinking tea, the negative (yin) air goes down, which detoxifies our body; while after drinking alcohol, the positive (yang) air goes up,

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268 Also see Beijing Scene, 1998.
which puts our mood in a high spirit. So, we read in *Shishuo Xinyu*, on the one hand, Wei-Jin *mingshi* drank wine to excess, criticizing or despising the common customs. On the other hand, they drank tea, ignoring the outside world and enjoying their “light talk.” The contrast between alcohol and tea is hence expressed in the public understanding that tea resembles the recluse, and wine resembles the cavalier; wine is for good comradeship, and tea is for the man of quiet virtue. So, if it’s better to drink new tea and old wine, for a classic drinker, it’s also better to drink tea alone, but one should drink wine with friends since the ideal state of drinking tea is quiet and serene; the ideal state of drinking wine is warm and lively. Furthermore, if a bar can be a Daoist Wandering Land and Western exotica, for example, free, stimulating, aggressive, and powerful, yet melancholic, a traditional teahouse is a place for slow activity (*pin*) and aesthetic contemplation. *Pin* is a reflection of Daoist’s taste in nature and Buddhist sentiment for harmony. *Pin* encourages a way of intuitive understanding and sudden enlightenment, which eventually allows one to reach such a state of mind where “the green mountain does not move, while the clouds come and go by themselves.” Therefore, drinking tea in China has become a kind of aesthetic temperament, spiritual pursuit and life attitude:

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269 In their conversations they concentrated on the light or pure aspect of matters, such as sex, poetry, and metaphysical issues or rhetoric, in such a way as to free the spirit and to display a philosophical wit. See Liu Yiqing, *Shishuo Xinyu*, Zhonghua Book Publishing House, 1982.

refined, refreshing and close to nature. So, as old Chinese saying chants, “Let’s brew carefully the yin and yang.”

Similar to Japanese *Chado*, there are also ritualized manners in Chinese tea ceremonies. The general proper steps of drinking tea might be to warm up the teapot, invite tea into the pot, pour boiling water, taste the flavor, drink and clean and maintain the tea set. Cups made of china are suitable for light tea, and pottery clay is better for strong tea, like *puer* and *guanyin*. Basically the ancient Chinese meaning of drinking tea is realized in certain conditions and manners:

Sitting in a tile-roofed house with paper windows;

Clear spring and green tea;\(^{272}\)

A simple but elegant pottery tea set;

Drinking with two or three friends...\(^{273}\)

In addition, the Chinese endow tea with profound meanings. Brewing tea, tasting tea, and filling tea are all developed with the soul of refined culture. The art and technique of tea enjoyment, then, consists of the following principles: first, tea, being most susceptible to contamination of flavors, must be handled throughout with the utmost cleanliness and kept apart from wine, incense, and other smelly substances and people handling such substances. Second, it must be kept in a cool, dry place, and during moist seasons, a reasonable quantity for use must be kept in special small pots, best made of

\(^{271}\) For instance, the Ming style of drinking tea should be *pingdan* (light, simple), *xianya* (refined, elegant), *duanzhuang* (dignified), *zhipu* (simple), *ziran* (natural), *wenhou* (warm, mild). See Xu Mingde, *Tea Culture in China*, Shanghai Guji Chubanshe, 1995, p. 29.

\(^{272}\) Chinese regard drinking green tea as the orthodox in the art of tea drinking. They enjoy the color, fragrance and taste of the green tea - nature’s tea - the fine flavor of nature.

\(^{273}\) Also See Sun Ming, *Cha Wenhua*, Shandong wenyi chubanshe, 1993.
pewter-foil, while the reserve in the big pots is not opened except when necessary. If a supply gets moldy, it should be submitted to a gentle roasting over a slow fire, uncovered and constantly fanned, so as to prevent the leaves from turning yellow or becoming discolored. Third, half of the art of making tea lies in getting good water with a keen edge; the hierarchy of water is as follows: 1) mountain spring water; 2) river water; 3) well water; 4) tap water if it comes from dams for it is thus essentially mountain water and therefore satisfactory.274

Another essential element of drinking tea is the company with whom one drinks. First, as we mentioned earlier, tea company should be small for many guests would make it noisy, and noisiness takes away from the cultured charm of the experience. Lin Yutang, again, expresses well the importance of the number of people with whom one drinks tea to the tenor of the ceremony: “To drink alone is called secluded; to drink between two is called comfortable; to drink with three or four is called charming; to drink with five or six is called common; and to drink with seven or eight is called [contemptuously] philanthropic.”275

Second, the Chinese word pin has another meaning besides sample, savor and taste. It also denotes the personality of character or of man, which emphasizes the notion of human understanding, high-mindedness, and detachment from life, absence of pettiness or triviality or vulgarity. In this sense, pin is akin to the English term “manner” or “style.” One can be a master of technique, yet without pin, his work has no soul.

274 This is known by most of the Chinese who regard tea-drinking as an art of living. Also see Lin Yutang, The Importance of Living, Quill, 1965.

Therefore, the charming and secluded tea ceremonies are always associated with ya — refinement. The author of *Cha Jian*, Du Long (c. 1592), says: “When the fire attacks the water, we begin to hear a sound similar to the singing of the wind among the pine trees. We pour the tea into a cup, and the gentle glow of its light plays around the place. The pleasure of such a moment cannot be shared with vulgar people.”

Hence, chastened in spirit, quiet in mind and surrounded by proper company, one is fit to enjoy tea. However, some standards of tea drinking may tend toward the extreme. In *Dream in the Red Mansion*, Miao Yu claims, “Drinking one cup of tea can be called ‘pin,’ drinking two cups of tea becomes ‘vulgar thing’ for quenching one’s thirst.” Obviously, in Maio Yu’s eyes, most people are “vulgar folks.” Miao Yu herself certainly could not stand for the “vulgarity” of this earthly world and became a nun.

Refined or vulgar, when we are brewing a cup of tea, time passes by. In the twinkling of an eye, the world has changed. In the 1990s, like those who visit them, Chinese teahouses are in a process of transformation. By transformation, the cultural interaction between the West and East continues into the future as *yiqiyihui*, one time, one meeting, leaving each of us changed in some degree or other.

Teahouse Dawancha (Big Bowl Tea), near Qianmen (the front door of the Forbidden City), was the first teahouse after the Cultural Revolution to become a tourist site by offering national or local rituals and performances, for example, chanting stories with thumping pigskin and bamboo drums intended to attract foreigners. The waiters at

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278 A foreigner wrote about his experience in *Tan Gen Yuan-Authentic Beijing Restaurant in a Beijing newspaper “Beijing Wanbao”*: 
Dawancha greet their customers in a traditional Beijing manner -- "Ai! Kan cha!" (Oh! Get the Tea!). Two birdcages hang from the ceiling and two mynah birds whistle “nin hao” (Hello) cheerfully and constantly.

My experiences at Dawancha lasted as sensuous memories. On a Friday night, I went to Dawancha Teahouse with some friends, including an American couple. Two xiaoqie brought us some green tea. Another xiaoqie was sitting next to us, playing on the piba, a stringed instrument, a classical song developed from an ancient story, "Ambush from Ten Sides." The plucks and quavers with the tone of an old civilization fascinated our American friends. It was a peaceful night. An old-fashioned oil lamp flickered and our chamber was washed in a warm red glow.

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Tan Gen Yuan’s platoon of man-pulled rickshaws receives guests from the car park outside the east gate of the Temple of Earth park (Ditan Gongyuan). Inside the first yard are two antique duck ovens, three Xinjiang meat-stick barbecue stands equipped with three Xinjiang men, two live peacocks (whose fate remains unknown), and a beer garden with plenty of beer and rolled-up trousers during summer.

"Entering the restaurant itself, guests are greeted by the hoarse screaming toasts of a 72 year-old man who is deaf in one ear. Clasping a box of dinner mints, he happily wishes all comers “good fortune and long life.” Opposite him sits an in-house modeling clay sculptor who walks around the restaurant selling figurines of pigs and fishermen. The restaurant itself is decked-out in the form of a traditional courtyard decorated with old-framed photographs and 1930s Coca-Cola girl and cigarette posters. The traditional courtyard design contrasts with the smoke alarms and black metallic theater lights hanging from a low ceiling. As the waiter shouts our orders across the room to the kitchen, a spotlight beams onto the stage at the north end of the room, illuminating two actors and a pair of massive Peking Opera masks hanging on the wall. The actors launch into a Laurel and Hardy style routine known as xiangsheng or cross-talking. They are followed by a Peking Opera act that consists of young girls in garish dresses and painted faces, mimicking with their voices the final stages of a cat neutering. Later acts include acrobatics and folk music played on a traditional three-string guitar. All goes well until an admirably attired bald man with a high pitched voice begins to counterpoint the revolutionary opera songs with anti-NATO chants. At this point we quickly discover that the restaurant’s take-away service is both quick and efficient.

"The food is good although there is nothing that you would not find in an ordinary Northern Chinese restaurant. But it’s worth going to Tan Gen Yuan for the entertainment. And about our little misunderstanding anti-foreigner slogans shouted in the direction of our table, the management sincerely apologized and the check was on the house.”
Like theme bars, there are many theme teahouses to attract special groups of patrons. Lao Zhi Qing Zhi Jia is a fine example. Under the roof of the Lao Zhi Qing Zhi Jia (Home of Old School Graduates),\textsuperscript{279} the red dry peppers are hanging and swinging in the wind. Inside this teahouse, the most noticeable attractions are the three big bookshelves with a variety of books on "Lao Zhi-qing" (Old School Graduate) published over the last twenty years. The themes of the teahouses, such as "lao zhi qing" are selected for different reasons. Some intends to set up a new trend, the other, such as Lao Zhi Qing Zhi Jia, is bound up with memories which are highly selective themselves. One of the bitter-sweet ironies presented by this teahouse is that the gone-never-to-return youth is often the most chanting call.\textsuperscript{280} No matter how absurd the life was, it was often beautiful once associated with the memory of one’s youth. In the image of youth, things are turned into poetry. In the poetry, images are blurred and separated from us by time.

The lifestyle of common people during the Cultural Revolution was simplified and unified. Most of people would read the same books (such as Mao’s Quotations, Lei Feng’s Diary, Russian Novels), say the same language (such as the language of class struggle), watch the same movies (for example, the Eight Model Beijing Operas supervised by Mao’s wife Jiang Qing and some foreign movies from China’s comrade-

\textsuperscript{279} Laozhiqing are the generation of people who graduated from high school during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) and were sent to the remote countryside around China for the so-called “re-education” by peasants.

\textsuperscript{280} I already explained the sense of nostalgia towards the idealism of the 1950s and 1960s in the earlier part of this dissertation. In the consumerist 1990s, as Tang observed, many Chinese writers openly mourn the lost possibility of passionate devotion. They expressed their drive for a grand heroic life. I did not intend to say that the “Re-education Movement” was a grand cause. However, I indeed thought that there was a poetic and heroic spirit in the legend of the “Lao Zhi Qing” generation. See Tang Xiaobing, The Heroic and the Quotidian, Duke University Press, 2000, p. 5.
countries, such as Albania, Yugoslavia, and North Korea), and listen to the same songs (such as the propaganda songs of the Cultural Revolution). Leo Lee points out that the Cultural Revolution literally wiped out whatever traces of urban cosmopolitanism from women’s permed hair to foreign books (of course, Marxist work was one of the exceptions). It was indeed a time of the anti-romanticism. However, the home dance party in the 1970s was an open secret. A lady recalled, “The room was not spacious. The light was dim and covered with old newspaper. Friends were dancing together and enjoyed the air of romance.” Bitter or sweet, the simple era that used to belong to us has gone forever. Nowadays, the younger generation that was born after the Cultural Revolution has very little knowledge and concern about the impact of the Cultural Revolution. The past or more precisely, the stories of Lao Zhi Qing might only satisfy their curiosities. In their mind, even the Cultural Revolution is just a trendy term.

In Beijing, teahouses range in kind from the simple and inexpensive to the popular and the large. Some simple and very inexpensive teahouses are quite small and accommodate less than fifteen people at three or four long tables with benches on either side. Typically, the patrons in this kind of teahouse are old men. Some teahouses of Zhengzhou are noisy, leisurely, and informal. People sit with their friends at a table and the waiter brings the desired teas. Some small teahouses in Zhengzhou usually feature the local tea (xinyang maojin) and are very popular places. The men smoke, play cards and chess, read newspapers, even have their hair-cut or face shaved, as they engage in animated conversation while drinking their tea. The big teahouses, such as Dawancha in

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Beijing, on the other hand are big enough to accommodate a hundred of patrons at twenty or more tables. Usually, big teahouses are multi-storied. As the prices increase story by story, the top floor draws the wealthier patrons or the people who have power to manipulate public money in their corruption activities.

The enjoyment of tea is also accompanied by the leisurely tasting of salted melon seeds, five-flavor beans, or peanuts and light snacks. The snacks for tea drinking should be light with a delicate shape and simple flavor, such as Beijing’s Yanggeng, and Nanjing’s Gansi.282 Recently, some tea houses have added more lingzuir (snacks) to their menu, including crystal sugar dates, cakes, and lianrong buns, a round pastry made of smashed lotus seeds or fried potatoes which are combined with glutinous rice, light sweet, hot and delicious. Like up-dated bars, the tea house owners are conscious of keeping good business through offering customers something different. They are confident that good quality plus a trendy menu may insure attractiveness. For this reason, Taiwan’s tea milkshake was also introduced into some teahouses in Beijing.

On the eastern edge of the bustling Wangfujing shopping district nestles a quiet Taiwanese teahouse -- Swing. A crowd of people drink tea while leisurely swaying. This modern-style teahouse is a bright and lively place where young urbanites can while away the hours. Swing is open until midnight and young people seem quite comfortable in the plastic forest that surrounds them. Not only have the interiors been revamped to suit a younger clientele, but the tea served there has adopted a variety of new tastes and colors, mixing milks, syrups and pearl sago balls in a cocktail shaker to create a frothy
concoction that is a combination of tea and milkshake. In the menu, there is a Generation X Series that consists of a variety of theme teas in a veritable rainbow of hues. I was once amazed by a cup of osmanthus tea I ordered. Those delicate petals of the sweet-scented osmanthus looked alive. Taiwanese tea is indeed recognized for its unique texture. Tapioca, in particular, a starch derived from a tropical Asian palm, has become a staple of Taiwan tea culture.

Drinking a cup of good tea with some delicious cookies in a place where all is sweetness, and delicacy, and harmony, is heaven. And all the good feelings are also enhanced by the pleasant sounds of bubbling water and hissing steam. After the xiaojie leaves the bill, the person who is facing the spout of the teapot pays. Then everybody is ready to face the outside world after having a good time.

Above all, tea and Chan have the same flavor. In Chinese tradition, Buddhist monks recommend tea with its bitter taste as beneficial to the heart and as an elixir of long life. Tea, in China, has been propagandized for its spiritual qualities and as well as its medicinal value. In chapter six, the medicinal functions of Chinese drinks and food are further analyzed.

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282 Stew the sliced dried bean curd/toufu and some ginger and soy sauce with thick soup; strain and serve with sesame oil; the best Gansi appear dark purple color, taste a little bit spicy and very delicious.

283 The medicinal value of tea was recognized in very early age of Chinese civilization. In Shennon Bencao, the first book on pharmaceuticals in China, it says: “Shennon has tasted hundreds of herbs. One day, he ran into seventy-two different poisonous weeds but got relieved by the antidote — tea.” See Wang Dingzhang, Chinese Folklore Culture, Sichuang renming chubanshe, 1993, p. 134.
Chapter Six: Medicine, Food and Beijing Cuisine

While Buddhist monks recommend tea as beneficial to the heart and as an elixir of long life, many Chinese herbs, along with traditional Chinese medicine, also find new favor in the eyes of Chinese who have began to pay close attention to their physical well-being. By chance, a doctor, Meng, aroused my new interest in the relationship between lifestyles and good health. I met Meng during a “Sunday Afternoon Tea Hour” organized by Today’s Women’s Club.

Today’s Women’s Club

Today’s Women’s Club was the first women’s club organized by a TV station in China in 1998. This club is like a women’s study group. It seeks to resolve the problems of daily life-projects, and offers a bigger space for women’s self-development. Today’s Women’s Club represents a kind of sisterhood in China. Being supported by a mentor, and being included in networks of comrades, are important to the women in the club. At the same time, they take advantage of the chance to enlarge their lives by receiving informal training, such as making pottery, zharang and sky diving. In the 1990s, there were no demonstrations on streets or at schools; no women were loudly declaring their resistance to men and society; no words like “women’s movement” even appeared in the recent media. Women’s study groups and activities, however, were

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284 The club was organized by Beijing TV Station, Today’s Women Show.

285 Zharan is a traditional printing method, specialized by some minority people.
quietly permeating people's lives.\textsuperscript{286} "Sunday Afternoon Tea Hour" is a regular seminar organized by Women's Club. The atmosphere is very lively: everyone participates in the discussion, and feels that women's emancipation depends on women themselves.

Through the Today's Women's Club, I was able to forge long-lasting friendships with a couple of women. Meng is one of them. I remember the day when I first met Meng. At three o'clock precisely I was at Wusetu Workshop,\textsuperscript{287} which was the place for our Sunday Tea Hour activity that weekend, but the other members had not showed up. While I was wandering up and down the stairs, the doorbell rang again. Meng, who was interested in learning how to make pottery, was also there for the meeting. That afternoon was the beginning of our friendship while I was in Beijing.

I could feel her loneliness. She gave up her prestigious career as an oculist (eye surgeon) in the well-known Sino-Japanese Friendship Hospital and began her solitary Chinese medicine research two years ago. Her choice was hardly understood by other people, including her family. After ten minutes of conversation, Meng and I began to laugh about the idea of projecting the issues of endocrine disorder or hormone disorder into the context of Chinese social transition and transformation, especially in the context of social disorder and dysfunction of Chinese society. With an interdisciplinary collaboration between medicine and anthropology, we wished that it might be possible to reach a different understanding about issues such as the balance of our body and soul in everyday practice.


\textsuperscript{287} Wusetu is an art workshop where people can learn how to make pottery, wax printing, costume designing, and interior designing, etc.
One day in May, I got a call from Meng. She had a medical service booth (table stand) for endocrine disorder at Gulou Daxie. That evening, I visited her small clinic sponsored by the Red Cross of Beijing. Gulou Daxie is an old and crowded street, which is not only jammed with the traffic all the time but also crowded by the slow construction aimed at improving the residential conditions; in this seemingly stagnant location, I saw two driving schools and numerous new restaurants. By the entry of a small lane, a stout woman half rose from her chair, and gave me a bob of silent inspection, with some quick little questioning glances from her small, fat-encircled eyes. The relatively low criminal rate in China is owed to those very alert common citizens, like her. Meng saw me through her window and came out to greet me. Her tiny clinic was packed with boxes of medical equipment and books. All was soaked with the smell of formalin. A tiny yeqiangwei (multiflora rose) in a small gray pot quietly graced the windowsill. The edges of her leather shoes were crusted by mud and dust from the street. There was also a mixture of dust and dandruff on her hair. Underneath her white labcoat, she wore a faded skirt and a wrinkled collar. Meng’s mind raced quickly from Chinese ancient history to the current economic reform, from sociology to medical science. She was very happy to have a listener. A dim and friendly sunset lit up her face. Her eager eyes glistened, making her unusually pretty.
The Human Body and Traditional Chinese Medicine

In China’s constantly changing society, people’s physical structure is in constant and dynamic exchange with the world around them. This is similar to what Ben Singer claims about stimulation. Singer argues the stimulation in modern life has influenced our nerve system: “Amid the unprecedented turbulence of the big city’s traffic, noise, billboards, street signs, jostling crowds, window displays, and advertisements, the individual is faced a new intensity of sensory stimulation.”²⁸⁸ In current Chinese society, a growing body of data, ever-changing opportunities create new hopes and choices, as well as new anxieties and disappointments. Meng corroborated this; she told me that the number of patients with endocrine disorders had been increasing significantly in recent years and that stress was one of the major causes of the disease. Traditionally, Chinese medicine sees the human body as a field of energy and information. From this perspective, people can influence health through their choices and interpretations: through the food they ingest, the emotions they experience, the sensory input they are exposed to, the daily patterns and rhythms of their lives. So, it is relevant that most of the major causes of suffering and illness are the result of different choices of lifestyles.

Meng asked me to read The Inner Classic of the Yellow Emperor which is a fundamental work of the theoretical texts of traditional Chinese medicine. It describes the body as follows: “The heart functions as the prince and governs through the shen (soul);

the lungs are liaison officers who promulgate rules and regulations; the liver is a general and devises strategies.  

*The Inner Classic of the Yellow Emperor* defines health as the correct balance between the *yin* (passive, nutritive) and *yang* (active) energies of the body. For instance, the *yin*-deficient type of person is normally thin and wiry, perhaps strong, purposeful, often passionate, and quick of movement. This type, with a high metabolic rate and a well-developed nervous system, often has problems with anxiety, nervousness, and sleeplessness. In traditional Chinese medical theory, "vital essence," or nutritive substance (*yin*), is said to be created out of "vital activity" (*yang*), or the workings of the glands and muscles and the circulation of blood and lymph throughout the body. Conversely, vital activity is created out of vital essence through the digestion and metabolism of essential nutrients.  

In the book, there are *Ba Gang* (eight key links): the void and the solid; the exterior and the interior; the chills and fever; and the zang & the fu (the internal organs including the heart, liver, spleen, lungs, kidneys, stomach, gall, intestines and bladder). So, we should *wenshen-zishen, shugan-yanggan, tiaoli-piwei, qingfei-runzao, yangxin-anshi, wenjing-sanhan, huoxue-huayu, ruanjian-sanjie.*  

Therefore, in traditional

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289 *Huanti Neijing* (The Inner Classic of the Yellow Emperor), chapter 8, Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1922.

290 See Ke Yunlu, *Faxian Huangdineijing* (Discovering The Inner Classic of the Yellow Emperor), Zuoja chubanshe, 1997.

291 Warm up and nourish the kidneys; smooth out and recuperate the livers; regulate and take good care of spleen and stomach; refresh lungs and moisten the respiratory tract; rest to attain mental tranquillity; warm up the collateral channels and send out the chills; invigorate the circulation of blood and dissolve the stasis of blood; soften and disperse the hard nodes and lumps.
Chinese medicine, “Zhizhonghe,” (incurring neutralization/moderation), that is, using medicine to help the recovery of a normal balance/harmony of the body, is a leading principle. Correspondingly, there is a hierarchy in traditional Chinese medicine: superior medicine nourishes fate; middle medicine nourishes nature; low medicine cures disease.\(^{292}\)

Furthermore, this traditional Chinese medical theory relates "five emotions" to different disease-causing agents:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emotion</th>
<th>Organ Affected</th>
<th>Potential Result of Excessive Emotion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anger</td>
<td>Liver</td>
<td>Headaches, irritability, and red itchy eyes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear</td>
<td>Kidney</td>
<td>Weak knees, low back pain, ringing in the ears</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joy/Mania</td>
<td>Heart, Nervous system</td>
<td>Insomnia, depression, anxiety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sadness/Grief</td>
<td>Lungs</td>
<td>Asthma, chronic bronchitis, emphysema, constipation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thinking/Worry(^{293})</td>
<td>Digestion</td>
<td>Digestive problem, fatigue, depression</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this theory, reactions to negative stress need not be damaging; responses, however, are often highly individual. Some people maintain health despite having experienced stressful or even life-threatening events. These individuals often feel a strong sense of meaning in their lives, a belief in themselves, and a commitment to living life well. Along with a strong, vigorous attitude and a close connection with their inner

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world, these survivors have a highly developed sense of self-control.\textsuperscript{294} The Daoist notion of "non-action" (\textit{wu wei}) is also a critique of an excess in terms of the operation of a living body since nourishing life is supposed to gain the calmness of mind, and to follow the natural patterns of things. \textit{(Zhuangzi: Yangsheng} (Nourishing Life) The body-microcosm, to the Daoist, is meant to correspond in all respects to the outer world and reflect it faithfully.

\textit{The Taste of Food/Medicine and the Taste of Life}

While Chinese medical theory relates "five emotions" to different disease-causing agents, Chinese also wisely and poetically make a connection between the taste of medicine or food and the taste of life itself. For instance, sweet is soothing and softening; sour taste can enhance the appetite; pungent taste is diaphoretic and then relaxing... On the other hand, Chinese emphasize that a person’s emotional activities have a great impact on one’s nervous system. So, when somebody is living in misery, a Chinese likes to say, “s/he is drinking the bitter wine of life,” and his/her health is jeopardized since the accumulation of emotional bitterness or anxiety is toxic to one’s body. Nevertheless, we all may have drunk the sweet and bitter wine of our lives, which always have ups and downs. I remember that when I first saw Lin, a very strong-minded businesswoman, I could see the illness on her face, which reflected the stressfulness and unhappiness in her personal life. Another friend of Lin, who claimed that he could read faces, said to her one

day: “I could read the death sign on your face. You poor thing, you must be terribly unhappy.”

Historically, Chinese intellectuals have never turned their attentions away from the happiness of human lives. In the works of Li Yu (1611-1680), there is an important section devoted to the pleasures of life, such as the ways of securing pleasure for the rich man and the poor man; in all the four seasons, the curing illness, ending in the unique division of medicine into three categories: “medicine that one likes by temperament,” “medicine that is needed at the moment,” and “medicine that one loves and longs for.” Li suggests that in order to maintain a normal balance and harmony of one’s body, a wise Chinese should have a strong determination to get the best out of life, a keen desire to enjoy what s/he has, and no regrets if s/he fails. He regards this attitude as the secret of the Chinese genius for contentment. Perhaps, this is also why Chinese can so open-mindedly enjoy the beauty and serenity in a simple cup of wine or tea. As Lin Yutang says:

Sometimes, when the wine was fragrant and the tea well-brewed, amidst the singing of the kettle and the gurgling of the spring, a happy thought came to the Chinese, and at intervals of about five hundred years, or under the forces of changed circumstances, their minds became creative and a new discovery was made either in the meter of poetry or in the improvement of porcelain, or in the art of grafting pear trees, and the nation moved on.

295 According to facial diagnosis in traditional Chinese medicine, one’s facial color has certain connection with certain illness, for instance, lung -- white; spleen -- yellow; heart -- red; liver -- blue/green; kidney -- black. For example, if a person has a weak or unbalanced spleen, his/her face color may appear yellow.

296 Ibid., P. 325-326.

“Be happy” and “be healthy” are major concerns for Chinese again in the 1990s. “Eat well” also became one of the slogans on the streets of Beijing, which reflects the basic economic achievement in China as well as the traditional Chinese belief — “you are what you eat.”

**Food and Medicine**

Huangcheng Laoma is a restaurant chain that started in China’s hotspot capital of Chengdu, Sichuan province. The Chaoyang district branch in Beijing is built in imitation of the classical architecture of southwestern China. While elegantly decorated with woodcuts, calligraphy, and two large friezes depicting Sichuan folktales, the dining area itself somewhat resembles a cafeteria with large number of tables. It provides different broths such as “Broiler Stock of Sea Horses,” “Medicinal Herb Broth,” and “Duck Broth.” These broths all have medical functions. For instance, “Duck Broth” comes complete with its own Xiaocao dongchong (Summer Grass Winter Worm) which is not a worm but a medicinal herb, which resembles a worm. The herb is supposed to be good for lung ailments. The *Lao Ma Hong* (Old Ma Red) liquor in this restaurant is loaded with medicinal herbs such as date which acts as a blood tonic and *gouqi* which is allegedly good for the eyes. With this hotpot, indeed, the more one drinks, the better s/he feels. In addition, the indirect lighting in the Huangcheng Laoma restaurant makes everybody look good. Remember: People who look good feel good. People who feel good tend to digest meals properly, which reduces irritability and tends to enhance one’s general sense of spiritual well-being.
In China, the marriage between food and medicine is absolutely a very ancient one. The first treatise on the medicinal qualities of foods in *The Inner Classic of the Yellow Emperor* was compiled in China about the second century B.C. Ke Yunlu argues that the foundations of the etiology, pathology, pathogenesis, treatment, and prevention of disease are laid down in *The Inner Classic of the Yellow Emperor*, along with the theoretical basis for dietotherapy.\(^{298}\) The Chinese, therefore, at a very early time, already linked health with diet. The guiding model for the treatment of disease was well established -- proper food and drink form the basis for curing illness.

The Daoist view of body is highly influenced by this central idea in *The Inner Classic of the Yellow Emperor*. For instance, zhai (on diet) is important in Daoism: on critical days one should observe a zhai. The rule is to purify oneself and to avoid any foods that might strengthen the forces of death. One should avoid, at these critical periods, stimulating and strong foods like garlic. The retreat is held in a clean, sparsely furnished place, away from all turmoil.

In the legends of Daoist Immortals, one of the most recurrent themes is that they do not eat grains. This rule is related to a whole complex of concepts and attitudes concerning different aspects of the body.\(^{299}\) In the Daoist theory on longevity, we also see some other concrete suggestions: Grind your teeth twenty-four times, swallow your breath twelve times. As you absorb the breath, think of the Original *qi* of the Great Harmony, which descends to the genitalia and spreads from there to the five viscera and

\(^{298}\) See Ke Yunlu, *Faxian Huangdineijing* (Discovering the Inner Classic of the Yellow Emperor), Zuojia chubanshe, 1997.

\(^{299}\) Daoists believe that the worms in human bodies are fed on cereals and the cutting off from grains weakens them to the point where they can be eliminated.
the four limbs, which all receive its beneficial action. This reflects an ancient philosophy
that all material things are considered part of an organic cosmos in which all the parts
belong, interact, and respond to the same dynamism. In the 1990s, Daoism still remains
present in common folk’s lives, for the highest Daoist goal is long life.

The modern offspring of the marriage between food and medicine is given a
modern name, dietotherapy -- the treatment of disease by using common foods. For
instance, in dietotherapy, a Chinese doctor may suggest that his patient eat dishes laden
with red peppers induces perspiration since traditional Chinese medicine advises that
sweat expels bodily toxins, purges the humors and helps equalize body temperature.
Perspiration also evaporates and causes a convection effect, thereby cooling off the chili-
consumer.

In China, over the centuries, specific foods and the recipes for the most common
ailments have been written. There are precise formulations for the preparation of
medicines for such pathologies as the common cold, influenza, bronchitis, infectious
hepatitis, insomnia, and the mumps. Food, such as Chinese dates, pepper, crystal sugar,
hawthorn, and the seed of Job’s Tear, can be bought either in a grocery shop or from a
herbalist to use as food or medicine or both. Hawthorn, in particular, is one of the most
popular ingredients in Beijing’s special local products, such as delicious pingtang hulu
(candied haws on a stick) and shanzha gao (haw jelly). Chinese also believe that
wolfberry liqueur is good for kidney troubles and black chicken broth is good for women.
In Beijing’s medicinal and gourmet restaurant, I also found honeysuckle tea, rabbit with
black sesame seed, ginseng soup, and buns made with a special fungus stuffing. Every
dish is good for some ailment or other. For instance, a common recipe, Chao yaohua, a
stir-fried dish of pig’s kidney with a special tree bark is good for one’s kidneys. This recipe is two thousand years old, having been concocted by Zhang Zhongjing, a famous doctor who lived during the Han Dynasty.

In the meantime, Chinese eating habits are grounded in their understanding of the cycles of nature and its four seasons. The traditional Chinese calendar is based both on the cycle of the sun (yang) and that of the moon (yin). The former is marked by the solstices and the equinoxes, and divides the year into twenty-four periods called “energy nodes” (jieqi). Each of these periods has a name corresponding to the change in the weather: “Great Heat,” “Small Cold,” “Awakening of the Insects.” The Chinese believe that one should eat different types of foods during each jieqi. Yin and yang serve to designate cold and hot, moon and sun, soft and hard, feminine and masculine, death and life. Their complementary opposition exists in everything and their alternation is the first law of Chinese cosmology: when yin reaches its apex, it changes into yang, and vice versa. The colors of one’s clothing, one’s food, everything has to be in keeping with the cosmic cycle so as not to interfere and to insure universal harmony. For a Chinese person, a normal, peaceful, regulated life is a major factor in his/her accumulation of spiritual power. Living according to the calendar cycles, the ever-renewed passing of the seasons, and participating in these through everyday life, is said to lead one naturally to a marvelous old age.

Food and Lifestyles

It appears alien to argue about Chinese lifestyles without talking about Chinese food. It is equally hard to explore Chinese food in general and Beijing cuisine in
particular, without mentioning different local cuisine since Chinese eating customs are so varied based on their diverse local lifestyles and Beijing cuisine is a negotiation of its metropolitan diversities.\footnote{See Appendix 2: Chinese Cuisine.}

China is heavily populated but has relatively little fertile land, so that the Chinese learned early on to use everything edible as food. The Great Wall and politics aside, the Chinese are neither nationalistic nor xenophobic when it comes to food.\footnote{Also see William Hu, \textit{Chinese Food and Folklore}, University of Hawaii, 1987.} Chinese welcomed the foods of foreign origins: eggplant from India in the Northern and Southern Dynasty (420-589); green beans from India in the Northern Song Dynasty; spinach from Persia in the Tang Dynasty; tomatoes from Southeast Asia in the Ming Dynasty; peas from the Central Asia; peanuts and sunflower-seeds from America; hot peppers also from America by way of Southeast Asia; and carrots, cabbage, and cauliflower from Europe, etc.\footnote{See Wang Xuetai, \textit{Zhongguo Yinshi Wenhua} (The Culture of Chinese Cuisine), Zhonghuashuju, 1993.}

During the Tang Dynasty (618-907 A. D.), the Golden Age of China, the taste of the exotic was indulged and thus, many foods were brought into China, including almonds, grapes, spinach, lettuce, figs, kohlrabi, sugar beets, leeks, and shallots. There are references to pine nuts and pistachios as well.\footnote{See Wang-Chuan Chen, \textit{Chinese Herb Cooking for Health}, Chunqing Publishing House, 1997. Also see Patricia Buckley Ebrey, \textit{Cambridge Illustrated History of China}, Cambridge University press, 1996.} It is no accident that the first known cookbook and the first nutrition textbook appeared during the Tang Dynasty. Although known long before, it was also during the Tang Dynasty that tea attained the popularity
that it can still boast to the present day. In addition, the growing influence of Buddhism and its emphasis on vegetarianism led to innovative uses of wheat products in the form of dumplings and fried dough strips, both of which one still sees everywhere in China.

The Tang period carried the rituals and celebrations of the Imperial Court to an even higher state of refinement. Official celebrations still made use of familiar rituals and familiar foods but both rituals and menus were enriched. Ancestors, especially imperial ones, were venerated as before. However, the Emperors now took to fasting as an act of purification before indulging in ceremonial feasts. The details of all the rituals and sacrificial offices were spelled out at length and codified in law. Needless to say, Chinese cuisine has been highly influenced by the aesthetic tastes of Chinese scholars and intellectuals. Poet and essayist Li Yu (1611-1680) wrote about his passion for crabs: “Meat as white as jade, golden roe-to try to use seasoning to improve its taste is like holding up a torch to brighten the sunshine.” In their personal practices, Chinese scholars concluded that the essence of Chinese cuisine was in the meaning of cooking (peng-tiao) itself. “Tiao” (adjusting) is to flavor food with different seasonings (cooking oil, salt, sauce, vinegar, wine, sugar, honey, ginger, cinnamon, garlic, mustard, etc.). The seasonings eventually lost their distinctive characters and merged into a new substance as a fine result of collective cooperation. “Peng” emphasizes huohou (basically temperature control), which requires that the temperature of food be “just right.” The Chinese philosophy of harmony, neutralization, and zhongyong (the doctrine of the mean) is artistically practiced in Chinese cooking. This, perhaps, sounds more like Confucianism, and less like Daoism.

304 Li Yu, Xianqing ouji, Zhejiang renmin chubanshe, 1993.
Beijing -- An Ancient Capital City and a Cosmopolitan Cuisine

Beijing’s charm is unique and ancient. In a chapter titled, “The Enchanting Beijing” in Xichao (Western Tides) Jiang Menglin recalls:

I had been living in Beijing for fifteen years in 1937 when the Sino-Japanese War began. In my memory, even the flying dust of Beijing is recalled with delight. I miss Beijing’s dust and I wish that I could see it again. In the morning, the sun rises. The sunshine illuminates the paper on the window on which the shadows of climbing vines swing in the wind. The redwood table would be covered by a thin layer of soft sand overnight. When I hold my feather duster and gently wipe off the dust on the table, I feel a kind of ineffable joy. Then, I sweep away the dust on the brush pot and inkstone. In the meanwhile, I can enjoy the landscape carved on the brush pot and the inkstone which has probably been used by many scholars in the past hundreds of years who might also carefully wipe out the dust as I am doing. In addition, the pottery in the period of Emperor Qianlong, the bronzeware in the Zhou Dynasty and the tortoise shells of divination in the Shang Dynasty (16th-14th century B.C.) four thousand year ago are also waiting for me to wipe them clean. The thread-bound Chinese books lying quietly on the bookshelves were printed before the Western world knew anything about printing. When I touch the cover of these books, I realize that the flying dust already visited them, too.\(^{305}\)

What Jiang recalls here with nostalgia is an “antique atmosphere” and “classic flair” which can “bring him back to The Periods Of Spring and Autumn when Confucius was setting up his teaching school, or the Tang Dynasty when the Christians first came to China. In addition, the fragrance of the towering old pine trees covered with moss, the palaces and royal gardens, the restaurants with their exquisite cuisine, the antique stores, and Beijing University invoke nuanced memories of Beijing. Beijing is a city of history, a cultural center and a mecca for scholars, artists, and intellectuals.

\(^{305}\) Jiang Menglin, Xichao (Western Tides), Taipei: Fuxin shuju, 1989, p. 201-2.
According to the legend, about 4000-3000 years ago, the Yan and Huang tribes fought three wars near the present-day Beijing. Wars spread southward to the areas along and beyond the Yellow River, which resulted in a unified Huaxia (Chinese) people. In the period of the legendary Emperor Yao, a city called You Du emerged in the Beijing area. Wars, trade and marriage were the means by which ancient people mixed together and conducted cultural exchanges. With her unique geographical location, Beijing played a vital role in this process and became the political center of the ethnic minority people in the northern China.  

Located in the Huabei Plains that belong to the Yellow River Valley, old Beijing was built in the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368). During 1267-83, Kublai Khan, founder of the Yuan Dynasty, built a metropolis, the most magnificent in the world at the time, on the ruins left by the plunder of Jin (1115-1234) rulers. Covering 42 square kilometers, the city was built entirely on an idealistic pattern depicted in ancient Chinese books. It was expanded repeatedly by emperors of the Ming and Qing dynasties to later become an integral, square-shaped city enclosed by high walls and composed of magnificent imperial palaces and neat streets and lanes (hutong) arranged in a unified order.

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306 See Beijing, Beijing chubanshe, 1995.

307 According to some statistics, more than 2,000 hutongs have disappeared in Beijing over the past 50 years. The term hutong, meaning a well according to the Beijing Place Names Office, began to be used extensively in Beijing during the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368). Due to the shortage of water supply in ancient Beijing, a great number of people used to live near a well. A passageway tended to be kept between buildings. With the growth in the number of residents, the passage was extended, thus forming a hutong. The disappearance of hutongs indicates that the ancient culture of Beijing is withering.

Since the early 1990s, the numerous buildings surpassing the height limits have ruined the elegant horizontal outlines characterized by yellow glazed tiles of the Forbidden City. Now, one tract after another of siheyuan (quadrangle, a compound with single-story houses around a courtyard) and hutong has been dismantled. The old architecture and Tianmenmen on the central axis have become a withered potted landscape under the squeeze of high buildings. "What the
Since several Dynasties in Chinese history chose Beijing as their capital, the variety of tastes from all corners of the land contribute to the uniqueness of Beijing cuisine. It is none and, at the same time, all. Zhou Zuoren, in his *Yunnan Zaji*, was puzzled by the absence of specialty in Beijing cuisine which seems not to match its powerful central political and cultural position in China. However, what Zhou noticed was also the cosmopolitan charm of Beijing cuisine. Indeed, Beijing was the capital in several dynasties, during which imperial palaces housed the best chefs from all over China. Since then, times come and go. The emperors’ chefs come and go. However, Beijing has become a metropolitan city that incorporates things of diverse natures.

As a northern city, Beijing is geographically close to traditional nomadic areas. In the Liao, Jin, Yuan and Qing Dynasties, Beijing was chosen as the capital by the ruling nomadic nationalities whose dietetic habits inevitably have influenced the characteristics of Beijing's cuisine. For instance, mutton plays an important role in many of Beijing's specialties, such as the Whole-Body-Lamb Banquet, stewed or roasted mutton, *Shuanyangrou* (instant-boil slices of lamb and vegetables in a chafing dish), and even some snacks like quick-fry sheep tripe slices, and lightly fried mutton dumplings.

During the Qing Dynasty (1644-1912), there were all kinds of palace banquets, occurring when a new emperor came into power, when the government changed its title of reign, when a war was won, for the Spring Festival, or for special birthdays. Roasted or boiled fish, deer and pork comprised the main dishes. In order to satisfy both the Han Chinese and the Manchu, however, the banquets were divided into two forms -- the Han
banquet and the Manchu banquet. Different cooking utensils, dinner sets, materials, and cooking methods were used. In the middle period of the Qing Dynasty, the customs and cultures of the Manchu and Han gradually blended, which promoted the development of a Qing Dynasty palace food culture in which the two styles became mixed. The materials used to cook the food were varied, and characteristically the food looked very beautiful and tasted delicious. As time went by, Mongolian, Hui and Tibetan foods were also added, so the *Man Han Quan Xi* (Manchu-Han Banquet), or Feast of Complete Manchu-Han Chinese, became the most colorful and luxurious banquet in Chinese history.

Since the Qing Dynasty, Beijing’s cuisine has been particularly impacted by the eating habits of the Menchu nationality, which traditionally enjoys pork. Therefore, roasted piglet and earthenware pots of stewed pork have been added to the distinctive Beijing cuisine. The most famous Beijing style of cuisine, Manchu-Han Banquet and Beijing Roasted-duck reflect the practice of "incorporating cuisine of diverse styles." In Manchu-Han Banquet, the main courses are Manchu’s roasted meats and southern cuisine’s shark’s fin, *Yanwo* (edible bird’s nest), sea cucumber, abalone, and squid; the dessert of Manchu’s traditional pastries and steamed buns is served in turn. The soups are chosen from Huaiyang (Yangzhou and Huaian areas) and Jiangzhe (Southern Jiangsu and Western Zhejiang areas) styles of cuisine. Beijing’s Roasted Duck uses Beijing duck, but it borrows the roasting technique from Huaiyang cuisine and the duck is eaten with raw Chinese green onion and lotus-leaf-pancake which are borrowed from Shandoing’s cuisine.

*hugong* and *siheyuan*, Beijing is losing its folk traditions, local features, human-related cultural values and historical anecdotes.
The restaurants in Beijing specializing in court food are the Fang Shan\textsuperscript{308} in the Beihai Park and Ting Li Guan in the Summer Palace. The Beijing Fangshan Restaurant offers the splendors of this style of cooking. The restaurant was established in 1925 (its predecessor was the imperial kitchen of the Qing Dynasty). Since its opening, it has developed the original courses of palace food and now has more than eight thousand kinds of courses and desserts.

The various local cuisines of China, as well as the foreign haute cuisine and fast foods, all came to Beijing. These cuisines have coexisted, mixed, and transformed. So, Beijing became a melting pot for different cuisines -- an echo of the grand times of different Dynasties.

In addition to a vast array of different kinds of Chinese food, people in Beijing can also indulge cravings for the cuisine of a good number of the China's fifty-six official minorities. The popularity of exotic ethnic cuisine is on the rise in Beijing. For instance, the staple of Tibetan food is tsampa, ground barley usually cooked into porridge and served with rancid yak butter tea. The Dai people of Yunnan are ethno-linguistic cousins of the Thai and their cuisine has similarities to Thai food. Deep-fried tree moss is delicious, as are the many rice-based dishes served in coconut shells and hollowed out pineapple halves. The Chinese Muslim (Hui) minority's cuisine is heavy on fried, spiced lamb. Delicious baked or flat bread coated in sesame seeds is a special feature of Hui cuisine in Beijing. The Muslim ethnic group from Xinjiang prefers its lamb roasted over

\textsuperscript{308} Fangshan is inside the mansion and garden of Prince Gong of the Qing Dynasty is nearby. The 1000-room mansion is the most exquisitely decorated and best preserved among the princely mansion in Beijing. The garden covers 25,000 square meters, with artificial rockeries, covered corridors and pavilions. It is said that the Grand View Garden described in the novel \textit{A Dream of Red Mansions} was modeled after it.
a fire. Uighur cuisine is also noted for its fine spicy tomato salads, flat bread called naan, noodle dishes and lightly spiced soups made with bell pepper, tomato and mutton. The proximity of the sheep-and-goat-filled Mongolian plains has ensured that mutton is an essential part of the northern diet and the Mongolian hotpot is a winter favorite in Beijing. Diners put thinly sliced meat and vegetables into a broth in a pot boiling away at the center of the table. A moment later, a cooked morsel is removed, dipped in a sesame paste and garlic sauce and eaten. One of the memorable views of Beijing at night is the joy of many small restaurants serving instant-boiled mutton.\textsuperscript{309} They can be found everywhere and the special Sichuan menu “Ma, La Tang” was more popular than the film it inspired, \textit{Love- Spicy and Hot} (1998).\textsuperscript{310} Sichuan hotpot is similar to Mongolian hotpot, but the broth is made with red chillis and Sichuan wild pepper. It was originally served as a street snack, with the meat and vegetables served on skewers for easy boiling. In the late 1990s, we have seen an ongoing craze on Beijing streets for “Ma La Tang.”

From the end of 1980s to the early 1990s, Beijing’s local liquor Erguotou has come to be in accord with the \textit{qingxiang} model after adapting the yeast from Shanxi Fenjiu. Erguotou is only 5 yuan per bottle, the cheapest among the well-known Chinese wines. However, Erguotou has been chosen to be served in the Great Hall of the People in Beijing. It is welcomed by people of different ages and its charm endures. It’s quite interesting that Erguotou may be the only cheap liquor that nobody feels they lose face in drinking in extravagant circumstances. After 1994, there were some changes in business banquet rituals and the rediscovery of traditional rituals. In the early 1990s, at a business

\textsuperscript{309} Thin slices of mutton and vegetables are scalded in a chafing dish. Seafood and other food also can be used.
banquet there were normally twenty or even thirty dishes served. With the improvement of the economy of the majority Chinese, the style of formal dinner has changed in the mid-1990s. A desire for refinement, excellency or the best quality became the new trend. The host preferred to choose dishes by their refined quality, not by their extravagant quantity. “Eat out of heart!” is a Chinese philosophy about the relationship between food and human relationships. Chinese society is a renben (humanistic) society in which renqing (human touch, favor and relationship) always plays an important role in daily life. Even after the reform of the legal system, economic system and other systems, the cultural concept of “la guanxi” (establish relationship) and “zou houmen” (get in by the back door)\textsuperscript{311} have not disappeared from Chinese society. The Chinese saying “yue he yue hou, yue du yue bo” (the more they drink, the deeper their friendship grows, the more they gamble, the more meager their relationship goes) is still true in Chinese society of the 1990s. Nevertheless, in a good relationship with one’s family and friends, Chinese continue enjoying their good food and good health.

It is a Chinese saying that all things in heaven and earth find their own place or balance. Kingdoms rise and fall. Nations come and go. Many things like “heat waves” also come and go. And so does food.\textsuperscript{312} However, “eating, drinking, man, woman” is always the fundamental phenomena in our human world. For this, Confucius reduced the great desires of human beings to two - alimentation and reproduction or in simpler terms, food, drink and sex.

\textsuperscript{310} Ma, la and tang is a Sichuan style of spicy chafing dish.

\textsuperscript{311} Secure advantages through pull or influence.

\textsuperscript{312} Also see K. C. Chang, Food in Chinese Cuisine: Anthropological and Historical Perspectives, Yale University, 1977.
Chapter Seven: Yin/Shi - Nan/Nu (Drink/Eat - Man/Wman)

Prostitution, as one of the most ancient professions, has reemerged in China since 1980s. Constantly, some local KTV halls, especially those in Hainan and northeast China were closed down for their involvement in sex business. According to what I heard and read in Chinese newspapers, some xiaojie in KTV bars even claimed publicly that the easiest way a woman could have power in a man’s world was to manipulate men so that she ended up with a full purse, and then continued to work through men to achieve her own goals.

Certainly, we cannot ignore that different xiaojie chose to work in KTV bars for different reasons. One day, I happened upon a book about women’s issues in the 1930s - 1940s. One of the article, “A Waitress’s Words,” discusses the gender issues in public houses:

With the changing environment, public houses [wine shops or bars] and restaurants have sprung up like mushrooms, which embellishes a flourishing Shanghai. Many restaurants are remodeled and turned into splendid places. At the same time, young and pretty women are hired as another type of attraction. However, how pathetic we are! Driven by whips from hard life, we have to torture our body and soul, sinking into a world of filth and mire.

Just when we got our jobs, we were so excited. With our pure and simple minds, we expected to bid a farewell to a tough life through hard labor. But, at work, our boss demanded that we should wear heavy make-up and dress in expensive and gorgeous clothes. We began to lose our honesty and simplicity. We had to assume a charming smile and hide our innermost sadness. Most of us had to support our families since our parents had lost their jobs. But our several hundreds per month salaries were inadequate to support our families, let alone the expenses for make-up and clothing in order to keep up appearances for the boss. We worked thirteen hours a day and suffered deep mental trauma. We had to endure humiliation and sneers without any sympathy and comfort from others. If we did not accept customers’ frivolous behavior, we would be fired.
Men assume that we waitresses are not pure and honest women. However, our determination to achieve a decent and meaningful life cannot be destroyed. We are using our limited leisure time for studying even though we didn’t have the opportunity to go to school before. We are eager to learn from life and pursue a decent future. We do not want to be slaves forever. Though we have a low social status now, we still keep our compassion and big hearts. We do not want to accept any offer with an evil intent and we refuse to reap without sowing. Hence, we will work hard to shake off the yoke of our life and seek a brighter new future.  

More than half century has passed since this speech of a Chinese bargirl was published in a local newspaper in Shanghai. In the 1990s, the issue of gender is still a controversial topic around bar girls, especially the xiaojiemen in Karaoke bars.

Surrounded by delicious light refreshments in Beijing’s Karaoke bars, I was impressed by the sophisticated and strong-minded female managers, pretty, vivacious and often mercenary waitresses, and well-mannered, stylish female patrons. Some people called these women “social butterflies.” During my less than seven-month stay in China, I witnessed an ever greater number of bars and clubs hiring an increasing influx of pretty alien or country girls who were attracted to the city by the “dushi ciji” (“metropolitan excitement”). So, in this chapter, I intend to offer a cultural critique of gender as one of the colorful commercial products, displayed in the showcase of urban leisure institution -- KTV (Karaoke Bars).

**KTV:**

The muddy road after the rain reflected the streetlights. The smell from the restaurants was alluring. Fulin KTV bar was still silent in the dimness, with a silhouette

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313 Bo Xin, "Shenbao-Ziyou Tan (Shanghai Newspaper: Free-talk)", December 16, 1942.
of an elongated red lantern on the wall. Yan went there often. If not, the girls there would call him at home for an invitation. A month ago, a Mongolian girl jumped from the second floor, bruising herself everywhere after he brought his wife there with him for the first time. He went there for comfort despite the expense because he needed to have somebody to talk to. He particularly needed to be cared for by a girl. If she was not only considerate, but also young and pretty; that was even better.

In China, KTV bars often change their styles and are known for their reasonable prices, which makes them popular with customers of all ages. My friend Lao Guo’s KTV bar, for instance, is designed inside a huge oil barrel. While his petrochemical factory is in a depression, his entertaining business is still booming. The large parlor of a KTV hall is often arranged with couches and carpets, several big leather chairs, and low tables in front of each couch. Candles in glass jars shine on each table and ashtrays are also available.

Some of the customers lay silently on the sofas, lost in their own thoughts or gazing at the Karaoke screen with blank expressions. Others talked together in low, monotonous voices or tried to pay attention to the words of their neighbors in order to offer an appropriate response every now and then. Through the gloom, I could only barely catch a glimpse of customers sitting on couches, with here and there a gaze turned upon the newcomers. Out of the black shadows little red circles of light glimmered, now bright, now faint. Working girls were instinctively more aware of any young and pretty female customers.

In KTV bars, a customer can buy a bouquet of flowers for a xiaojie he likes. The
flowers are publicly shared and can be transferred from one xiaojie by one customer to another xiaojie by another customer. According to the rule, the KTV bar and xiaojie themselves also get a portion of the money paid by the customers for flowers. Giving flowers shows more courtesy than directly giving money. The xiaojie who gets the flowers says something sweet to the customer before she sings a song. In front of a big crowd, flirting flies from the microphone and floats in the air to catch everyone's attention. Customers are illuminated by a track light and fussed over by a pretty xiaojie, which is considered a way to earn face. Most of the customers are businesspeople. Frequenting KTVs is part of the business and sending some nice message through xiaojie to business partners is widely practiced. When a businessman is bathed in light, he might not be able to take off his formal dark suit, yet a sudden relaxation shows on his face. Overnight, a business competitor can become a friend in this kind of pleasant atmosphere.

While the male customers in KTVs typically choose to sing a song Xiaofang (which expresses a man’s romantic and nostalgic feeling toward a beautiful and gentle country girl), xiaojiemen prefer to sing a popular song in recent years called "Dage, Ni Hao Ma?" (Big Brother, How Are You?): “Do you know how many good meimei (meimei literally means younger sister, but it refers to female lovers here) you really have? Why are every one of your meimei's eyes brimming with tears?”

However, men do not like to see the sad faces and listen to any complains; they only enjoy cheerful smiles in a KTV hall. Men have worries of their own, and so they do not want to listen to other women (if they have to be tolerant to their wives) complaining of aches or weariness. Most of the men want a xiaojie in a KTV hall to “be the best
Customers at the karaoke parlor choose a xiaojie (girl) from a lineup. The girl then must spend the rest of the night with the guy who chooses her; she lights his cigarettes, pours his booze, laughs at his jokes, etc. At the end of the night the customer is expected to tip the girl up to hundreds or even thousands of yuan. In such circumstances, one of the most controversial issues about KTV bars becomes the dubious relationship between male customers and xiaojiemen. Many male customers often use "ma, la, tang" to describe xiaojiemen in KTV bars. In the past couple of years, one of the popular mass cuisines in Beijing was Ma-la-tang.314 "Ma" is peppery (a flavor created by Chinese prickly ash and other seasonings), "la" is spicy, "tang" is hot. People associate those characteristics of food with the desire for true love: strong, warm and tasty. Ironically, although most of the men in KTV bars flirt, talk, lap up the hostesses' attentions, and feel important, they ultimately keep xiaojiemen at a distance — by judging their looks, leaving them at the door of the KTV halls, and keeping them assigned to a different and secondary order of being: the sanpei women.315 Compared to a wife or serious girlfriend of these men, sanpei women are easily dismissed or disregarded.

The new emergence of sanpei women evokes a public discussion on the issues of gender and sexuality. In the early 1980s, when the door towards the Western world was somewhat open, young women of different backgrounds hung out in the nightclubs of five or four-star western-style hotels (e.g., the Great Wall Hotel, Hilton Hotel) in Beijing, and many of them, unfortunately, were despised as prostitutes, including some young

314 Ma-la-tang is a Sichuan style of food, spicy and hot I saw it was advertised as a special dish on the signboards everywhere. Even a new film in 1998 was named "Love ma-la-tang."
college girls. Recently, it is often heard that some young and beautiful women choose an "easy way of making money," and participate in the life of "zuotai" (to be one or several male patrons' drinking and chatting companion in nightclubs) or "zoutai" (to be "picked up" by one male patron and sleep with him). They throw a dark shadow on the image of "social butterflies," and evoke a new social concern about gender issues in new economic and cultural circumstances.

Mian Mian, a former KTV xiaojie and a recent popular writer, accepted an interview by American journalist Gary Jones in 1998. Jones recalled:

A huge, cracking neon sign bolted over the window bathes 29 year-old Shanghai writer Mian Mian in scarlet and sour green light. Skin flushed and sensuous one moment, anemic and lifeless the next, she lounges on the bed in a cheap Shanghai hotel dragging on one in an endless chain of cigarettes. Soon she will prowl the city's bars and nightclubs, seeking out the doomed and damned that populate her roman a clef prose. Prostitutes, junkies, strippers and club kids. Gangsters, punks, groupies and pimps—all are not-so-fair game for this nocturnal chronicle of China's seedy underbelly.316

Mian Mian's tale is one of personal liberation, excess and redemption. Reflecting a new generation of writers who are shaking off the Communist Party's shackles on creativity and spurring Chinese fiction into unexplored territory, Mian Mian's milieu is marked by wretched love affairs, hard drugs, suicide and promiscuous sex.

In the China of the early 1980s, sexuality was still a sensitive issue, even in the arena of literature. There are a few novels, however, that explore sexuality in ways that are relevant to our discussion of KTV bars and the interaction between men and women

315 A sanpei woman is often sexually involved with her male clients.

in these bars. Zhang Xianliang's 1983 novel *Luhua Shu* ("Mimosa") was one of the few novels that caught a nationwide attention for its reference of sexuality. In "Mimosa," the protagonist Zhang Yonglin, a petty-bourgeois intellectual, is sentenced to do hard labor at a labor-reform farm. Zhang Yonglin, being an intellectual and an avid reader of Marx, cannot help reflecting on the material aspect of this reform process. Materially speaking, the labor reform places him at a level of living that is below subsistence. There never is enough food to eat and no provision is made for his sexual needs. Everything in his immediate environment apparently wants to reduce him to the two most basic of animal instinctual needs -- food and sex.\(^{317}\)

To Zhang, food represents nature and, at the level of physical survival, food represents a relationship between man and Nature such that Nature provides the source of food or sustenance for humans. Mimosa is the woman who not only freely offers food to Zhang but is also available for the gratification of his need for sex. Faced with the discrepancy in social standing between himself and Mimosa, Zhang wonders what would happen if he applied Marx's theories of "use value and exchange value" to men's relations to emotion and sex.

In another of Zhang novels, *Nanren de Yiban Shi Nuren* ("Half of Man is Woman"), the problem is no longer one of whether it is necessary for man to conquer, control, manage and distribute women in order to transcend his animal existence and enter into a new social order. An integral question in this novel is how man can most efficiently appropriate woman as a resource so that he may transform himself into a

subject in the emerging social order. While Wang Anyi in her "Three Themes on Love" explores sexuality and female subjectivity as a means of testing the limits of reality and the boundaries of human consciousness, Zhang Xianliang uses sexuality and gender relationships in order to expose human strength and weakness, social dynamics, and social ills. One of Zhang Xianliang's claims is: "Men will not stay with the women who made them men." Why? Zhang does not offer his own clear answers.

A man will not stay with a woman for different reasons. And gender issues are profoundly beyond sexuality. In Lu Xun's Shangshi (Regret for the Past, 1925), Juansheng is the first narrator who, in a series of notes, attempts to reconnect with and redeem the essence of his life during a period shortly after the outbreak of the May Fourth Movement. This is a crucial moment for Juansheng because he transforms himself in this period from a follower of "new thoughts" into a poor writer, trying to sell manuscripts to support his family of two. After the more stirring moments of the revolution have passed, Juansheng realizes that while he was plunging hard into life, exhausting his brain in the desperate hope of filling their stomachs, the woman he loved had drifted farther and farther away from a "meaningful" course of life. To his great disappointment, Zijun's life was now preoccupied with none other than dogs, hens, and other domestic trivialities:

Then there was the never-ending business of eating every day. All Zijun's efforts seemed to be devoted to our meals. One ate to earn, and earned to eat; A Sui [the dog] and the hens had to be fed too. Apparently, Zijun had

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forgotten all she had ever learned, and did not realize that she was interrupting my train of thought when she called me to meals. And although as I sat down I sometimes showed a little displeasure, she paid no attention at all, but just went on munching away quite unconcerned.  

Lu Xun, with his sharp pen, portrays in cruel details how the triviality of life kills a young couple’s ideals and romance. Ling Shuhua, a bright female writer in the 1920s, offers her observation of how a man can change his mind once he suddenly finds the change in a woman:

Ching-jen paced the reception room and smilingly watched his wife put away articles of worship to his ancestors as she gave orders to the cook: "Later, when you serve dinner, no need to heat the fish again; add some cooking wine to the chestnut chicken and stew it again; also add some sugar to the vegetable dish and stew it some more. The 'Together Duck' is a little tough. Simmer it some more." "That's right, simmer the 'Together Duck' some more. Could we also add some slices of bamboo shoots to it?" Ching-jen asked his wife, walking up to her. From his beaming face, he was quite pleased with her arrangements and he felt that his wife was quite an attractive woman [my emphasis].

But, after a severe quarrel between Ching-jen and his wife, his previous tender feelings for his wife gave way to misogynistic observations:

As his wife used a fresh handkerchief to wipe off her tears, he noticed how unsightly her swollen nose was. How her lips, which he had considered pretty, looked purplish without lipstick, dark and contorted from crying. He also noticed how slanted her plain eyes really were, a flaw he had failed to notice before because he was in love with her. Suddenly he remembered what his mother used to say: "Slanted-eyed women are the most difficult to handle." This was the first time in his married life that he had become aware of her ugliness [my emphasis].


320 Ling Shuhua, "Zhongqiu wan" ("The Night of Midautumn Festival"), translation is an adaptation from Nathan Mao's translation in Modern Chinese Stories and Novellas, 1928, p. 200-205.

A man also claims to change his mind after he gradually recognizes the change in a woman. He might claim that he chose her as his date because she was "available, delicious, and relatively inexpensive." These are the reasons given by people all over the world for why they like Chinese food. He might divorce her because she was also available to other men and too expensive after she became his wife. On the other hand, a man's attitude toward a woman can be similar to his attitude toward food: he may develop his addiction to certain cuisine, and at the same time, his interest or curiosity in new flavors sparks as well.

However, how about women? They also change their minds. After a woman I knew broke up with her first boyfriend, she met different men. She claimed that her life was sweet and sour just like tiansuan rou (Chinese sweet and sour pork). In her recent romance, she recognized that in her new lover's life, she could be soup, dessert, or beverage, but not a main course. However, she did not want to leave him. He had opened up a whole world for her, a vast world full of suffering and passion, a world she'd never known before. It had changed her outlook on the world, her whole aesthetic. He had helped her discover and develop her own talents. He had made her mature into a real woman. Therefore, she gave her own testimony -- the half of woman is man. Quite often, a Chinese woman's consistent silence of thought is a kind of "let-it-be" of thought. She believes that a good woman is a good school to a man and vice versa. Thus, she is especially grateful to those men who open for her a world of taste and style. Ding Ling,

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another well-known Chinese writer, discusses the subtlety of this kind of gender issue in her famous novel *The Diary of Miss Sophia*:

> Her love for the self that grew out of her intimate relation with him surpassed by far her love for the man himself, although she had not fully realized it at the moment.\(^{323}\)

She likes the new self, the self as presented to her lover's eyes. As a brand new, unfamiliar self, she is able to experience many new and unfamiliar feelings; or her brand new and unfamiliar feelings enable her to discover and create a brand new, unfamiliar self. She is pleased to discover the boundless imaginative and creative powers this new self is capable of.\(^{324}\)

In Ding's world of fiction or nonfiction, women themselves are also the players in the game of gender. With their new lovers they play a new role, give a new performance. They do not really have to love these men but only the selves that they become when they are with them. They can throw away their old selves like the chef who plays with his colorful foods. As Meng Yue points out, "While the woman pursues her goal and becomes mature, the male characters represent various plot spaces, positions, or personified obstacles that she must enter, pass through, and emerge from."\(^{325}\) Thus, gender relations are not predicated on the desires of either man or woman alone but on the reworking of the subjectivity of male and female each in his/her own terms and in terms of each other. In gender relationships, men and women are seeking to *remold* and

\(^{323}\) Ding Ling, "Shafei nushi riji" ("The Diary of Miss Sophia"), in *Ding Ling duanpian xiaoshuo xuan* (Ding Ling's short stories), Beijing, 1981, p. 31.

\(^{324}\) Ding Ling, "Shafei nushi riji" ("The Diary of Miss Sophia"), in *Ding Ling duanpian xiaoshuo xuan* (Ding Ling's short stories), Beijing, 1981.

reconstruct themselves. In a “post-Heideggerian” notion, man or woman is a purely self-interpreting being, in its fundamental motivation as well as its practical implications.

Ideally, men can get the best part of women; and women try to give them their best part. However, in the routine life of men and women, something can be missing or gone forever and there is a kind of loneliness that cannot be explained to anyone else. A xiaojie in a KTV bar told me that men often frequented KTV, seeking conversation. They were bothered by the enormous distance that separated different men and women and made people unable to share the most important matters of their lives. I asked about her relationships with her male customers. She claimed: “Things could get worse.” She further told me that in a sealed, stifling world dominated by money, men and women mutually become victims of some spell, using or being used, cheating or being cheated, hurting or being hurt. Sometimes, she felt like living in the kind of dreams where one was guided by a sort of fatal inevitability, where it would be futile to try to change the simplest situation or conduct basic communication. I was impressed by the strong desire for communication among some xiaojie in KTV bars. In the past, like many others, I rarely thought about these women without the prejudices simply based on the controversies of their professions. I had difficulty trusting most of the KTV xiaojiemen who were, in my view, utterly practical.

In current China, practical young women are indeed attracted to the social gloss and connections of middle-aged businessmen, who can introduce the girls to the world of fine clothes and even finer food. These women can catch a revealing glimpse of the calculating side of themselves in action. They are conscious about how the men they are dealing with are helping them to make social contacts, and are teaching them things they
need to know. Intimate relationships with people in power promises them an enticing role as a social queen of their microcosmos, sharing confidences and the society columns with their new friends, entertaining the members of clubs and elite business circles. Certainly, it is not a bad thing for young women without a strong background and outstanding talents to have a polished and metropolitan social dimension. On the other hand, since "making 'wise' selection of a mate requires a considerable amount of knowledge and experience," the KTV bars and nightclubs can be the right places for young women to see and listen, and to compare and learn. Once they have gained more experience on the dating stage, both by having dated more individuals and by having the opportunity to consider a wider range of potential marriage partners, they should be able to make a better choice when it comes time to select someone to wed. Therefore, the KTV bars or nightclubs become a place to evoke and materialize the desires of young women for a change and the possibility to make a change, especially to make a speedy change because of a fortuitous chance or an "accident" (e.g., an interesting if not dramatic moment; a special meeting, or an unexpected encounter with an "ideal" date).

Obviously, in the last fifteen years, one's wealth is often more powerful than one's virtue in China and many Chinese marriages are "colored" with different practical considerations. The gambling spirit has become an essential ingredient for both Chinese men and women. The smell of money -- the lust for power and money -- rules much of Chinese life for both men and women. Because of the transitional flux in their lives, the emotional lives of many women also have the structure and character of the new Golden

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age of China. Thus, marriage is not only an opportunity to rise in social station, but also to gain renown and authority. Therefore, though class and educational matching in marriage are still important considerations, they have been challenged and changed markedly by the weight of money. Consequently, whether a woman "marries down" or "marries up" depends on what she cares about most. More and more young women join the trend of "bang da kuan" (staying with a rich guy) though they are often resented and despised by the public for their extreme "materialism."

Unsurprisingly, a lot of nouveaux-riches businessmen’s girlfriends are the sort of “social butterfly” type of women who know what is expected of them and just do it. In public or private, they know how “to behave,” so that things can work out. Ideally, romance, work, and mutual encouragement would be the pattern that these women shared with their lovers. It is also fair to say that most businessmen’s new wives are also good housekeepers who run the household and handle much of the discipline in family affairs, because their husbands are away from home so often — the usual, painful reason for their absence is that they are off romancing other women. If these women have not married for passion, it is not a big problem for them. But, if they are strongly emotionally involved, a family tragedy may result. However, what these wives willingly or unwillingly begin to learn from their experiences are the ways in which a family maneuvers around a problem and does not acknowledge it. Keep up appearances. Just protect the impression of the microcosmos about the family. They do not talk about what is really bothering them and just make sure that they keep on “playing the game.”

If love and marriage correspond to a very particular standard of human relationships and structure of feelings, beyond this standard, there is also an abundance of
modifications and nuances.

*She is Yin, and He is Yang*

The ancient ideas of the Chinese cosmos are expressed by the *yin-yang* sign, which symbolizes the dualism of the world. *Yin* is the female principle, *yang* the male. In *Daode Jing*, Laozi not only emphasizes the harmonious relationships between men and women, but also gives women his special respect:

The Dao gives birth to One.  
One gives birth to Two.  
Two gives birth to Three.  
Three gives birth to all things.  
All things have their backs to the female and stand facing male.  
When male and female combine, all things achieve harmony.  
   *Daode Jing Chapter 42*  
The female by quiescence conquers the male;  
By quiescence gets underneath.  
   -- Daode Jing  Chapter 61

Consequently, male represents the "strong," "big" and "hard." Female represents "weak," "small," and "soft." According to Daoism, *yin* belongs the earth and the moon, water, the North, darkness, and cold; *yang* the sky and the sun, fire and noon, light, and warmth. Laozi gives a priority of the "weak," "small," and "soft" over the "strong," "big" and "hard." Laozi contends, "returning is the action of the Dao" and "weakness is the usefulness of the Dao."

In *The Literary Mind and The Carving of The Dragons*, Liu Xie also says: "Nature, creating living beings, endows them with limbs in pairs." This Chinese idea that all things go in pairs is derived from a fundamental onto-cosmological outlook of *yin* and *yang* that is expressed in the *Yijing*. The polarity of *yin* and *yang*, for the Chinese, suggests not only the formation and the transformation of the ultimate reality (the *Dao*)
but also the formation and the transformation of human history. However the polarity of the *yin* and the *yang* cannot be interpreted as dichotomies and contradictions because *yin* and *yang* are both *xiangsheng* (mutual arisings) and *xiangke* (mutual conquest): They are complementary opposites and opposite complements. It is said in the *Yijing* "yi-yin-yi-yang [one-yin-one-yang, or the balance between yin and yang] is the *Dao.*" English translations such as the "law of identity," "relational thinking," the "principle of dependent-arising," the "relation of opposites," and the "identity of contraries" reflect the notion of identity in differences and differences in identity implied in the polarity of *yin* and *yang*. The transformation and alternation of the two forces, for instance, the man and woman, are represented by a process of conflict and harmonization.

The physiological and pathological theories expressed in ancient Chinese medicine, as we discussed in chapter 6, are also based on the *yin/yang* principle, from which a plethora of polarities are developed: interior and exterior, hot and cold, dry and wet. Recall that in the practice of medicine, instead of deciphering the dysfunction of an individual part, Chinese medicine emphasizes the patterns of bodily dynamism as a whole. It is commonly believed that if that which causes a person’s pain is something hot, or cold, or dry, or wet, then he or she who would carry out the cure should counteract cold with hot, hot with cold, wet with dry, and dry with wet. In his relationship with women, a man knows that his sense of authority is naturally and nicely manifested by a woman’s obedience or gentleness.

Therefore, the stereotyped Chinese feminine attributes are being tender, sweet, graceful and loving. A skilled and clever woman is supposed to be made for a man who is assured of his manliness; for a male to depend on a female is a way of building a certain
sense of dependence into his construction of masculinity.

Similarly, Anne Allison bases her observation on her study of a Japanese hostess bar: “Men like to be in charge or have the appearance of being in charge; to be the focus of attention or the ones deciding to whom the attention will be directed; to have their words listened to and accepted; and to be generally fussed over, pumped up, complimented, flattered, and indulged. Men structure these behaviors mainly with women. With other men they agree on things, share jokes, praise one another or playfully put each other down, and engage in parallel or joint behavior (flirting with different hostesses, for example, or flirting together with a single hostess).”

But, like modern Japanese women, Chinese women are not only strong but also use obedience as a means to reach an end that involves conquest. The Chinese idiom yirou ke gang literally means to use softness to conquer toughness. Furthermore, in the 1990s, the traditional images of gender relationships tilt and lose their balance. “It is only because your heart is too soft, your heart is too soft,” are the most touching words in a popular song in 1997, which conveys some dilemma of Chinese men’s attitude toward Chinese women who began to be out of their control in the 1990s. “Strike the right blow at the right time,” were the highly acclaimed words from a theme song in the classic TV soap-opera Shuihu (Watershed), which was borrowed to describe an in-time business activity, as well as the right time to show masculinity, yet not indicate violence. According to a survey in 1998, Chinese men are mostly attracted to the Chinese women who combine the modern spirit of independence and the virtues of a traditional Chinese

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lady.

A Lady

The central images of traditional Chinese ladies portrayed in classical writings are demure and virtuous:

Guan-guan goes to the ospreys,
On the islet in the river.
The modest, retiring, virtuous, young lady --

For our gentleman a good mate she.
Here long, there short, is the duckweed,
To the left, to the right, borne about by the current
The modest, retiring, virtuous, young lady --
Waking and sleeping, he sought her.
He sought her and found her not,
And waking and sleeping he thought about her.
Long he thought; oh! long and anxiously;
On his side, on his back, he turned, and back again. 328

This poem describes the journey of an ancient Chinese man seeking a Chinese lady -- the modest, retiring, and virtuous young lady. In China, the idea of a lady is normally connected with *dajia guixiu* (excellent woman from a family of high social standing) and the qualities of a *guixiu* comprise a combination of sound familial education, graceful personal appearance and behaviors, and a keen sense of one’s own role with regard to different people. Chinese *dajia guixiu* share some characteristics with Western salon ladies.

When Emily Putnam analyzes the history of the lady in “The Lady of the Salon,” she depicts the charm of a salon lady as such: "The soft bloom of the lady’s cheek, the gentle brilliance of her eyes, the light luxuriance of her hair, the tender colors and

328 *Shi Jing* (Book of Poetry), 6th century B.C. Legge, James’s translation.
graceful fabrics of her dress, the characteristic sentiment of her whole appearance are recalled to us at once by the mere mention of the pastel. It carries with it a whole theory of manners, of love and life.”\(^{329}\)

But, Putnam points out that “[t]he lady of the salon formulated this art of life in a very high spirit and called it ‘politesse’:\(^{330}\)

Little by little, woman's beauty becomes animated and refined. It is no longer physical, material, brutal. She steps out so to speak from the type in which she was imprisoned and flashes with the light of liberty. She acquires lightness, animation, and spiritual liveliness. She discovers the soul and the secret of modern beauty — expression. Her depths, her reflections, her smile come as you gaze at her, her eyes speak. Intelligence passes over her face and transfigures it. The intelligence of the eighteenth century models the woman's face upon the masque of the comedy of Marivaux, so mobile, so finely shaded, so delicate and so prettily animated by all the coquetry of the heart, of charm and of taste.\(^{331}\)

Thus, a lady, gradually, can ground her ideal of life in her aesthetic value through her style and her manner. Therefore, we recognize that the classical image of a lady in China and the West has certain common features, such as vivid intelligence and elegant manners.

**New Gender Relationships in the 1990s**

In the 1990s, as we discussed earlier, a bar street in China can be a training place for women who desire to change their lives. Sitting there, walking there, they expose


\(^{330}\) Ibid., p. 242.

\(^{331}\) Ibid. p. 221.
their appreciation, yearning, calculation, jealousy, and composed competition. They are ready to accept any good advice and follow it as a river follows its course. They admire the stylish women walking on Fifth Avenue in New York. But, at the same time, these Chinese girls have their own styles or they are just lovely Chinese young girls. Even the most modern Beijing girl with dyed reddish hair and silver lips still could not conceal her Chinese girl’s identity. They look much softer and more pleasant than the punk-dressed American girls. They also have their own standards for accepting or rejecting foreign fashions and know how to transform them into their own styles: zhongyong/middle-way, yet still unique. They play the role of transferring and remaking Western lifestyles in the social and cultural context of current China. These girls are not only familiar with Western fashions, but also with their own tastes. They claim that they are Chinese citizens who would be neither haughty nor humble in a worldwide stage of fashions and trends.

Finally, I want to quote Wang Anyi’s words to lead to my concluding remarks on the gender relationships inside and outside KTV halls:

Body and soul, she is there to be read and recorded in justification of a man’s own assertion of self-integrity, his own transcendence of a painful crisis of identity. 332

For Emmanuel Levinas, when one enters into dialogue of alterity, (s)he can learn or grow. No longer does the Self as Self-identical reign in the mood of inferiority and consciousness, in the mood of proud triumph of identity, in the world of being and identity: rather the Self first finds his/her sense and orientation in the mode of sensibility, in the mood of humility and willingness to be wounded in and for the face of the

vulnerable other, beyond being and identity. Not plenitude of being and intelligibility but responsibility is both the first and last word. The self of a man or a woman is elected to substitution, and thereby transformed from solitude to solicitude.

In brief, there is always something ancient and universal in gender or any other human relationship. Around the dinning table, if the guests’ looks show a calm mind and a respectful amiability, that is best. “Say nothing that can arouse conflict, or anger others,” “be a good table companion,” and “control yourselves” are regarded as good rules of etiquette. Most simply and most effectively, just “Smile at everybody.” Yes, just smile. In my college autograph album in China, a classmate left such a sentence: “A good woman will often put a smile on her face.”
Chapter Eight: Back to Modernity

It's an early afternoon in February. When I was wandering on the street of Liuli Chang, well known for its antique shops, bookstores and other delicate artifacts, my eyes were caught by some old poster-like pictures. They were, in fact, old advertising calendars for cigarettes, medicine, houses for rent and other items. I did not bargain much this time and bought them all with much joy.\textsuperscript{333} The wind was followed by a sudden sleet on my way back home. I tried to protect my treasure while I enjoyed the fresh air. We used to have more snows during the winter season in Beijing – a solemn city with Chinese ilexes, standing silently in a silver land.

\textit{Yuefenpai}

\textit{Yuefenpai}, namely New Year Picture with calendar, was first made in Shanghai. In the beginning, these pictures were presented free to the customers as advertisements.\textsuperscript{334} The emergence of \textit{Yuefenpai} is attributable to the injection of foreign capital, the development of national industry and commerce, and keen competition in the domestic market. Incidentally, with the import of foreign commodities, the pictures portraying foreign girls and still lives were introduced into China as early as the end of the nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{335} However, as the content of the pictures was not familiar to the masses, they did not achieve effective results as expected. At last, the merchants used the

\begin{small}
\textsuperscript{333} They are hanging on the wall of the guestroom in our Houston house.

\textsuperscript{334} See \textit{Yue Fen Pai}, Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe, 1998, p. 45.

\textsuperscript{335} See \textit{Cigarette Card}, Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe, 1998, p. 32.
\end{small}
traditional technique of Chinese painting for reference, and adopted the artistic form of the New Year Picture, which was well received by the masses. This gradually popularized Yuefenpai. Despite the slight difference in the technique of painting, Yuefenpai still catered to townspeople. Actually, the pictures were ultimately used to advertise all kinds of goods. Yuefenpai always portrayed refined modern beauties. The graceful lines of the figures and soft coloration made the picture come into vogue. On the other hand, the pictures also drew their material from historical stories, legend, landscape and flower-and-bird themes.

Men who were truly experts in the art of Yuefenpai included Zhou Muqiao, Zhen Mantuo, then Xu Yongqing, Zhou Tong, Xie Zhiguang and Hang Zhiying. Each contributed greatly to the development of Yuefenpai. However, the artistic styles of these painters changed a lot as the market quickly expanded. To some extent, the market’s expansion was a catalyst in the development of Yuefenpai.\(^\text{336}\)

Yuefenpai had another form of expression later on. These new pictures were called New Spring Festival Pictures. Although some still related to goods, others became pure artistic pieces. Jin Meisheng, Jin Xuecheng and Li Mubai were renowned Yuefenpai painters of that period.

A cigarette card, a kind of cigarette advertisement, is a small card placed in the cigarette pack for the purpose of promoting the sale of cigarettes.\(^\text{337}\) The card was introduced into China from the Western countries at the end of 19th century. Substantial content, elegant painting and splendid colors are the notable characteristics of cigarette

\(^{336}\) See Yue Fen Pai, Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe, 1998, p. 49.

\(^{337}\) See Cigarette Card, Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe, 1998, p. 27.
cards. The first set of color cigarette cards in the world was made in Wales in 1895. The set of cigarette cards, called “World Army” or “Infantryman & Cavalryman,” was composed of 100 cards. Shanghai Guoren Tobacco Company published the first set in China, of Chinese ladies of Late Qing.\textsuperscript{338} The cigarette card emerged during the period of great prosperity in the 1930s. Almost all cigarette manufacturers, even other industries, presented the cards so as to have more customers. According to incomplete figures, there were more than 4000 kinds of cigarette cards during this period. Surprisingly, some cards were made by renowned painters. Modern beauty or legends were always the protagonists of the cigarette card. In addition, a cigarette card might draw its material from world wars and historical stories. Therefore, cigarette cards were sometimes acclaimed as micro-encyclopédias based on their contents. From the cultural point of view, the cigarette card was not only a kind of advertisement but also part of the daily life of most Chinese.

In the 1930s, movie stars became the new attraction for Yuefenpai and other posters and they sold ideas and lifestyles rather than goods and services. During the height of cigarette card manufacturing and circulation in the 1930s, the influence on fashion from Shanghai was very strong throughout the country, and the city remained a center of style in China. The film industry in Shanghai was also a lucrative business at the time: Shanghai’s sixty theatres catered to some three million inhabitants, and accounted for more than 20\% of the cinemas in China.\textsuperscript{339} Movie stars, both male and female, were treated grandly and their tastes in fashion were detailed in magazines

\textsuperscript{338} See Yue Fen Pai, Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe, 1998, p. 51.

\textsuperscript{339} Ibid., p. 72.
eagerly devoured by their admirers. The permanent wave hairdo, especially, was copied by all women with style.

_ Yuefenpai _ and posters indeed produce culturally and historically specific ideals of gendered beauty. Noticeably, the advertising calendars show feminine ideals in their transition: the fashionable woman of 1910 was bound-footed and bound-chested, her face serene and reserved in expression. Her counterpart in the 1930s stands tall and well-formed in high heels, a tailored _ qipao _ outlining her full bosom; beneath a Hollywood hairstyle, her face presents a Hollywood sweetness.  

As Leo Lee argues, in the early 1930s, such a modern woman, “Shidai guniang” (literally girl of the modern epoch or Modern Girl) was just emerging on the Shanghai urban scene as a new media image in film and popular journalism before she assumed presence in real life in the 1940s. By this time of the 1940s, the modern Chinese woman figure was no longer a novelty but almost a fixture in the popular media and a target of gossip in the mosquito press. From 1930s to 1940s, there was considerable journalistic literature devoted entirely to the shaping of such a new woman: from clothing and fashion to personal hygiene. Women journals and movie magazines played a crucial role in the process of image production.  

In the Mao’s era of the 1950s and 1960s, especially during the Cultural Revolution, the images of Chinese women on calendars were homogeneous, non-sexual, high-spirited revolutionists and the very proud Mao’s youth. They were often categorized

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340 Wu Hao (1994) Duhui modeng: yuefenpai 1910-1930s (Calendar Posters of the Modern Chinese Woman), Hong Kong: Sanlian shudian, p.50. Also see Yue Fen Pai, Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe, 1998.

as Chairman Mao’s woman worker, Chairman Mao’s woman farmer, Chairman Mao’s woman solider, Chairman Mao’s woman bare-foot doctor, or Chairman Mao’s woman teacher, and so on.

In the late 1980s, the calendar models for Heimei (darker-skin younger sister) Toothpaste showcased a change of style from a soft and sweet grace in the 1930s to a cool and intimidating grace as an announcement of the elevating individuality. Interestingly, modern beauty disappeared as a theme in the yuefenpai in the 1990s; instead, the motif calendar “Modern Living” became vogue in the late 1990s, and the newest models of cars take their place as the public icon of a commercialized modernity in China.

In recent years, the bar owners have liked to use old calendars (Yuefenpai) of the 1920s or 1930s to decorate the wall. In an early afternoon, which is normally very quiet, everything on the wall leaves a passing trace in the mottled lights. A sense of history floats in the air, fading in and out in the smiling faces of calendar girls, lightly.

The re-proliferation of old yuefenpai in the bars and coffee shops awakened as well as exploited the Chinese nostalgic imagination about an unclear past and the foreigner's taste for exotic China and Chinese women.

Old Photos

In August 1997, a book series Laozhaopian (Old Photos) was published by Shandong huabao chubanshe (Shangdong Pictorial Publishing House). In October, two months later, the third edition of this series was put on the market as a bestseller. In the books, various emblematic shots such as old signboards in old Beiping (Beijing’s old
name), paper lanterns, a cross-road or a kite above the tall wall of old hutong, solitary and beautiful, represent a form which can embrace deep, contradictory emotions and be transformed into an expression of something unified, permanent, and transcendent.

In a small bar, Sishuiliunian (Time Passing Swiftly Like Flowing Water), old photos on the wall deeply attract my attention. These old photos exhibit a fantastic combination of temporality and eternity of Chinese history in the 1960s and 1970s, which turns the mundane into the lyrical. In the 1990s, old photos, like antique phonographs, have become the fancy decorations of some bars, especially in the bars with certain leitmotif, such as “the 1930s.” An open-air restaurant and food-stall center in Shanghai even won a decoration design award for its use of some old photos, including the pictures of the top ten prostitutes in old Shanghai.343

In many aspects, old photos have become selected and ritualized Chinese myth and history. As Susan Sontag contends, photography has an adverse effect on historical understanding because it abstracts and fragments; in historical terms, it destroys or at least encourages ignorance of context, the lived history in which events first took on meaning.344 Photography may deny the determining weight of history – of genuine and historically embedded differences, injustices, and conflicts.345 Sontag also argues that

342 Old style of lane or alley in Beijing.

343 “What is the attraction of the 1930s in Shanghai?” I asked a manager in a bar. He said: “In those years, if you wanted to be somebody and live a certain kind of lifestyle, you simply just needed to do it. You could do anything you wanted and realize any dream in your mind. It was a paradise for adventurers. Just like in the 1980s and 1990s, China is again the paradise of new adventurers.”


345 Ibid., p. 33.
people become customers of reality, and the reality that is framed and consumed is one that blurs any distinctions between originals and copies.\textsuperscript{346} So, the freedom to consume a plurality of images and goods is equated with freedom itself. The old photos rather give the customers aesthetic experience of history. They simultaneously embrace and distance history -- they are disengaged, depoliticalized, and non-judgmental.\textsuperscript{347} Their fleeting images heighten our awareness of the artificiality and superficiality of life.

Recognizing the power of photography, many restaurants in Beijing also institutionalize photography as an efficient way to claim “authenticity” \textit{freely}. For instance, Old Beijing House is a mixture of authentic and ersatz: it is a theme restaurant rather than a real old Beijing institution, but it serves up good, hearty food to customers who drink erguotou and speak in thick Beijing brogues. The high-ceiling room is decorated with classical painting replicas, 1930s cigarette advertisements, old photos of old Beiping and gorgeous red lanterns. These images radically de-creates “the past, eroding historical connectedness or continuity. Through those images, Sontag writes, “the world becomes a series of unrelated, freestanding particles.”\textsuperscript{348}

Certainly, it is not difficult for us to feel the de-politicization among the unrelated, freestanding particles. In “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” Water Benjamin argues that mechanical reproduction may promote a “progressive reaction” within its mass audience, a reaction “characterized by the direct, intimate fusion of visual and emotional enjoyment with the orientation of the expert.” With regard to


\textsuperscript{347} Ibid., p. 178-79.

\textsuperscript{348} Ibid., p. 23.
photography specifically, Benjamin argues that the reproduction of prints exemplifies the erosion of “authenticity” which transfers “the total function of art” from the realm of ritual to that of politics.  

In short, photography can stimulate a “dialectic of seeing” which illuminates the material history of cultural change and political struggle. In the context of Chinese bar businesses, bar customers’ sense of the “intimate fusion of visual and emotional enjoyment” are orientated by the bar managers or designers. The ritualized myths and history are not only the illustrations of the “the material history of cultural change,” but also of business strategy. Although we can see “political struggle” as part of nationalism, which is itself often regarded as a powerful tool for business, the more prominent feature of these old photos is de-politicization with an “erosion of authenticity.”

The fact is that there is growing trend of strategic and contextual depoliticization on each side of China’s sea. According to an article in the China Today, there is a Chairman Mao Café right in the heart of Taipei. It is a place with “a cozy, smoky watering hole chock-a-block with Mao bric-a-brac—and filled on weekend evenings with Taiwan’s restless Generation X.” Of course, the co-owner admits the Mao Zedong theme was a cheeky marketing gimmick rather than an ideological statement. This might be the reflection of the “Chairman Mao’s Fever” in China in the 1990s.

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350 As a historian and philosopher, Feng Youlan makes his comment as such: “The Chinese Communist Party led the Chinese people in overthrowing the rule of the landlord class and chasing out the imperialists….Chairman Mao Zedong of the Communist Party truly had led the Chinese people to where they could get on their own feet….The entire Chinese people believed this. They truly felt admiration and affection for Chairman Mao….This was not blind worship because it had been justified by action. In the first few years after Liberation [1949], Chairman Mao’s words and actions represented the aims and wishes of a whole people. In the 1950s,
Chairman Mao’s badges become hot collectibles, Chairman Mao’s photos also have turned into protective talisman for Beijing taxi-drivers. This strange unification between the demystification of Mao and deification of Mao reflected the rational re-evaluation of Mao Zedong as a common human being and the emotional attachment to a superpower. However, the persistent nostalgia for Mao and his era is easier to be understood in the context of the 1990s when commodification arrives to put a price tag on human relations. The nostalgia reflects a popular longing for the charismatic leader and even a communal spirit as Tang Xiaoping insightfully points out: the consumerism of the 1990s has “turned the commodity form into an ideology of its own and even skillfully capitalized on the bygone revolutionary age and its passionate utopianism.”

Hence, just like the Lao Zhi Qing Teahouse, Chairman Mao’s Bar shows the ingenious ideas to cash in on the Utopianism and nostalgia. In the 1990s, “shock value” is quickly recognized and cherished as an effective marketing strategy. So, Roland Barthes says, “man does not have a relationship with myth based on truth but on use”; “they de-politicize according to their needs.”

Consumerism has translated collective concerns into consumer desires, by which means even the revolutionary past may be made profitable. “When such robust commercialism and entrepreneurialism eventually make inroads into the traditionally


The Maoist utopian longing for “a full and complete life” is also expressed in the negation of the late twentieth-century consumerism and mass culture.


ideological front of the socialist regime, namely, the realm of centralized cultural production, we hear an almost audible sign of relief, a not-so-quiet celebration of the demise of over-politicization and the end of Ideology."\(^{353}\) "Then, something -- the passing of time, a veer of taste, a revival of interest, a sudden topicality, even an organized maneuver by interested parties -- and the scene is transformed. Things which till then, and whatever their original merit or status, could be scarcely given away, are searched out, regarded with a nostalgic respect or an aesthetic enthusiasm which may or may not be justified by facts."\(^{354}\)

Meanwhile, through all such vicissitudes, the objects concerned, whatever they may be, and regardless of whether they are fragmentary or "adapted," are still the same objects. The old photos, however, have different meanings for different people.\(^{355}\)

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\(^{355}\) For instance, the photos of the 1950s often evoke nostalgia for the youthful vitality and energetic spirit of the time. In the 1950s, the literature and music of the former Soviet Unions were very popular among young Chinese who were imbued with idealism, lofty Communist cause, romantic love and heroic personalities. In their memories, the "air" of the 1950s was bright, clear, pure and fresh. This period was often recalled in Chinese cinema with the warmth of the youth -- a young nation, a young ruling political party and a generation of people with young and revolutionary spirit. This generation was very proud of being a member of the great Proletarians and devoting their lives to their newly born Socialist motherland. Even in their leisure activities in which ice-skating and group dancing led the trends, they expressed the spirit of liberation, freedom and sincere enthusiasm. Feng Youlan also recalls, "In the 1950s, the Chinese people—whether they were male or female, old or young, of any class or stratum — all had the sort of [energetic] spirit [of the people who have experienced revolutions]. The Communist Party had only to send down an order and everyone in the country would pull together and give it their best effort....This is a spirit born of convictions, so once it is roused, nothing can stand its way. During the Ten Years of Chaos [Cultural Revolution], many people became disillusioned with their ideals. Their beliefs were shaken....This was the greatest wound the Ten Years of Chaos inflicted on the Chinese people—the greatest after-effect." See Feng Youlan, *The Hall of Three Pines*, trans. By Denis Mair, University of Hawaii Press, 2000, p. 223. Everything looks different from a distance. The pain of our past has been forgotten or chosen to
some people, the old photos are the reminders of mundane continuity and human transience. Such people might wonder “What's still there?” “What's disappearing?” and “What's changed?” For other people, the photos become the everyday world of social action and photographic realism; they might say, as my friend did: “Do you know why I like looking at them? I think it's because those problems and intrigues, the big and little pleasures and troubles, occur in our own lives, too.” As the result, old photos exhibit bits of the “real,” and they operate, fragmentarily, with a metonymical claim to authenticity. Cohen calls this zone between representation and reality “the epistemological twilight,” a striking phrase that captures the ambiguity of the interaction between a reality that can be grasped only in its representations and the representations that feed off and form part of that ongoing reality.356

However, there is always more subtlety in life than we have perceived. The identity of a bar is often a reflection of personal experiences. The owner of Texas bar is a returned UT Austin graduate. Thus, the exoticism in Texas bar is indicated by the photo prints of Texas and a bullhorn, and other accessories, such as a Texas cowboy’s hat hanging on the wall, a pair of cowboy’s boots standing on a corner table. Several tabletop arrangements such as the vase with Texas bluebonnet pattern all hold personal memories. Interestingly, when I chatted with the owner, he told me that he did not intend to claim

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any Texan authenticity. He simply wanted to pick up some pieces of his unforgettable past. What he cannot deny, however, is that he indeed exhibits bits of the "real" of Texas or Texas in his memory. These pieces operate, fragmentarily, with an automatic claim to authenticity.

Nevertheless, an unforgettable past is always haunting, even if this past has little to do with our current daily life. Whereas affluent Americans have always looked to Europe and beyond for a surrogate lineage through cultural display for their own lack of a long history and tradition, Chinese are also looking back to their own long history and tradition for something they have been missing for a long time. What’s that? It’s hard to say! However, the managers of bars exhibit old photos, not as the models of historical anchorage, but as novel images for consumer sales. For them, old photos, like other fancy artifacts hanging on the wall, are not diverse representations of culture, specified by their national and historical locations, but undifferentiated visions of the surface of exoticism, nostalgia, and dedication to an imagined "good place" or "good old time." The effect of the exhibition of those old photos was not only continuity in change, stability in transience, but also the discontinuity in history, and the novelty of consumerism, which characterizes the essential aspects of Chinese Westernization and modernity.

He Shang: the Song of Chinese Westernization and Modernity

If old calendar girls and old photos represent pieces of Chinese national identities and history, they also can be easily turned into stereotyped images of certain identities and history. As George Mikes claims, "stereotyped images die hard and there is always
good reason for their existence.⁵⁶⁷ So, the New York Metropolitan Museum organized an exhibition of "Costumes of China: The Ch'ing Dynasty," promoted by special museum consultant Diana Vreeland in 1980, which concentrated on the exotic riches of Chinese emperors. In Vreeland's world of artsy-craftsy consumerism, China is magnified by splendid color—golden and yellow.

This "yellow" color has been used by both Chinese and foreign filmmakers who like to show that they have philosophical sensitivity and depth, as a repetitive symbol by which the viewer tries to decipher cultural and historical meanings of an ancient, and especially a rural tradition. Their stories are told through images: the bare soil, the wind, the sand, the trees, the hills, and the ravines. But, we all have become the witnesses to the change and vicissitudes of life in China.

As Gao Minglu points out, the Chinese elite was not defined economically but by intellectual influence, and the social and cultural weight of intellectuals grew during the mid-eighties, as the government encouraged them to contribute to society. Cultural activity in all areas -- from universities to newspapers to television networks -- increased. Many intellectuals felt a strong responsibility to the public and believed that official and public culture could be enlightened through their efforts. They promoted ideas in the mass media that generally were not those of the official political propagandists but were their own, and intellectuals saw themselves as something of modernist and enlightenment philosophers in their own historical context. The influence of elite culture was best

exemplified by the production of television scripts like *Heshang* (River Elegy), with its revisionist historical ideas, for public television.\(^{358}\)

In late 1988, the TV show *He Shang* created a national sensation by challenging the classic symbols of Chinese tradition and nationalism — the Great Wall and the Yellow River on the National Central TV Station.

*He* means river, and especially the Yellow River, which considered the cradle of China’s ancient civilization. *Shang* means to die ahead of one’s time. In *Heshang*, the Great Wall and the Yellow River culture (the Yellow Culture) represent a Chinese traditional mentality of agricultural isolation, exclusivism, and self-sufficiency.\(^{359}\) Thus, China, with a long history of civilization, gradually fell into a high-level equilibrium trap in which there was less motivation for change and, finally, incapacity for change.\(^{360}\)

*Heshang* also challenges the Great Wall as an expression of “the Chinese people’s extraordinary intelligence and untiring spirit of self-strengthening.” *He Shang* argued that the Great Wall, “is a great and tragic gravestone forged by historical destiny. It can by no means represent strength, initiative and glory; it can only represent an isolationist, conservative and incompetent defense and a cowardly lack of aggression.” To protect herself from foreign invasion, China’s first thought has always been to keep her doors

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\(^{359}\) Family ethics limit Chinese travels, for Confucius said, “A man does not travel to distant places when his parents are living, and if he does, he must have a definite destination.” However, Confucius meant the moral training in the family as the basis for general moral training, and he planned that from the general moral training a society should emerge which would live happily and harmoniously together. P. 179

shut; yet to save her civilization from decline, she needs to throw her gates open to receive the new culture of science and democracy.

The story of the Great Wall begs the question: Why did the four great inventions of paper, printing, gunpowder and compass, all of which originated in China, produce a scientific and an industrial revolution in Europe but leave China unchanged? Although there is no easy answer for this inquiry, Chinese intellectuals try to diagnose the obstinate illnesses in Chinese society. China has always been a society of peasants with small landholdings who have never had the social cohesiveness to challenge authority. Commerce existed, but the emperor and his officials skimmed off all the surplus wealth, and there was never a concept of a commodity [i.e. market] economy. Further, China’s excessive population ensured that laborsaving devices and efficiency would never be important values; rather, the labor force would be characterized by a weak spirit of enterprise, a very low ability to accept risk, a deep psychology of dependency, and a strong sense of passive acceptance of a fate. This agricultural and defensive culture is categorized by Xie Xuanjun and Yuan Zhiming as “Yellow Culture.”

Xie and Yuan propose a bold hypothesis that world civilizations can be classed as either “yellow” or “blue.” “Yellow” civilizations, like China’s, are agricultural, continental, inward-looking and defensive. “Blue” civilizations, like that of ancient Greece or modern Europe, are industrial, sea-faring, outward-looking and aggressive. “Yellow” civilizations are characterized by political despotism and by a monistic, ethical creed that forbids diversity. “Blue” civilizations are marked by the liberation of the new

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productive forces of industry, which in turn require democracy, science, and the promotion of diversity. From this perspective, I am intrigued by the open and far-reaching “Blueness,” since the central theme of my dissertation is also openness and diversity.

Relying only on the yellow soil and the Yellow River, it is no longer possible to feed the daily increasingly population and no longer possible to give to a new culture, for the land and river no longer posses the nutrition and energy they once had. Since the 17th century, Chinese civilization has declined. Her decline was due not to imperialism but to her own internal failure to respond to the challenges represented by Western industrial civilization. As the writers of *Heshang* claimed, “History has proven countless times that the decline of a civilization is not caused by attack from external forces, but rather by the degeneration of its internal system.”

In an essay entitled “The Erratic Development of Culture,” Lu Xun argued that China’s weakness and strengths all proceeded from the same cause — isolation. It was an isolation that had allowed China to develop independently, free from outside influence, but that also had deprived her of outside stimulation. The result had been a gradual atrophy. Therefore, Lu Xun was eager to offer his effort to tear down the cultural walls that cut China off from the world by his diligent translation works of foreign literature and other works. He responded to the dilemma posed by the massive onslaught of Western culture not by praising the glories of Chinese antiquity, nor by recommending wholesale Westernization, but rather by helping China to look outward through his translations. Inspired by Lu Xun, the authors of *Heshang* also try to discover how to transform Chinese tradition from a burden into resource, and how to engage in what Lin

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Yusheng has called “creative transformation.” Hence, the overall message in *Heshang* is clear: just as the Yellow River must flow into the sea and its murky yellow waters merge with the clear blue ocean, so too must China eliminate the “sediment” of its traditional culture, abandon isolation and open up to the world.\(^{364}\)

In the first chapter of this dissertation, the year of 1842 was regarded as the turning point in Chinese history; five Chinese port cities were forced by foreign colonialists to open as business harbors. The year of 1979 became another historical landmark when a new port city was established from a small village — the Shenzhen Special Economic Zone. It was the milestone of Deng Xiaoping’s new “Open Policy.”\(^{365}\) Chinese began to turn to gaze at the distant ocean with hopes and expectations. In 1986, fourteen coastal cities were entirely opened up to the outside world, China had formally assumed a posture of challenging the sea.\(^{366}\)

*Challenging the Illness of Yellow Culture -- From Danwei to Renzhi*\(^{367}\)

While challenging the outside world, Chinese also began to seek to cure the illness of their own social system. *Danwei* and *Renzhi* became the targets of public

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\(^{363}\) See Longnian de beichuang, p. 45-50.

\(^{364}\) Ibid., p. 51.

\(^{365}\) Shenzhen is in Guangdong Province and borders on Hong Kong, hence it is well-placed for manufacturing goods for export.

\(^{366}\) The fourteen coastal cities, from north to south, are: Dalian, Qinhuangdao, Tianjin, Yantai, Qingdao, Lianyungang, Nantong, Shanghai, Ningbo, Wenzhou, Fuzhou, Guangzhou, Zhanjiang, and Beihai. See Su Xiaokang, Wang Luxiang, *Deathsong of the River* (*Heshang*), Cornell University, 1991.

\(^{367}\) *Danwei* means working unit; *renzhi* refers to rule by a hierarchy of thugs.
criticism. I was not completely shocked, but still a little surprised when I heard the following words from my two college classmates: “If the Communist party does not die, and if the danwei system is not reformed, China will die!” “Qin, you do not know how dark and dirty the local authorities are in China, especially outside Beijing.” Qian Ning, the son of the Chinese former Foreign Minister Qian Qichen, claims that one of the monsters of the Chinese system is danwei — the working unit. Qian contends that “in contemporary Chinese society, home, nation and danwei are three in one, in which the all-round danwei is the major foundation for maintaining an all-round social system. Therefore, there is a unique subordinative relationship of the individuals to their danwei. In fact, how much freedom the individuals can enjoy, to a great extent, depends on what kind of the danwei they work in and what kind of bosses they work with. Political pressure can be either melt into thin air or be intensified without limit by the danwei. Thus, the freedom of individuals can be extended or reduced by their danwei. Consequently, “political persecutions” in China are frequently the “persecutions by the danwei” or “individual persecutions by one or several heads of the danwei.”  

In modern China, danwei is indeed, a powerful product of the Yellow Culture — a Renzhi culture. This is a fundamental problem of Chinese society.

Renzhi is a rule by individuals, as opposed to fazhi, the rule of law. Renzhi means government by whim. And government by caprice becomes even more unpredictable when it is mixed up with government by guanxi, with everybody trying to take advantage of relationships to nullify the rules that do exist.

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Renzhi means rule by not just one thug “but a hierarchy of thugs.” The power trickles down from the top man of the nation. Each lower official acts like a prince on his own turf, from the ministry to the department to the section to the team, from the factory manager to the production manager to the workshop director. The petty autocrats (in each work-unit) are often the worst, as well as the most difficult to escape. The majority of Chinese are living their lives within the birdcage of danwei. Danwei keeps its claws on its employees in many ways, by controlling things such as getting a passport, changing a job, moving from one apartment to another, or even obtaining a pregnancy permission. Eventually, danwei pays much more attention to the control of people than to running the business. In this environment, Chinese are not afraid of law but instead people in power, since the law or rules can be overridden by guanxi or hongbao (a red pack with money inside).

In the 1990s, danwei was no longer as important as it had been, and some Chinese people managed to get by without one. But for the great majority of urban citizens, the controls remained in place. And the danwei, at the grass-roots level in Chinese society, is still the most important of all simply because it determines where and how people live.

When Deng Xiaoping took over power, his solution was simple: fast economic modernization and market liberalization under a monolithic political system. In other words, Deng Xiaoping sought to implement an experiment in capitalism led by a communist party. The unlikely combination was a result of Deng’s almost naked pragmatism. He injected common sense into Chinese politics and decision-making. The new approach was immortalized in his phrase: “It doesn’t matter whether a cat is black or

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369 Ibid., p. 71.
white as long as it catches mice.” It is hardly surprising that this philosophy soon emerged as the most popular consensus in post-Mao China. As the result, it has been quite a bittersweet experience to Chinese people. After Deng Xiaoping made his tour to the south in early 1992, the entire country seemed to change its personality. As if he had flicked a switch, politics was out, business was in. It seemed as though 1.2 billion people seized a new religion: baijinzhuyi, “money worship.” All of a sudden, making money was not a grubby occupation but a resourceful, clever way of surviving and improving one’s lot in life. Confucianism had looked down on merchants, and twentieth-century intellectuals shared that distaste. This was one reason why the first generation of self-employed small business people in China were mostly ex-convicts and other undesirables, those who had no chance of getting any other jobs. During the 1980s, young women wanted to marry officials or, if none were available, at least employees of state-owned companies. Self-employed business people were at the bottom of the barrel, because they had low status and no job security. This situation changed very rapidly in the early 1990s. In the 1990s, entrepreneurs who are sprung up like bamboo shoots after a spring rain, became hot and spicy in China.

The new slang, which had already appeared in the late 1980s, was xia hai, or jump in the sea, and it meant “to go into business.” In the early 1990s, everybody seemed to xia hai: university professors, ministry-level officials, political dissidents, doctors, and the children of the leaders. Chinese intellectuals, who used to quote Patrick Henry’s
“give me liberty or give me death,” now adhere to a Wall Street credo: “Greed is good.”

“Anyone who has any smarts can boost his income in China these days,” said a young college professor. “Only the dumbest bums aren’t doing anything.” Just about everybody had xia hai or was at least moonlighting: waitressing at night, writing articles for popular magazines, teaching English or aerobics, consulting on computer programs, or giving seminars on stocks and bonds. This way they were able to triple or quadruple their salaries and, at the same time, keep their “iron rice bowl” with its job security, housing, and health insurance. This rough-and-tumble time in China has nurtured a new breed of entrepreneurs and a group of people who don’t draw a salary from the government but instead live on their own smarts, making deals whenever they can. On the other hand, the Chinese began to enjoy a greater freedom to design their own lives. Public confidence meant that more and more Chinese people were capable of challenging the authority of danwei. More and more people began to take different jobs during their flexible hours.

In this loosening social environment, China’s economy began to take off. With an increasingly open market, self-employed small business people (getihu) played important roles. They were the first huge group people who began to challenge the authority of danwei with their fast-growing economic power. Following in their footsteps, people in the Chinese entertainment industry also began to choose not to stay in any danwei and work as getihu actors and singers. The actors called it “paochang” (running from one

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shooting site to another shooting site), and the singers called it “zuxue” (running from one stage in one city to another stage in another city in a day or even in one night). These actors and singers experienced a sense of working on an assembly line. The sensuous experience of the city has been embodied in the figure of these getihu singers or actors, an emblematic persona in the last twenty years of the twentieth-century in China. They stroll around the TV stations, film studios, radio recording workshops, and their transient living shelters. Most of the getihu came to Beijing with little experience and little money. Several years later, they became Beijing’s new residents with rich experience and handfuls of money. They made their own lives jump like a moving picture.

Grasping the good opportunities, Chinese mass media become bolder, daring to test taboos on the Cultural Revolution and other sensitive topics. So, for example, such as Jiang Wen’s film Yangguang Canlan de Rizi (“In the Heat of the Sun”) which portrays a group of Beijing teenagers hanging out during the chaotic Cultural Revolution (1966-76). Theater is even more rambunctious, exploring themes such as the way power corrupts. Novelist Wang Shuo did not criticize the Communist Party; he laughed at it. The party, in his eyes, was “uncool.” And in music, Cui Jian is the nation’s rock star, a hero to urban youth, and his raspy outbursts of alienation have become the anthems of his generation. Nevertheless, I have to admit the kaleidoscope of life in Beijing suggests a “city symphony” adapted to different genres — too rich and chaotic to discern.

The Transformation

The transformation in China has produced what Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl Wudunn characterize as
a strange organism, an alternately depressing and exhilarating blend of authoritarianism and free markets. The metamorphosis now under way is loosening the control and provoking all kinds of tensions within Chinese society. China today faces the turmoil that rapid modernization always brings: urbanization, the changes in job patterns, the rise of individuality, the replacement of the extended family with the nuclear family, the fraying of traditional morality. And at the same time, it faces a crisis of faith, the end of Communist ideology and the search for something to take its place.\textsuperscript{371}

There are different definitions of modernity, and different interpretations of modernity with Chinese characteristics in particular. According to Georg Simmel, modernity, in short, is conceived of as a barrage of stimuli. The new metropolitan environment in recent China can be described as “hyperstimulus” (borrowed from Michael Davis).\textsuperscript{372} In the early 1990s, the economy improved, and capitalism and its wild mores once again sailed into China. This time it came in big waves, sweeping in with Western liquor and luxuries, cigarettes and caviar. Extravagance spread among the new class, from local officials to the top Communist Party leaders. China became a new world of conspicuous consumption. In an art exhibition, Zhou Tiehai showed the current consumerism in China: \textit{Buy Happiness}. Tang Xiaoping also observed, China of the 1990s has experienced an “explosive capitalist Great Leap Forward.”\textsuperscript{373}

For instance, eight (8) is a lucky number in China since its sound in Chinese is similar to “fa,” which means prosperity. The most recent example of faith in the number


eight is found in architecture of the tallest skyscraper in China. So, a Chinese man bought a 88,888 yuan pen in a Japanese department store's first outlet in Beijing at Christmas, 1992. Another example is the story of a real estate magnate who paid $55,000 in an auction for Shanghai license plate Z0518 which is regarded as an auspicious number, because, in Chinese, it sounds vaguely like the words for "I will be rich." In the trend of conspicuous consumption, the Glorious Clock and Watch Shop in Beijing is selling Rado watches imported from Switzerland and priced at up to $3,000 and the business has been brisk. It is going to sell Rolexes at prices up to $20,000 each and the manager is very optimistic about his potential customers.

However, regardless of all the superficiality and stupidity of conspicuous consumption among wealthy Chinese, wealth leads to mobility and ease of communication across a vast area within or outside China. These transformations and the rise of a Chinese middle class are creating a pressure group against the authoritarian system in China. People want to participate in the system. They want a voice. While a market economy expands people's wallets, freedom in the arts and society opens their souls. 

374 A silver pagoda, a rising bamboo shoot, and an upright pen are images evoked by the 88-storey Jin Mao Building in Pudong, in China and a soaring monument to Shanghai's economic boom. The design of this gently tapered building also embodies China's history and culture. First, it is a modern evocation of an ancient pagoda. Second, the building frequently incorporates the number of eight, which the Chinese consider lucky, throughout the structure.

Crafting New National and Cultural Identities

Chinese modernity has been labeled by many scholars as a defensive modernity, which has been inextricably bound up with the articulation of a national identity and subjectivity. It did not seek a global role or interaction in a larger modern world.\(^{376}\)

Gao Minglu argues, from the 1950s to the 1970s, Mao’s radical nationalism was based on an iconoclastic philosophy that was both anti-traditional and anti-Western. After Mao died and the Cultural Revolution ended in the late 1970s, the generation in the 1980s embraced again the Western modern world, especially the modern art and literature. The cultural debate climaxed around the mid-1980s with such trends as Searching for Cultural Roots, Cultural Reflection, and Culture Fever. During this period of time, the avant-garde art and literature movements also emerged with a more radical tone of social and cultural criticism. Although the new art movement in the 1980s encompassed forms of almost every Western modern movement from Dada to Pop, the art practice using various Western-originated forms was self-oriented and not involved with the Western mainstream for either direct input or evaluation. “It was an internal dialogue answering only to its own social and cultural demands.”\(^{377}\) Gao further points out “the Chinese in all three of our regions and abroad can identify themselves in the mirror of the West’s definition of a Chinese modernity. For example, concepts like Neo-Confucianism, Confucian capitalism, industrial East Asia, and Post-Confucianism that first emerged in

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the West spread in East Asia during the seventies and eighties and began to be discussed in Mainland China after its economic boom of the early nineties."

In the ongoing Chinese process of creating a national identity, the Western world certainly has played an important role for the orientation of Chinese for re-thinking what is authentic and important about Chinese culture. And the power of the West's gaze can lead to a rediscovery of tradition or lead to self-exoticization. For example, some Chinese factory managers had to wait for their foreign customers' instructions to produce authentic Chinese products since those foreigners need to ensure the standards and details of a specific Chinese style. Thus, the lavish costumes modeled on imperial Chinese robes and the silhouettes of Chinese pagodas were combined with a Chinese peasant style of hat as an accessory to the bizarre Chinoiserie imagined by Yves Saint Laurent, a French fashion designer. It is important to note that in this process of crafting Chinese culture, young Chinese country artisans simply worked at repetitive, painstaking tasks in which scores of skilled laborers contributed a monotonous small part in the creation of a single craft.

At the same time, "Stay Chinese" was one of the lessons that the Chinese learned through global communication and competition. In Chinese export products, oriental motifs and scenes were incorporated into interior design, landscape gardening, dress patterns, and porcelains, illustrating imaginary scenes of Chinese life, landscapes, and customs. Chinese attempt to establish a cultural identity by valorizing Chinese tradition and nationalism. The search for a primordial, authentic Chinese past to oppose to the modern, foreign-imbued present is a strategy to soothe the heart of a huge population of

378 Ibid.
Chinese who have (im)personally experienced the pain and humiliation of dealing with the outside world. China, like other non-Western nations, has tried to use national culture as a strategic term in a struggle with the West. For instance, in the past fifty years, the cultural battles between China and U.S. tended to be defensive on Chinese side, \(^{379}\) in which nationalism has become instrumental and therapeutic. Nationalism can even be associated with the “Ah Q-ist psychological victory.” \(^{380}\)

National belonging is, after all, based on the myth of belonging to a particular culture. During the process of modernization in the 1980s and 1990s, Chinese are transitioning from the lack of a consciousness about cultural protection to the development of Chinese national, local or minority culture and will eventually benefit from it in the short and long run. As the result of such weakening, “rituals on stage” or “performed rituals” for tourists as ethnic authenticity become an effective way of fostering and bolstering a nation or a local culture. \(^{381}\)

\(^{379}\) Chinese nationalist sentiment was surging after Prime Minister Zhu Rongji’s April visit to America in 1999, especially after the U.S. planes bombed Beijing’s embassy in Belgrade in May; even Premiere Zhu’s promises to severely cut China’s tariffs from telecommunications to agricultural products under WTO prompted charges that he was selling the country into “economic prostitution.”

\(^{380}\) Ah Q is the character in Lu Xun’s novel “Ah Q-The Real Story” (1921). Unable to cope with the present, Ah Q flees into the fantasies of a past in which his ancestors were rich and powerful or escape into a future in which his unborn children will be. The conservative Chinese scholars of the period were boasting of the glories of ancient China while disregarding the accomplishments of the West. In Lu Xun’s novel, the reader sees Ah Q suffer defeat after defeat, each of which is immediately transformed into an inner, psychological victory. Such was the impact of the story that “Ah Q-ism” and “psychological victory” became staple terms of everyday conversation in China.

However, rituals are no longer spiritual activities for their own sake, but are a selective appropriation of the past to suit present purposes. "Wenhuadatai, jingjichangxi" (culture builds up the stage on which the economy performs) is this vibrant product of the Chinese economy in the 1990s.

This performative dimensions of culture in current China are seen most often in the overbuilding of miniature or same-size imitations of historical sites or stories. Rituals, ceremonies, festivals, celebrations, and the like were properly understood as both instrumental and expressive for domestic and international tourists. For many people, especially foreign tourists, these images and representations will be, if not the sum total of their knowledge, a dominating factor in their awareness. Such representations actively construct a historical reality, cobbling much of it together from shards of myth and fact, from the tissue of sometimes contradictory ideologies already circulating within the culture. For example, for Beijing’s inhabitants, the emperor’s palaces have become simply images in the memory of their childhood, and an image to be recalled in their cultural awareness, occasionally, casually and leisurely consumed.

However, traditions, especially a rich tradition, indeed give Chinese comfort and confidence. So, it is no wonder that the tradition often becomes indispensable ingredient in Chinese cultural taste and fantasies. In a fashion show in 1994, novelty and tradition, sensuality and consumption were bound together in a pastiche of Tang Dynasty and multinational Chinese romantic imagery -- "Meng Hui Tang Chao!" ("Dreaming Back to the Tang Dynasty!")
Sharing Chinese sentiments on modernization, Taiwan writer Qidengsheng brings out the subtlety of the contradictory mentality of the contemporary Chinese, who give a sentimental glance to the past, wave “goodbye” to it and step to the future. In his novel *Walking to the Black Bridge*, Qidengsheng describes with a melancholy tone the violent transformation of Taiwan’s society in the process of industrialization and Westernization, along with the change of local people’s living customs and habits. The narrator is sentimental about the vicissitudes; however, at the same time, he is expecting to visit his two sisters who both married Americans and have attached themselves to another culture. They experience the transition of national identity, and they need to get used to their identification with a new culture.

Nevertheless, as Henri Michaux said, a nationality is supposed to feel shameful for carrying its history, instead, it should look for its history in the future.\(^{382}\) China’s membership in the WTO is going to be watershed in Chinese history and China’s move toward global integration. It is a move that will open her markets as never before. However, opening up China is the only real road to success in the long run. Facing the challenges from foreign companies, Chinese entrepreneurs adopt new technologies and develop new products to compete with their foreign counterparts in the market. Chinese people, through increasing exchanges, have acknowledged a more overall and deeper understanding about the outside world, and have begun to have a global consciousness. It has been a hard journey for a new way of self-identity and self-rediscovery.

Finally, *Zhong seng xuan hua* -- heteroglossia is found in more cultural innovation and greater tolerance for differences in China in the 1990s. The terms of

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\(^{382}\) See *Heshang*. Also see *A Barbarian in Asia* by Henri Michaux, Reissue, 1986.
hybridization, mixed stew, multi-colored, motley clown, impurity or crossbreed have to be used together in order to emphasize the mixed nature of Chinese society in the 1990s.  

It seems that I can hear Liu Suola’s rock & roll China Collage! To the Chinese, the present is only a meeting, a meeting between a poetic and ambiguous tradition and modernity, between a somewhat remembered past and somehow known future. Yiqiuyihui -- one meeting, one time. If nostalgia was the theme song during the first half of the 1990s, during the last five years of the twentieth century, people began to anticipate the new century. They are shrouded in the mist of their new anxieties and expectations. In Beijing, a gust of “Back to the Ancients” wind continues to blow, against or along with the unavoidable vibration of modernization.

The Yellow River is fated to traverse the yellow soil plateau.
The Yellow River will ultimately empty into the blue sea.
The Yellow River’s suffering and its hope have made it great.
The Yellow must preserve the dynamism and undaunted

Resolve, which comes from the plateau
The waters of life arise from the sea and flow back into the sea.
After a thousand years of solitude, the Yellow River has finally
Seen the blue sea.  

With all its ambiguities, life continues. In *My Country and My people*, published in 1938, Lin Yutang describes with his sense of humor: “Merry Old China sips her tea

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383 I did not intend to sell any naïveté about Westernization or globalization. Realizing that the life of a new millennium is far more familiar and banal than once anticipated and fantasized, Tang Xiaoping claimed: “In a deflated sense of the expression, we live in an age where the future is already now.” See Tang Xiaobing, *The Heroic and the Quotidian*, Duke University Press, 2000, p. 341.

and smiles on, and in her smiles, I detect at times a mere laziness to change and at others a conservatism that savors of haughtiness." In the 1990's Merry New China smiles on, enthusiastically and vigorously following the waves of the Great Transformation.

Let yourself go,
Following the waves of the
Great Transformation.  

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386 This is a poem by Tao Qian. See Zhongguo yu Zhongguo wenhua, Hunan Wenyi Chubanshe, 1983, p. 89.
Appendix 1- A Conversation in the *Listen Bar*:

[Yu] “I enjoyed *Dances with Wolves*, especially the scene when Kevin Costner standing on the edge of the cliff with his hair blowing in the wind. I also liked *Scent of a Woman* which shows the life of the youngsters from the perspective of a very experienced and worldly wise man. I feel that I am that young man. Al Pacino gives me a lot of inspiration. I lent my videotape to my friend Old Du who was a rough guy. I thought he should watch and learn something from it.

As for other films...I'd say that some of Hollywood's special effects touched my heart. If I have had that working environment in China, I could have achieved much the same. But I haven't got the chance, although I have already done a good job in my area. Well...I often hate that I was not born at the right time.”

[Qin, trying to encourage a conversation] “Look at him! His eyes are beaming when he is excited and he is quite lovely that way.”

[Yu] [pleased to hear that] “Tian used to say that I am one of the sexist among the students of the 1990 class, especially when I was giving a speech or when I had not shaved.”

[Pang] “It's time to sing a song.” [turn to his wife Mei] “To my boss:

How glittering, pages of a history book,
Tumultuously, ten thousand horses chasing deer;
How gallant, a famous general,
Boundlessly, numerous ambushes, emerging on ten sides.
The mountain lays an ambush,

The water lays an ambush,
The sky lays an ambush,
The earth lays an ambush…"

[Pang] “This song is too sentimental. It doesn’t fit the air here.” Pang cleaned his throat and sang another song:

The beautiful night is so serene,
Only the sound of my violin is left on the grassland
I want to write a letter to my girl far away
It’s too bad that the postman never comes.”

Some couples are still dancing with the music of the band.

[Pang was frustrated by his hoarse voice and sighed] “OK, that’s it. Oh, well, people only dared to gossip behind my back in the past. Now, some of them jumped out.”

[Yu] “I love what an old citizen said in a TV show: “I’m never afraid of anybody. I’m not afraid to fight against the Japanese, one at a time!” However, we lost to Japanese nationality because the general qualities of our Chinese masses were too low. I do not mean that I hate Japanese. I hate our own people because they did not have backbones.”

[Pang] Yu, you’re from a family of Bannerman. You know that? I met your father. Come on, let’s drink. I got the same feeling from you and your father: a Bannerman’s pride, a Bannerman’s obnoxiousness, and a Bannerman’s nostalgia -- the crops outside the Great Wall." [Pang laughed]

[Yu] “Talking about the crops outside the Great Wall….nonsense! You, mother fucker! The only thing that I’m proud of my family is this: all our relatives in our big family lived off their ancestor’s properties by selling houses and other stuff. But, since my

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387 Noble Manchu people of the “Eight Banners” in Qing Dynasty.

388 The Manchu were originally living in the Northeastern China outside the Great Wall.
grandfather, my family has relied on ourselves. My grandmother was selling peanuts. They didn’t care! As long as they could support themselves, they didn’t mind hard labor. If things got worse, they could even try to work as a rickshaw driver. [laugh] They had the American spirit. [laugh] The other people of the collateral branch of our family, such as the family of my great aunt continued to sell houses even after the Liberation [1949]. They would move out the boxes of stuff for sale without knowing what was inside. My family has always looked down upon them, regarding them as trash. My father now still thinks that they are pieces of shit. We know how to rely on ourselves, not others! When I was young, I wasn’t a good student. My cousin’s father was asking favors from others to help his son get accepted by a college. My dad told me ‘Rely on yourself. If you fail to pass the college exam, I’m not going to beg anybody for you.’ So, in our whole family, I’m the only one who went to Beijing University. We do not beg! Beg to whom?”

[Pang] This is the pride, the bone of pride [a lofty and unyielding character]! The pride in the blood! The guys in Beijing University have a tendency to detest the earthly world and its vulgar ways. Therefore, many alcoholic geniuses were created at this college. A lot of them became the most huo [successful] people in Beijing. They are geniuses in any field. If they are involved in music, their music will become the hottest.

[Yu interrupted] Some comrades like me were not good students. However, we had the spirit! We could look down upon anybody, because I never compare myself with anyone. I only compare myself with myself. I’m happy about myself as long as I make progress everyday. I rarely asked favors from others. After these years of business experience, I’m proud of myself at this point -- how can I put it in words? -- Well, I can survive without anybody and survive well. I do not need anyone!”
[Pang] No, you need others. I can not live without my boss. I can't. I'll add just one point. Then, I'll completely agree with your other opinions. But, my boss is special.”

[Yu] I can live by myself.

[Pang] That was because you haven't accepted some American philosophy. You haven't played GMAT. You are playing in printing business now. Well, I was also born more sentimental than you were.”

[Yu] The only thing that I admire you is – your English used to be very poor. But now you could play GMAT and become a teacher of the GMAT. This proves your intelligence and spirit.”

[Pang] “I can’t help it. I was born a dunce.”

[Yu] “I was born a dumb ass too. I was the same when I prepared for the TOEFL. There were numerous students who were better at it than I was. I was the most stupid one.”

[Pang] “I was even more of a dumb ass than you were, five points lower than your IQ.”

[Yu] “But, at the end, everybody will be my students. They will come to me and learn with full sincerity. This even includes the professors in my department. Whenever they need an interpreter, they would think about me first. So, I know that there is always a day I'll eventually feel proud and elated. However, I was an honest interpreter. If I didn't know a word, I would definitely look up the dictionary.”

[Pang] “Brother, ten years later, if we meet some noisy asshole, we'd just tell him: ‘Don't interrupt, you can only listen. Don't get drunk and act crazy in front of me, OK?’”

[Yu] “Now, I have been away from that kind of state of mind. If he steps in, I simply leave.”

389 The term “play” here conveys a sense of playful attitude of mastering and controlling things.
[Pang] “Nowadays, there are too many crabs and shrimps. If you do not go, they will swarm over you and drink you under the table.”

[Yu] There is no need. I can not compete with them in drinking since I do not work on that.”

[Pang] “It is not that we can not compete. Don’t we also allow the jiu (alcohol) to water the flower of our youth?”

[Yu] “I didn’t use the jiu to water the flower of my spirit, I used the cigarette to nurse it.”

[Pang] “Superb! The same. This is that the different tunes rendered with equal skill.”

[Yu] “However, one day, I know, one day, I will not need to nurse the flower of my spirit with cigarettes, but with the air.”

[Pang] “But, the air in Beijing is not qualified, too polluted.”

[Yu] “It’s OK with me. I can nourish the flower of my spirit with the polluted air of Beijing.”

[Pang] “Very good! Add some acid rain, plus some alkali.”

[Yu] “I indeed admit that there are a lot of people smarter than I am. But, I only compare to myself. If I can make a progress in a couple of years, I will be very happy with myself.”

[Pang] “I often feel that I was a general in my previous existence. I was born a knight, while accidentally I learned read a little bit and wrote some doggerel. Eventually, after years of hard study, I could write an autobiography.”

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It means something different in approach but equally satisfactory in result.
[Yu] “Other people gave me more credit than I gave myself. Feng once said that I could play broad axe with one hand, and play plum blossom seal calligraphy with the other hand. I was very flattered.”

[Pang] “Hey, Luo (Yu’s girlfriend), you might have fallen in love with this quality of him.”

[Mei, Pang’s Wife] “Yu, the best of all in what you just said was that one day you do not need to use alcohol or cigarettes to nurse the flower of your spirit, even the foul air of Beijing still can be used to serve for the flower of the spirit.”

[Pang] “I have to interrupt. Perhaps, some day, I want to be a hand-made shoemaker. I’d love to give each comrade here a pair of shoes I made.”

[Yu] “This is the meaning of life which all depends on what can make you happy. When I was quite unhappy, I thought about being a cowboy in Miyun County.”

[Pang] “I’ll be a horseman in Kangxi Grassland.”

[Yu] “If something was the biggest pleasure in your life, you should go for it. Don’t worry about anything else, right? There’s no end to pursuing money and fame. I used to want to be a scientist, like the scientists on Star Trek. My life would be fine in that way too.”

[Pang] “Yu, can I talk?”

[Yu] “You can.”

[Pang] “Alright! I want to speak for three minutes and tell you what I think about you.”

[Yu] “My natural gift is not as good as many others…”

[Pang] “It’s your arrogance that overshadows your talent. It’s the pride that flows in your blood.”
[Yu] “But, now, I already have sense of caring for others. So, I have good relationships with many people in Zhongguancun.”

[Pan] “That is necessary. That’s why you could make a fortune.”

[Yu] “Many people truly regard me as their friends, and I see them as my friends too. Normally it needs to take years to have your buddies-in-arms. But, I got this kind of friends by several bowls of fried egg rice within several days. This is what I am good at. Such as Zhang Zhaohui came to me all the time, yelling: ‘Er’s Mom, is dinner ready?’

[Laugh] Smart people can feel the spirit around me.”

[Pan] “Yu, why don’t you drink for three minutes? Therefore, I can talk for my three minutes about my understanding of your words. You always have the right to talk to me.”

[Yu] “I believe that I have the right.”

[Pan] “Because I respect you. Now, I do not need to talk about this. My brother [Yu] has very strong sense of responsibility. Sometimes, there is some misunderstanding between us. We stopped talking to each other for two years. Every now and then, we are simply just polite to each other.”

[Yu] “Pan, once I call you Big Brother, it must be the time when you achieve your success.”

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391 Zhongguancun area in Beijing is well-known for several most famous universities in China, some best scientific institutions and high-tech supermarket.

392 This came from a Chinese xiangsheng (a kind of comic dialogue) named Fishing in which the comedians imitate Tianjin dialect. It could be talked as a pure joke without any concrete meaning.

393 The story of “Three Sworn Brothers Under the Peach Tree” in Three Kingdoms (namely, Wei, 220-265, Shu Han, 221-263 and Wu, 222-280) represents the important role of sworn brothers in Chinese society in which guanxi (social relationship) is always essential. Even recently, in August 1999, a song “You’re My Brother” was chosen for the Primary of the Nationalist Party in Taiwan.
[Pang] "Yep."

[Yu] "There are very few people that I will call Big Brother. I don’t believe in crap like ‘Big Brother,’ which sounds vulgar to me. If there is a Big Brother there, I’d like to put it this way: I will call some guy Big Brother if I respect him even if he is very slow-witted. Some people will never be qualified to be my Big Brother even if they are very intelligent."

[Pang] "Right!"

[Yu] "Once I call you Big Brother Pang..."

[Pang] "You’re a good parameter for me. You were arrogant to me before."

[Yu] "That’s only a little piece of it. We were, after all,...My personality..."

[Pang] "Don’t explain it."

[Yu] No, no, no, Let me finish..."

[Pang] "Let me finish."

[Yu] "I have my good part in my heart because I can understand people. Everybody has weakness or a soft spot. You have your soft spot in your heart, and Comrade Mei has her soft spot. We all have our soft spots. How can I put it in words?"

[Pang] Stop talking about this, OK?"

[Yu] "OK, OK."

[Pang] "Don’t make me sad today."

[Yu] "You're wrong. You should not feel sad today. If I were you, I would not have felt sad. I’d rather feel proud. After walking through so many troublesome roads..."

[Pang] "I still have the shine of afterglow."

[Yu] "Even if we couldn’t do anything perfect. We should try to be 90%. You were..."
[Pang] “Don’t mention my past, OK?”

[Mei] “Listen to Yu.”

[Yu] “As for you, you have a very intelligent side, but your intelligence can cover some of your very dark sides. You need to change. As for my own personality, I am a person of strong character which also conceals a lot of other aspects…”

[Pang] “Yu, I just want to say… let me add this. I met your father…”

[Yu] “But, my father…”

[Pang] “Listen to me. He didn’t say much to me. I sensed the atmosphere. You understand?”

[Yu] “I understand.”

[Pang] “Today, I brought this topic in front of all of us…”

[Yu] “Ok. However…”

[Pang] “Let me finish what I’m saying. This bowstring has been stretched too taut. If it were not in this relaxed atmosphere, I would not talk about this. But Yu is my brother. It doesn’t matter if he calls me Big Brother or not.”

[Yu] “Right.”

[Pang] “Now, I’m not qualified to ask Yu to call me Big Brother. I don’t mind. So what? If he feels like calling me Big Brother again, he will.”

[Yu] “It’s even OK for me to call you Dad. [laugh] Now, let me talk.”

[Pang] “Let me finish. I want to be very candid to you because you might have learned that it’s me who is trying to keep you as a friend.”

[Yu] “Continue.”

[Pang] “I used to shine. Now, I need to find the good parts in me.”
[Yu] “You not only need to expose the good parts but also bury the bad parts of yourself.”

[Pang] “I’m burying them now.”

[Yu] “You have much burying to do!!.”

[Pang] “I will bury them one by one once I find them.”

[Yu] “You’re full of shit!! You haven’t buried enough!!”

[Pang] “Because I’m not in my best state of mind.”

[Yu] “So far, I have nothing to be afraid of in front of you. I could kick your ass whenever I feel like. Old Du has a worker’s background and I do not have the guts to confront him like this.”

[Pang] “Go ahead to try it if you like. I have pain that you do not have.”

[Yu] “I have my own pain. It just might be not as severe as yours. But…”

[Pang] “Your pain is just disappointment.”

[Yu] “Right. But if you want to be my Big Brother…”

[Pang] “I do not want to be your Big Brother.”

[Yu] “You should try.”

[Pang] “I give up.”

[Yu] “You can not give up.”

[Pang] “I used to be lost, OK?”

[Yu] “You were…”

[Pang] “Alright?”

[Yu] “You used to be lost. I dare to say this to you. When I was fifteen, I was expelled from school and held in custody for fifteen days. However, since then, I haven’t been lost
again. Or, I can say that I haven’t been lost for a single second. I always know what I am doing.”

[Pang] “Because you have the genes of a Qiren.”

[Yu] “You should despise this Qiren class. You are a member of the great Han nationality.”

[Mei, Pang’s wife who is a Hui nationality] “Excellent point, Yu!”

[Yu] “I feel humble to be a Qiren. I’m afraid to be mentioned as a Qiren. All nationalities are equal. All the same.”

[Mei] “Very much the same.”

[Pang] “We’re all Chinese.”

[Yu] “We’re all ‘people,’ ‘human beings.’”

[Pang] “But, don’t be a son of the bitch. [Pang said it in English]”

[Yu] “You must listen to your boss, your boss sometimes is very right.”

[Pang] “I often refuse to listen to her. That why I always makes mistakes. My boss has been trying to straighten me out.”

[Yu] “She’s a good one.”

[Pang turns to his wife] “Have you ever heard of this? I have been so humble in front of you. I never treat anybody else in that way.”

[Yu] “Your biggest success is...”

[Pang] “My boss.”

[Yu] “Your biggest success is the fact that your boss is still your boss [or your wife].”

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394 Pang and Yu have been calling Mei (Pang’s wife) “Boss” during the conversation.
[Pang] “She has kicked me out. [Shifting to English] ‘You’re fired.’ [Shifting to Chinese again] ‘Go to the backyard to settle your account.’”

[Yu] [in English] “But she is still your boss. [back to Chinese] This is your most…”

[Pang] “It is my whole life’s honor.”

[Yu] “It is indeed your most distinguished achievement, especially after you did so many terrible things. My father has very poor impression about you. After he heard some of your wrongdoings, he thought that kind of thing [divorce] would be unavoidable. But, to his surprise, she is still your boss. I do not need to explain anything to him.”

[Pang] “Don’t say anything to him.”

[Yu] “It’s your good luck.”

[Pang] “Yes.”

[Yu] “It’s not just your good luck. You made your luck. I wish you can give full play to your good qualities and conceal your weak points. When I first came to Beijing University, I remembered what you said: ‘shi cai ao wu’ [use one’s outstanding ability to despise the ordinary folks]. This is of no use. There is always somebody there who is more capable than you are. Well, by the way, I regard the Centennial Celebration of Beijing University as a piece of shit.”

[Pang] “Shit?”

[Yu] “Fuck!” “Damn!” “I know all American cursing words.” [turned to Qin] “I may be more familiar with those terms than you are.”

[Pang] “Because she is not interested in those words. It was one way that we learned our English in Beijing University. It was a way to negate American students’ sense of
superiority. Besides, we also had some Japanese students. They dared to cursed Chinese students once they learned those words from Americans."

[Qin] "Where is the sense of superiority of American students? I haven't seen much."

[Yu] "I agree with her. American might not have a sense of superiority."

[Pang] "Decent American do not have sense of superiority. But some shallow and arrogant American jerks feel that they are superior."

[Yu] "You can simply ignore them. I might be a mediocre. But I'm proud that I have the ideals of my own. I make my own judgment about each individual. If one day I can call Pang Big Brother again, he will be very different."

[Pang] "Stop it. I care about this. Don't you understand? This is a pain to me in my life."

[Yu] "My Big Brother Pang should be different from others and much better than others. I know that sometimes I am very arrogant. But sometimes I can be very modest. For instance, I look like an elementary student when I try to design a computer program."

[Pang] "I have more experience in this respect. Do you want to listen to me?"

[Yu] "I'm listening."

[Pang] "Any master is solitary. And a master does not have to show his skill to the owner of a small grocery store."

[Yu] "But, I make my own judgment. I treated one of my employees with a five-yuan lunchbox. But, he claimed if he couldn't figure out the program, then he'd rather not eat that lunchbox. Right after he said that, he clicked with the mouse, and miraculously the program began to work. I admire this kind of attitude. This guy is probably crazy and obnoxious in many aspects. But, I admire that kind of spirit."

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395 Yu is a history major.
[Pang] “Tomorrow is going to be the May First International Labor’s Day. It’s nice to enjoy the fruit of hard work. However, it’s beautiful even if there is no fruit. Working itself is beautiful.”

[Yu] “I appreciate this.”

[Pang] “If I’m wrong, I’d like to pay for my sin. Now, I do not believe in Christ, I’m working on the Koran.”

[Yu] “That’s you. I do not intend to get involve in any religion. I do admire anyone who has more talents than I do, and despise anyone who is weaker than I am, if it is because he was born a nobody.”

[Pang in English] “I just run away from them.”

[Yu] “If I do not have extra energy, I just look at them from a distance of ten thousand li [It refers to a long distance]. If I have more energy, I’ll let them know they have a hopeless life if they do not improve themselves.”

[Pang] “Shit, I’m not going to tell them that. I’ll allow them to run their course.”

[Yu] “I wish one day I can learn GMAT from you, then you will be my Big Brother.”

[Pang] “As good brother, they drink whenever they feel like. But, sometimes, a leaf before the eyes shuts out Mount Taishan. We all make mistakes. We have to hold on to ourselves. For example, you can not show sorrow in your office or you’ll add some spice to the life of gossip folks. Beauty is in the shining stars, not in the meteor. A meteor is very unfortunate.”

[Yu] “I do not want to be a meteor.”

[Pang] “We want to live to our seventies or eighties, like the old soldiers in the Great March who are full of scars in their bodies but still in good shape. They go to the
elementary school to speak once in a while. Of course, we’re another generation.

Remember that I explained Emperor Yang to you before? 396

[Yu] “I didn’t listen to you.”

[Pang] “Then, I won’t explain it again.”

[Yu] “The reason that I looked down upon you before, was your constant indulgence in fantasies. Now I can appreciate you because you now began to live in the real world. I can only appreciate somebody who lives in the real world first, and then later stands aloof from the worldly affairs.”

[Pang] “This is ‘to live from the state of Utility to the state of Morality, and then, to the state of Universe.’” 397

[Yu] “Printing is a very vulgar business. But, I am working on computerized printing which is not too vulgar. On the other hand, I developed my own opinion of this business….Even if I can pick up thousand of problems in Fan, such as his laziness, I admire his rich experiences and original views in computer hardwares. During these years, I haven’t paid him much. However, if I can help him to go to school in America, I will feel I have done something for him. I do not mean that America means a lot to us. But, in my mind, America is indeed a different place.”

[Pang] “You haven’t been studying America in the recent a couple of years. America is changing too.”

[Yu] “Although I have never been there, I do know there are many weakness in American personalities.”

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396 Emperor Yang Guang in Sui Dynasty (581-617).

397 A quotation from Feng Youlan.
“American are human beings. ‘Chairman Mao is also a human being.’ [Pang imitated Premier Zhou en-lai’s Jiangsu accent; laughs]

“American play by rules. Although American have a lot of problems, they have the courage to pursue their personal excellencies. We Chinese can not compete with them at this point. How can I not worry about any secular means of living and pursue some wild dream now?”

“Have some Tequiza. Yu, You know I need to take full responsibility for all my suffers during these years.”

“Hell yes, it’s your fault!”

“My boss is made of pure gold. I should not have taken her to some places. I thought we could use a little romance. Regardless, time is flying. Time and tide show sympathy to no man.”

“I wish that you…The reason that I am here drinking with you…”

“You’re an arrogant asshole!”

“OK, OK.”

“Listen, Don’t be so fuck’ in arrogant. OK? I’m begging you. You’re my brother, not a transient guest in a bar. One day, you will call me Big Brother. Aren’t you working on your GMAT?”

“Yu Minhong³⁹⁸ was my teacher. I used to worship him. In his classroom with several thousand students, he said he only relies on himself. Everybody was cheering for

³⁹⁸ Yu min-hong is very famous for his TOEFL, GRE and GMAT school in China. He also became a very wealthy man for his go abroad English teaching business.
him. Those several thousand of people were not mediocre. One day, I wish that you can be a master of GMAT yourself.”

[Pang] “I’m going to teach at the end of May. But, I haven’t attended any GMAT exam. A good sore is still very important.”

[Yu] “Score is not important.”

[Pang] “If score is not important, why were you accepted by Beijing University?”

[Yu] “I still can not figure out how I was accepted by Beijing University. It is as if in another world, Gods were blessing me. It’s destiny. But, I must say that I am very grateful to my high school teacher. In high school, I was always late for class. My teacher told me: ‘You do not need to compare yourself with others. If you can overcome your own problems and come to school in time at 7:30a.m., I think you can get into Beijing University as long as there is one opening.’ In my whole life, the two most influential people to me are my father and my high school teacher. My father rarely met my teacher, but they felt as if they were the best friends in the world.”

[Mei] “Was that in your senior year?”

[Yu] “Yes. I was very very hot tempered back then. I regarded the Dean of the students as a piece of shit. I threatened him with a knife. Shit, when I came out from the jail, everybody was afraid of me.”

[Pang] “How could you threaten your teacher?”

[Yu] “That’s me. I was a brat. But, soon after that, I began to understand…”

[Pang] “Well, Yu, shall we talk about something else? I have to say your state of mind…. according to psychology or my analysis, is still not at its best condition.”

[Yu] “I also feel that I haven’t adjusted yet.”
“Let me finish... If you represent the high-spirited melody, I represent low-pitched accompany. You are the leading role, understand? I leave this moment to you. In my heart, everybody has a position and a file. Of course, there are old files and new files, OK? When I came here alone to drink, I was missing home, and I was...”

“My problem was exactly that I loved to be in the leading role.”

“But, I like you to be in the leading role.”

“My mistakes were caused by my desire to be in the leading role.”

“You’re not my lover. No, absolutely not. But, ‘I’d like to be ruins as long as you’re an evergreen ivy.’ You can be arrogant, because you’re younger than I am. I have been watching you from distance. You understand? I have deeper sufferings waiting for me. I have another kind of destiny. Everybody has his own fate.”

“I agree.”

“Let me finish.”

“No, let me finish. You have big misery waiting for you. But if you can take your misery not as the worst...”

“It’s not. God is testing my limit.”

“During these years, the conflict between us is right in front of your nose. If one day you can see through your misery and take it easy...”

“Can you give me a chance to talk? We haven’t seen each other for half year. In this half year...”

“Listen you, big dick, it’s not half a year. The problem between us is not just this half year.”

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399 Pang cited from a well-known poem in China by Paitophan.
Pang] “It’s about a hundred year.” [laugh]

[Yu] “Yeah, anout a hundred year!”

Pang] “We used to be ‘sworn brothers,’ but also we despised each other. There might be some old scores in our previous world, which is why we are still tangled with each other.”

[Yu] “So, you speak your mind after a cup of drinks. Keeping drinking!”

Pang] “Mei is worried about our relationship. We were two good buddies. Then, suddenly stopped talking to each other…”

[Yu] “Only slims blame others. You can only blame yourself.”

Pang] “Sure! She punished me too.”

[Yu] “It’s right to punish you because she is your good boss.”

Pang] “Can you let me say this for you instead? Shit, why don’t you give your comrade a chance to talk? How about just three minutes?”

[Yu] “Luo whispered to me today: ‘Mei is prettier than ever.'”

Pang] “Is this a compliment to me? Whenever she’s up, I’m down. We are a kind of couple of mutual restraint.”

[Yu] “Right.”

Pang] “We are destroying each other, not like you two. God arranged her to restrain me.”

[Yu] “But…”

Pang] “During all these years, I have been busy with ‘restraining’ her. I haven’t done anything else. If I’m in tears when I sing tonight, please don’t laugh at me.”

[Yu] “We’re not going to laugh at you.”
[Pang] "I can be a stupid bustard sometimes…"

[Yu] "Luo and I have been together for many years…"

[Luo] "Almost six years."

[Yu] "We belong to… How can I describe this…?"

[Pang] "Yu…"

[Yu] "Shut up and listen. We have mutual respect for each other though we have very different personalities. She makes ten thousand yuan per month. I usually make twenty or thirty or forty thousand yuan per month when my business goes well.\textsuperscript{400} Above all, we can recognize our own weakness and amplify each other’s strength."

[Pang] "Yu, turn your face around toward me and repeat what you just said. As brothers, there is a long way to go in our own Great March. In the old days, the Forth Front Red Army was reunited with the First Front. However, Zhang Guotao tried to set up another central authority. He nearly put old Mao into a dangerous situation. But, at the end, old Mao played some smart tricks. As a result, the entire Forth Front Army was almost destroyed. Zhang escaped from the Party and Xu Xiangqian ran back to Mao’s army almost alone. However, all this is not important since the designation of the Forth Front Army was eventually recovered and turned into the Eight Route Army. [turned to the waiter] Bring me a cup of Chivas Regal 12 years. [continued talking to Yu] You’re talking in a quite high tone. See, I’d rather talk in a lower voice. Nevertheless, you didn’t know me in a lot of aspects."

\textsuperscript{400} Luo is working for an American company in Beijing as a computer programmer who has visited her company’s headquarter in Austin, TX for two times.
[Yu] “I really didn’t understand you in many aspects. On the other hand, you only try to understand yourself. You even do not try to understand Mei. That’s why you have become who you are now.”

[Pang] “You are misreading my words again.”

[Yu] “Drink!”

[Pang] “Continue. I care about what you have to say.”

[Yu] “I know you care. If I say something harmful to you, I know, you care. Otherwise I will turn around and leave. I would not, after all, drink this [pointed to the liquor] with you.”

[Pang] “This is Taquiza.”

[Yu] “Taquiza, beer, right? I do not have to drink this with you. I’d rather drink at home, which is much more enjoyable.”

[Pang] “Please don’t despise me all of a sudden after teaching me with grace and patience.”

[Yu] “This despite is good for you.”

[Pang] “No good.”

[Yu] “Good for you!”

[Pang] “I don’t care.”

[Yu] “It’s also good for me if you despise me.”

[Pang] “I do not despise you.”

[Yu] “You do not despise me. But I despise you because you made a lot of mistakes.”

[Pang] “You misread me.”
[Yu] “I’m not misreading you. Even if I misread you, I despised you from what I read. How can you make people not misread you? Can you make Mei not misread you? If Mei does not misread you, it doesn’t matter at all if anybody else misread you. If I can make Luo not misread me, it doesn’t matter whether you misread me or not. Why should I care? [turned to Luo] “Do you misread me?’

[Luo smiled] “What do you think?’

[Pang] “See, how nice she is to you! [turned to his wife Mei] Please let the relevant person talk too.’

[Mei] “If you want me to say something, I will. There is no problem of ‘misreading.’ But as Yu said you have to try to understand others.’

[Yu] “It doesn’t matter if you can understand me or others. You must understand Mei. If you cannot understand her 100%, 50% would be pretty good.’

[Pang] “I’m alright. I can understand her between 35% to 75%.’

[Yu] “Oh, bullshit! You never understood her 75%.’

[Mei] “It’s not that important if he could understand me. The key issue is…’

[Pang] “I have more severe problems. I should be swept into the garbage hill of history.’

[Yu] “Listen to Mei.’

[Mei] “Some stuff indeed should be swept to the junk hill of history.’

[Pang] “OK, from April 30, they are going to be swept to the garbage hill.’

[Yu] “Bullshit, you can’t change in a single day. You may just let all my words in one ear and out the other. But, as your friend, if I can say something really helpful to you, I’ll be satisfied.’

[Pang] “I wish you could repeat these words.’
Appendix 2: Chinese Cuisines:

China is a geographically enormous country. The diverse living conditions not only determine the variety of the transformation of Chinese local cuisine traditions and modernization but also formulate and shape the local eating and drinking rituals and habits.\footnote{This section is based on my personal experiences and my numerous conversations with Chinese friends and strangers.} For instance, Fujian is the home of overseas Chinese. Its cuisine specializes in seafoods and mountain products.\footnote{The most famous dish in Fujian Cuisine is “Fotiaoqiang” (Monk jump over the wall) which is cooked from eight mountain products in a tightly covered pot with wine.} Indeed, the eight major cuisine and wine cultures in China are very much relevant to geographical and climatic conditions in different areas of China.

Henan

The field snails from south of the lower reaches of the Yangtze River and the liquor from the area north of the Yellow River can become a simple but delicious snack for two friends, a northerner from Henan Province, and a southerner from Anhui Province. My Henan friend told me that “The Northerners have tradition of drinking liquor with big bowls and eating meat with big bowls because of the drought in Northern China. Especially in the grassland beyond the Great Wall, where vegetables had been insufficient.”\footnote{In the raw, rugged North and the soft, pliable South – one can see these differences in their language, music and poetry. In the poem “Chilechuan,” one can imagine the dreary northern landscape: “Down by the Chile river,/Beneath the Yin hills,/Like an inverted cup is the sky/That}
During a feast in Henan, the host proposed a toast to his guests. He held a liquor pot in front of the guests. The guests kept drinking but the host did not. So, it was very easy for the guests to get drunk. This wine drinking ritual or custom has its historical reason, as Sidney Mintz exposes: “Such deeply cherished tastes are rooted in underlying economic and social conditions.” Hennan is located in the Central Plains of China, which is comprised of the middle and lower reaches of the Yellow River. Historically, due to the endless floods, plagues of locusts and wars, the people in Hennan lived in poverty. When a guest came for a visit, the host would take care of his guest and make sure that he could drink well. Since there was normally not much wine available, the host might not get a chance to drink any. This custom has been followed until modern times.

Another Henanese custom “chigan huajin” (eat all and spend all) also could be traced to a historical moment when the area was controlled by the power of floods. When a flood from the Yellow River came, everything was gone, and local people had to flee to escape famine. When the flood was gone, a rich soil was left. People came back home, planted and harvested. They had to eat all and spend all before the visit of next flood. A life circle had been developed over thousands of years. I was told in my interviews in Zhengzhou that the special personality of Henanese, such as straightforward, generous and boasting all have something to do with this circle. In Lin Yutang’s eyes, the

covers the wasteland./Enormous is the earth./And the sky is a deep blue;/The wind blows, the tall grass bends./And the sheep and cattle come into view.”


With an explosion of private wealth but relatively few ways to invest it safely, China was undergoing a vast consumption boom between 1980s to mid-1990s. The sense of uncertainty (like traditional Henanese uncertainty toward their material possessions) had something to do with the conspicuous consumption of that period of time.
northern Chinese is acclimatized to “simple thinking and hard living, tall and stalwart, hale, hearty and humorous, onion-eating and fun-loving, children of nature.”

Shanxi

The stereotyped images of Shanxi Province are vinegar, Fenjiu wine and stingy people. The soil in Shanxi is alkaline and the major local food five cereals are also alkaline, so the Shanxinese love vinegar. Fenjiu wine is the jewel of Shanxi. It is produced in the Xinghuacun area where the soil has a peculiar fragrance. Fenjiu is the best representative of Chinese liquor of the Qingxiang (pure, fresh and delicately fragrant) model.

Traditionally, Shanxi was a poor area but did not have so many natural disasters like Henan. So, most of the ordinary people could manage a living with a carefully planned budget. In 1997, a TV sitcom Kou laoxir was quite hot. Kou is the surname of the protagonist, and laoxir means “stingy.” Kou laoxir is a caricature of Shanxinese. Indeed, Shanxinese has the fame of careful calculation and precise budget. Coincidentally, Shanxi produced several heads of the Ministry of Finance of China, such as Kong Xiangxi for the National Party, Wang Bingqian and Bo Yibo for the Communist Party.

Suzhou Cuisine

Cuisine has been always part of culture. Suzhou cuisine is characterized by the sweet and glutinous flavors of both its hongan (red board-chopping board for meat) and baian (white board-chopping board for pantry items). The pantry in Suzhou is as
exquisite as the one in Guangdong. Close to Lake Tai, Suzhou is a land of fish and rice. Perch, salangid and huiyu are the best-known local fish. In addition to being a commercial city, Suzhou, in Chinese history has been a place of recreation and self-cultivation for literati, officials and celebrities in many dynasties. In Suzhou cuisine, we can see the proof that Chinese intellectuals have traditionally pursued the naturalness of Dao. The Song Dynasty’s Su Shi in his “The Fu of Vegetable Soup” stresses the importance of preserving the natural flavor of vegetables. The Qing Dynasty’s Li Yu in his Xianqing Ouji (Some Casual Notes in A Leisurly Mood), also reveals a sense of a vegetarian ideology through his philosophy of being close to the nature. Li especially praises highly the natural delicious flavor of bamboo-shoots and water shield. So, this naturalist philosophy to a certain degree influenced Suzhou cuisine’s tendency to advocate a light and natural flavor.

406 In My Country and My People (1938), Lin Yutang argues that “Down the southeast coast, south of the Yangtse, one meets a different type, inured to ease and culture and sophistication, mentally developed but physically retrograde, loving their poetry and their comforts, sleek undergrown men and slim neurasthenic women, fed on birds’-nest soup and lotus seeds, shrewd in business, gifted in belles-lettres, and cowardly in war, ready to roll on the ground and cry for mamma before the lifted fist descends, offspring of the cultured Chinese families who crossed the Yangtse with their books and paintings during the end of the Jin Dynasty, when China was overrun by barbaric invaders.”

407 *Fu* is a descriptive prose interspersed with verse.

408 Fresh-cut bamboo-shoots and mushrooms are counted among the real joys of a simple rural life. The appreciation of bamboo-shoots is probably the most typical example of Chinese taste. Being not oily, it has unique quality. But the most important principle is that it lends flavor to pork cooked with it, and on the other hand, it receives the flavor of the pork itself. The whole culinary art of China depends on the art of mixture.
Huaiyang Cuisine

The Cuisine in Zhejiang Province is a mixed and miscellaneous collection of cuisines which have been influenced by cultures of immigration to the areas, beginning with the migration to the South during the Southern Song Dynasty (1127-1279). Zhejiang cuisine or Huaiyang cuisine is represented primarily by Yangzhou cuisine. Yangzhou is located on the juncture between the South and North, acting as a buffer zone. It has been the busiest commercial city since the middle age of the Qing Dynasty. After the change from transportation of grain to the capital via the Grand Canal\textsuperscript{409} to the sea shipping, Yangzhou is slowly declined. However, Yangzhou's reputation continued and its influence is prolonged.

Yangzou's Zhenjiang rice vinegar is as famous as the Shanxi's sorghum vinegar. Yangzhou's liquors belong to the spirits of mixing (rice fragrance) models, such as \textit{Jiafenjiu} and \textit{Hanjiu}.

Yangzhou cuisine is a variety of both the South and North which has the \textit{yin} beauty of the South and \textit{yang} beauty of the North. For instance, in one of Yangzhou cuisine's specialties "Shizitou", a pig head recipe is transformed from the Northern cuisine into a mixed style of southern delicacy. The balance between a sweetness and saltiness in Yangzhou Cuisine is ingenious.

Shanghai cuisine is based on Ningbo cuisine\textsuperscript{411} and Suzhou cuisine. After the Opium War, the prohibition during the Ming Dynasty and Qing Dynasty of maritime

\textsuperscript{409} The Grand Canal was built under the Emperor of Sui (581-618).

\textsuperscript{410} Hanjiu is 65%.

\textsuperscript{411} Ningbo immigrants from Zhejiang has been the most influential group in Shanghai and their cuisine is based on seafood.
trade and any exchange of goods with foreign countries was lifted. Shanghai became a commercial city and a diverse showcase of trends and styles, or anything new, modern, exotic and foreign. Shanghai chefs like to soak everything in Shaoxing wine; drunken chicken, drunken pigeon and drunken crab are Shanghai staples.

*Sichuan Cuisine*

In the southwest, Sichuan cuisine is found in Chengdu Basin which has adequate rainfall and rich products. In a land of abundance, Sichuanese in general do not worry about making a living. So, *bai longmenzhen* (chat, gossip or yarn spinning) in a tea house became a Sichuan-style of leisure or even a major daily activity in the local ethnology. Temperature, humidity and water quality determine the quality and characteristics of local wine products. Humid climate benefits the growth of fungus which offers special distiller’s yeast for Sichuan wine, such as *Luzhou laojiao* and *Wuliangye*. These two wines belong to nongxiangxing (model of strong fragrance) whose key element is their yeast. The creams of the five cereals (rice, two kinds of millet, wheat and beans) are kept in balance. *Wuliangye* is so even-tempered, nice; the changing/range of tastes in the mouth is too wonderful for words. In comparison, *Maotai jiu* pushes the air in your body down, but *Wuliangye* leads the air up and make you feel as if you were floating with satisfaction. Chinese are very sensitive to local specialties because they have strong sense of “*tianren heyi*” (the harmony between the Nature and the human body). The hot and humid climate in Sichuan is considered as *shire* (damp and hot) in traditional Chinese medicine. Sichuan cuisine uses chilies that have been either marinated or fried in oil, as
well as famous Sichuan wild pepper (*huajiao*). This crunchy little spice is described as
“ma” because it effectively numbs your tongue and taste buds. When our body feels
damp and hot, we may have poor digestion and a weak sense of taste. Thus, spicy food
can not only reduce the dampness and heat of the body but also stimulate one’s appetite.
This is the major reason for the spicy nature of Sichuan cuisine.

*Jianghuai Area*

The area between the south of the Huai River and the north of the Yangtze River
is called Jianghuai area. The famous wines there are jiangxiang model of liquors, such as
Bisheng’s *Gujing gongjiu* and *Yanghe daqu*. The Jianghuainese are stereotyped as
restless and quick-tempered. In Han Classics, it said that the Jianghuai area produced
treacherous and crafty fellows. This might have something to do with the endless floods.
Two famous jianxiong⁴¹² in Chinese history Cao Cao and Zhu Yuanzhang⁴¹³ became
proof of this assumption.

*Hubei and Hunan*

Hubei people are compared by the people of other provinces to “nine-headed
birds in heaven” because they never say die, and who think pepper is not hot enough to
eat until they have fried it in oil. Hunan was “yunmengze” in ancient China, where the
Jianghan Plains were zigzagged by the Yangtze River. The climate in summer is damp
and hot. The local people are straightforward, brave and as spicy as Hunan cuisine.

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⁴¹² A person who achieves high position by unscrupulous scheming.

⁴¹³ Emperor of Wei and the first Emperor of the Ming Dynasty.
Hunan people, also noted for their soldiery and dogged persistence, offer a pleasanter variety of these descendants of the ancient Chu’s warriors. The good local liquors are “Baishaye,” “Xiangquan,” and “Jiugui.” Jiugui, literally means “drunkard” is the best wine which recently emerged in 1990s. Huang Yongyu, a talented Chinese painter gave Jiugui his genius design for the wine’s bottle, like landscape painting of Zhang Daqian. In a Beijing bar, Jiugui claims a high price at 600 yuan ($75) per bottle.

**Yue Cuisine**

The unique but rich style of Yue Cuisine in Guangdong Province is particularly representative in Chinese history of modernization. From the Qing Dynasty, Zhuangdong began to do business with Southeast Asia. As a result, this became an area which was relatively more open to other cultures. Consequently, the Zhuangdong cuisine or Yue cuisine is characterized by its openness and magnanimity. Yue cuisine, in its soul, is the product of Daoism -- the pursuit of Nature. Li Yu in his *Xianqing ouji* mentioned the nature of food: warm, hot, damp, and dry. He argues about which food goes well with the other food (i.e. some foods have mutual promotion and some have mutual restraint). Chefs of Yue cuisine are practitioners of this philosophy.

In the process of Westernization, Yue cuisine has gone through a remarkable transformation. After the new Open Policy in the 1980s, Yue cuisine has had a powerful influence on Beijing. When I was invited to a dinner in Guangzhou, I noticed that every single course was Chinese style, but the liquors were Napoleon or General, and the cigarette was 555. During my stay in Guangdoing, I got the strong sense of *bafang*
zaicheng, zhongsheng xuanhua (heteroglossia) and the bearing of a great commercial and trading port. In Guangdong, everything is available as long as it has a market. Beijing’s Erguotou wine, for instance, can be found everywhere. In China, the generous and heroic spirit of Zhuangdong businessmen is said to be the opposite of Shanghainese businessmen. As Zhu Rongji concluded: “Shanghainese are shrewd but not smart,” and their small calculative tricks drive their business partners away.

Yue cuisine in China represents the modern spirit: the courage to incorporate things of diverse natures or even take in everything, the desire to welcome foreign culture, the courage to pursue originality and creativity and to challenge any taboos. Hence, in some Chinese view, Yue cuisine represents the “Blue Culture” or the “Ocean Culture” for its openness. Variety is a hallmark of Yue Cuisine, befitting the varied palates of the denizens of the busiest import/export zone in Asia. A well-balanced Cantonese meal is comprised of dishes made from subtly, incongruously-matched ingredients such as braised fresh crab meat with eggplant, sweet and sour beancurd with BBQ pork and endless plates of smaller steamed buns and fried dumplings that fall under the general category of dim sum.

Chaozhou cuisine is the cream of Yue cuisine. After Kejia ren (the Hakkas) immigrated to the south of the Five Ridges, they developed their own style of cuisine. Since the Hakata’s cultural level was higher, they were quite refined in their cooking.

414 Sir Cecil Clementi, governor of Hong Kong, pointed out in 1935 that Hong Kong is but a dot on the map of China; and yet it is a place of worldwide importance because of its ocean-borne commerce. It is a unique experiment in capitalistic venture and cross-cultural relationships: a peaceful meeting of East and West.

415 See chapter eight for detail.

416 The area covers Guangdong and Guangxi.
Chaozhou cuisine utilizes the most natural of flavors, and cannot hide behind a wall of excess spices; like people from Chaozhou, the food of Chaozhou is normally sincere and unpretentious.
Appendix 3: Chinese Cinema in the 1990s

The Chinese film industry in the 1990s is also in a process of reform. On a rainy afternoon, I interviewed Guan Tie-han, the head of Chinese Film Distribution.\textsuperscript{417} Guan Tie-han helped me make sense of the reform process:

After 1949, Chinese film industry adapted the Soviet Union System. "Hanging a screen in every village" and "Fill every vacant space" were part of political propaganda guidance. Starting from 1992, a reform began to take place in the Chinese film industry: the monopoly of purchasing and marketing of films by the Film Cooperative of China has given way to self-marketing by the local film studios. The benefit is shared by the film studio, the mediator(s) and the cinemas. But, in many areas, there are too many mediators to share the meager meal. For instance, there are four film distribution companies in the medium-sized city of Chengde, Hebei province. The four companies are backed by different local forces and nobody is willing to give up their piece of the pie in a game of power-balance. However, the whole film industry is highly controlled by the government, especially through the policy of the different annual quotas of film output for the 16 major film studios in China. The other independent film companies have to buy film permits (a piece of quota) from those 16 studios, which is part of the unfair competition.

\textsuperscript{417} Our conversation was constantly interrupted by the ringing phone, people asking Guan about the procedures for examination and approval of their activities. At one point, two visitors from Yingkou broke the conversation again. They were thinking about taking over a recreation hall with 100 square meters in Fengtai county. Guan told them that any recreation halls smaller than 200 square meters are going to be banned till the end of the year. Guan suggested: "Don't work on it. The recreation hall belongs to highly controlled project groups. Don't invest your money in that risky business." "We appreciate your advice." The visitors left, and Guan and I continued to talk.
In 1997, only 88 films were released industry-made. One of the key reasons was that some of the big film studios could not finance enough films because of their heavy burden of excessive numbers of employees and retirees. On the other hand, some wealthy agencies were not allowed to make films. The Forbidden City Film Cooperation, which has only 211 employees, became a very competitive player in the game.

From 1992 on, film tickets have been open-priced and the first test film was an American movie: "True Lies." The film industry in China no longer focuses on the market dominated by the needs of propaganda or social welfare for the employees in most work units. It has begun to open to a bigger market created by relatively free competition. This offers a huge film market for international investment. In the past, foreign investors were not allowed to be involved in building new cinemas or remodeling old cinemas for the sake of protecting national culture. Now, the control is loosening although the Chinese government is still very cautious about any intention to invade the cultural market in China and only permits the showing only of native films in the cinemas financed by the foreign investors.

Through my conversation with Guan and many others, I had chance to know, or even better, to watch several artistically and commercially successful Chinese films in the 1990s. For instance, Luo Yi, the 32 years-old American film producer and entrepreneur, is the creator of the Imar Films (1996), the first independent film company in China. Its debut production, the 1998 sleeper hit “Spicy Love Soup” consists five of cross-generational vignettes on love and marriage. XiZhao ("Shower"), another of Imar’s
sensational works, was released in 1998.\textsuperscript{418} \textit{Wo Ai Beijing} ("I love Beijing," 1999) is a recent film by a young director Ning Ying who has been "a recorder of things vanishing before our eyes." Ning's filmmaking career has involved wielding a 35-millimeter movie camera to capture characters, institutions, professions, even colors of the sky, that are quickly becoming antique memories destined for the footnotes of future history books and travel guides. The focus of her often darkly comic lens has found its depth of field exclusively in Beijing. In another of her highly acclaimed films, \textit{Zhaole} ("For Fun," 1992), Ning used most of the non-professional actors to tell the bittersweet tale of an amateur Beijing opera troupe comprised of retirees. In her \textit{Minjing Gushi} ("On the Beat," 1995), Ning told the story of an ordinary Beijing police officer during a campaign to rid the neighborhood of allegedly rabid canines. The comic portrait of bureaucracy, boredom and frustration established the young director as the comic philosopher of a millennia-old city in the process of being torn down and replaced with neon kitsch and toilet-tiled skyscrapers.

Another young filmmaker, Jia Zhangke, shares this sentiment with Ning Ying:

"As a director, I'm very excited and stimulated by what I see around me." Jia talks about his award-winning\textsuperscript{419} underground film \textit{Xiao Wu} ("Little Wu") in an interview. In the film, Xiao Wu's former buddy Xiaoyong runs karaoke bars (featuring various degrees of

\textsuperscript{418} The main thread of shower's tale begins when Erming, the mentally retarded son of a bathhouse owner, sends a postcard to his brother Daming, a Beijinger who has abandoned his young brother and father to seek his fortune in the modern metropolis of Shenzhen. Erming' hand-drawn picture of their father lying on a bed leads Daming to assume mistakenly that his father has passed away. After rushing back to Beijing, Daming finds his father still alive, but is soon drawn into a personal voyage through the old-world environs of the bathhouse, where he is forced to confront a new understanding of community, responsibility and family.

\textsuperscript{419} Berlin Film Festival's Wolfgang Staudte Award and San Francisco International Film Festival's Best Film.
sexual commerce) and traffics contraband cigarettes, but within the context of changing times, he is no longer seen as a criminal. When Xiao Wu points out the degree of criminality inherent in Xiaoyong's dealings, a lackey corrects Xiao Wu: "His cigarette business isn't trafficking. It's called 'free trade.' And he's never exploited his bar girls. It's called 'entertainment.'" In its noisy and subtle way, Xiaowu displays China in the midst of great change, with so many things disappearing before our eyes. In the context of an entire society moving ahead, seeking to pursue happiness, Xiao Wu is someone unable to deal with the change. He runs into walls everywhere he turns. But some people in these times are like fish in water. While witnessing the changes in many other places in urban China, I shared Jia's sentiment in his film. At the same time, however, I have been watching with much joy and envy a generation of Chinese, shined by their ever-victorious youth and unprecedented opportunities in China in the 1990s.

Grasping the good opportunities, Chinese mass media become bolder, daring to test taboos on the Cultural Revolution and other sensitive topics. So, for example, such as Jiang Wen's film Yangguang Canlan de Rizi ("In the Heat of the Sun") which portrays a group of Beijing teenagers hanging out during the chaotic Cultural Revolution (1966-76). Theater is even more rambunctious, exploring themes such as the way power corrupts. Novelist Wang Shuo did not criticize the Communist Party; he laughed at it. The party, in his eyes, was "uncool." And in music, Cui Jian is the nation’s rock star, a hero to urban youth, and his raspy outbursts of alienation have become the anthems of his generation. Nevertheless, I have to admit the kaleidoscope of life in Beijing suggests a "city symphony" adapted to different genres -- too rich and chaotic to discern.
### Appendix 4: Teahouses, Bars, Nightclubs, and Coffee Shops in Beijing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teahouses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Beijing Leather Xingsheng Huo Service Center</strong>&lt;br&gt;Fangxing Xi Mi Tea Building No. 29, Nansanhuan Rd. East, Fengtai District, Beijing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Green Tea House No. 53, Tuyuancun, Chaoyang 11am-12am</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wu Yutai Chaoenei Xiaojie Branch No. 223, Small Street, South, Chaoyangmen</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wu Yutai Dongsis Branch No. 533, Dongsis Street, North</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Xichan Tea House No.7 Meishuguan Dongjie, Dongcheng</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Bar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Address/Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Curry Cafe South Gate of Workers Stadium</td>
<td>10:00am-2:00am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Teiiasse Nextdoor of Chaoyang Education Bureau</td>
<td>10:00am-0:00am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May Flower Opposite Minzu Hotel Banpo Beer Hut</td>
<td>26 Wangfujing 10:30am-0:00am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nashville Bar &amp; Restaurant Dongdaqiao Xiejie Opposite of South Sanlitun Market</td>
<td>2:00pm-2:00am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rick’s Cafe 23 East Third Ring Road</td>
<td>11:30am-1:00am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Wei Bookstore 60 Fuxingmen Dajie</td>
<td>9:30am-10:30pm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Jianguomenwai

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Address/Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amazon East Third Ring Road, just north of Lufthansa Center</td>
<td>11:30am-2:00am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cafe Kranzler Kempinski Hotel</td>
<td>11:00am-1:00am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CD Jazz Bar East Third Ring Road, South of Agriculture Exhibition Center</td>
<td>5:00am-1:00am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL Gaucho 12 South Jinhua Road</td>
<td>11:00am-2:00pm, 4:30pm-10:00pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hard Rock Cafe 8 Dong San Huan Bei Lu</td>
<td>11:30am-1:00am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawaii Bar 6 Guanhuaxili</td>
<td>Johnny’s Coffee 77 Xibahe Dongli (Across from International Exhibition (enter) 9:00am-0:00pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure Pub G/F, Chang’an Club, 10 East Changan Avenue</td>
<td>6:00pm-5:00am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexican Wave Dongdaqiao Lu</td>
<td>11:00am-2:00am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paulaner Brauhaus Kempinski Hotel</td>
<td>11:00am-0:30am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phoenix Pub 12, Jianhua Nanlu (Off Jianguomenwai, just east of CVIK)</td>
<td>11:30am-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ristorante Pizzeria Cafe ADRIA Opposite the Kempinski Hotel, Liangmaqiao Rd., Chaoyang</td>
<td>Schiller’s Liangmaqiao Lu 7:30am-1:00am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunflower Club South Ritan Park Road</td>
<td>12:00am-2:00am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sun Garden Bar Guanghua Road</td>
<td>10:00am-2:00am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Location</td>
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<td>--------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>2:00pm</td>
<td>District, 100016</td>
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</table>

**Haidian**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Venue/Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5:30pm-</td>
<td>1 Wudaokou Road, Haidian District</td>
<td>Angle’s Cafe 1 Wudaokou</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midnight</td>
<td></td>
<td>Boss American BBQ 22 Haidian Lu, Haidian District 11:00am-1:00am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Chocolate Bar Shengfu Lu, Haidian District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Internet Cafe Capital Stadium Building, Wast Side, No. 54 Baishiqiao Rd., Haidian District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Kenny Rogers Roasters Haidian Branch 10:30am-12:00am</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Venue/Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4:30pm-</td>
<td>Inside trolley No. 105, 107 and 111 Baishiqiao Station, Haidian District</td>
<td>Lisheng Folk Bar Inside trolley No. 105, 107 and 111 Baishiqiao Station, Haidian District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:00am</td>
<td></td>
<td>Moon House Across from the West gate of the Beijing University, Haidian District 7:00pm-1:00am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>New Product Bar Shuanyushu, 500 Meters East Shuangan Shopping Center, Haidian District 5:00pm-2:00am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Nook Bar 100m west of Fourth Ring Road and Xueyuan Lu intersection, Haidian District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>NYX Sports Bar 200 meters from the south gate of the Beijing University, Haidian District 4:30pm-2:00am</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Venue/Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2:00pm-</td>
<td>Opposite the south gate of the North Transpotation University, Haidian District</td>
<td>0 Bar Opposite the south gate of the North Transpotation University, Haidian District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:00am</td>
<td></td>
<td>Richmond Brewery 298 Haidian Lu, Haidian District 11:00am-1:00am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Shadow Cafe (Club X Beijing) Behind the Yanshan Hotel, Haidian District 8:30pm-2:00am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Solution Pub Across from Beijing University West Gate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Texas Bar 1A Weigongcun, Haidian District 4:00pm-2:00am</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sanlitun Sanlitun (Bar North Street)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Venue/Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Angel Western Food 3 Stories, live</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Annie’s Cafe Mostly western food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bella Bakery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Boys &amp; Girls Club 21st century</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Daisy’s Pub Small stone room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Band</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day Off No.66</td>
<td>Downtown</td>
<td>Easy Day No.36:38 North Street Female boss designed the bar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jack &amp; Jill No.52,</td>
<td>Jazz Ya 18 Sanlitun Lu, Japanese Style</td>
<td>Kebab Cafe 11:00am-2:00am European food &amp; dining</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milan Club No.62</td>
<td>Public Space Different kinds of tea</td>
<td>Side by Side</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swing Band once a week</td>
<td>Upside Down Cafe Mexican food</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Sanlitun (Bar South Street)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pub</th>
<th>Details</th>
<th>Design, Live Pop Band</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Buddy Pub Nine TV Screens, aided by Taiwanese</td>
<td>Day Off Irish pub, Belgian chef, live music on Saturdays.</td>
<td>Fly-Fei Free man Bar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free Will Bar</td>
<td>Hidden Tree Popular western bar, assorted drinks Railway, coffee &amp; tea</td>
<td>Home Station 65041808</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jam House Funky music</td>
<td>Jungle Filled with trees Minder Cafe Disco music, dance floor, Filipino band</td>
<td>Nashville Bar &amp; Res. American food &amp; style New Cafe Latin music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O4U</td>
<td>Red Roof Bar Riders Bar Live African band on weekends</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Worker Stadium

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cafes</th>
<th>Details</th>
<th>Design, Live Pop Band</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ace Ca Fe Xinfunyicun Northside</td>
<td>Babylon North gate of the worker's gym.</td>
<td>Bella 20 North Sanlitun Berena's Bistro 6 East workers STadium Rd. Cafe Cafe Dong Da Qiao Xie Jie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building</td>
<td>11:00am-2:00am Live Music start at 9:00pm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carella Cafe East Workers Stadium Road</td>
<td>2:00pm-2:00am</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Century City Jazz Bar</td>
<td>4 North Workers Stadium Road 11:00am-2:00pm, 5:00pm-10:00pm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Road, Chaoyang district</td>
<td>11:30am-0:00am</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00am-2:00am</td>
<td>11:30am-2:00am</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hidden Tree 12 Dong Da Qiao Xie Jie</td>
<td>5:00pm-2:00am</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jazz Ya 18 Sanlitun Lu</td>
<td>11:00am-2:00am</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnny’s Coffee 2km north of the Hilton Hotel</td>
<td>10:00am-11:00pm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kebab Kafe Sanlitun Wicker Market</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maggie’s No.5 58 Sanlitun Bei Road</td>
<td>11:00am-2:00am</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metro Cafe 6 West Workers Stadium Road 5:30pm-0:00am</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minder Cafe Dong Da Qiao Xie Jie</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Palace Sanlitun ZhongJie</td>
<td>11:00am-2:00am</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peking Chalet Building No.1 North Sanlitun Road</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poachers Inn 7 Sanlitun Road</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Space No.48 Sanlitun Lu, Chaoyang district 11:30am-2:00am</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redwood Bar North Workers Stadium Road</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentiment Bar Sanlitun Lu</td>
<td>9:00am-1:00am</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single’s Bar Dong Da Qiao Xie Jie</td>
<td>11:00am-2:00am</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studio No.5 Bar East Worker’s Stadium Road 5:00pm-3:00am</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ted’s Cafe 56 Guan Dong Nan Jie</td>
<td>9:00am-2:00am</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Based on my fieldwork and the information from Travel in Beijing online.
### Appendix 5: A Brief Chronology of Beijing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>700 thousand B.C.</td>
<td>The Peking Man appeared in the Beijing area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1027 B.C.</td>
<td>Emergence of a city in the Beijing area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>226 B.C.</td>
<td>State of Qin annihilated State of Yan and occupied the city of Ji (Beijing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>350 A.D.</td>
<td>State of Qian Yan (Xianbei Nationality) occupied the city of Ji and made it capital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>756 A.D.</td>
<td>An Lushan declared himself emperor of Dayan State and made the city of Ji capital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>911 A.D.</td>
<td>Liu Shouguang declared himself emperor of Dayan State and made the city of Ji capital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>938 A.D.</td>
<td>Rulers of Liao Dynasty (916-1125) renamed You Zhou Yanjing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1153 A.D.</td>
<td>Emperor Hailing of Jin Dynasty moved capital to Yanjing, and renamed Zhongdu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1215 A.D.</td>
<td>Mongol army occupied the city (Beijing) and burned this central capital of the Jin Dynasty (1115-1234)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1272 A.D.</td>
<td>Kublai Khan, grandson of Genghis Khans, who established the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368), designated the city as Yuan capital and renamed her as Dadu, enabling the city to become the political, economic and cultural center of China for the first time. The city was one of the world’s grandest and most prosperous cities of the time. Marco Polo said of the city: The beauty and elaborate layout of the city defy description.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1285 A.D.</td>
<td>Construction of Dadu was basically completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1386 A.D.</td>
<td>Ming (1368-1644) army occupied Dadu and renamed the city Beijing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1403 A.D.</td>
<td>Ming court renamed the city as Beijing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1406 A.D.</td>
<td>Ming emperor made Beijing capital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1407 A.D.</td>
<td>Ming began constructing city wall, palaces and temples in Beijing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1420 A.D.</td>
<td>Construction of Beijing by Ming was completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1421 A.D.</td>
<td>Ming formally moved capital to Beijing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1564 A.D.</td>
<td>Ming completed construction of outer wall of Beijing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1644 A.D.</td>
<td>Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) moved capital to Beijing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912 A.D.</td>
<td>Last Qing emperor abdicated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1927 A.D.</td>
<td>Nationalist government made Nanjing capital of China and restored the name of Beijing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1937 A.D.</td>
<td>Japanese army occupied Beijing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1949 A.D.</td>
<td>The People’s Republic of China was founded with Beijing as its capital and changed the name back to Beijing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: This chart is based on the information from the Beijing Travel online.
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