

# REPUBLICAN BEIJING

*The City and Its Histories*



MADELEINE YUE DONG

Republican Beijing

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# Republican Beijing

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Madeleine Yue Dong

*With a Foreword by Thomas Bender*

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*For Hong, our parents, and Isabelle*

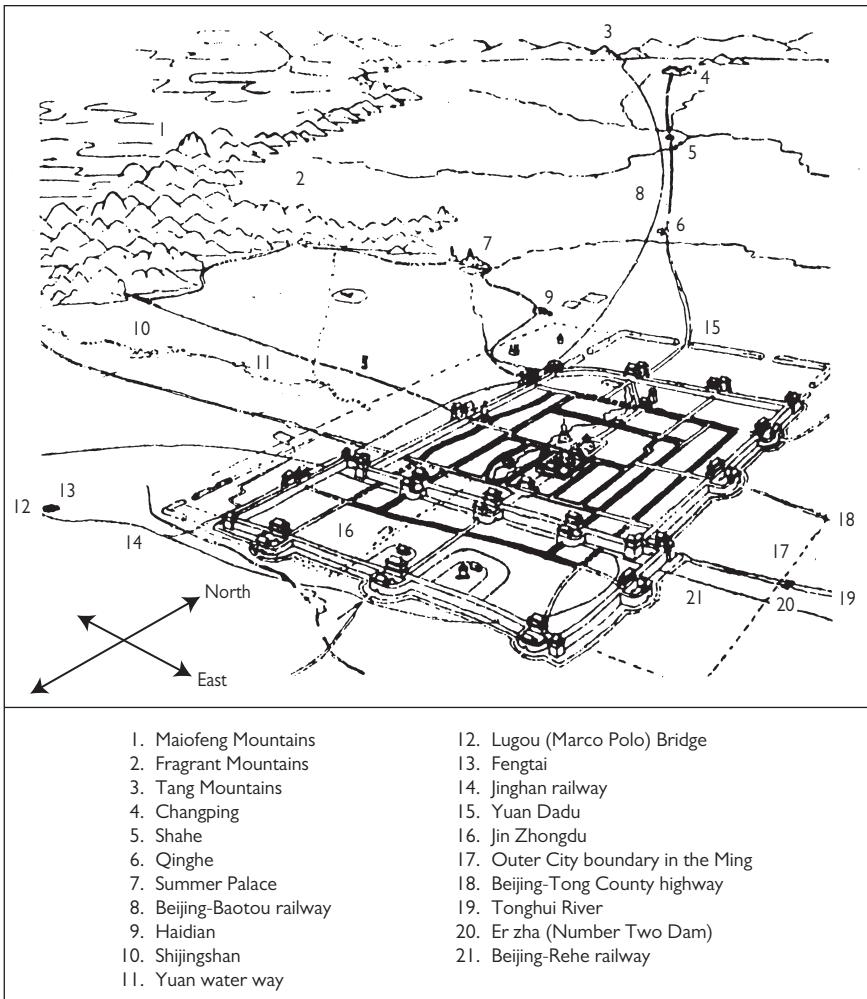


Figure 1. Beijing is located in a basin surrounded by mountains. The central part of the map indicates the historical changes of the city's location from the Jin and Yuan dynasties to the Republican period. Map based on a sketch by Liang Sicheng.



Figure 2. An overview of the Imperial City from the city wall. The picture was taken by a Western missionary who had the privilege to walk on the walls. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.



# Contents

List of Illustrations	xi
Foreword	xiii
Preface	xix
Introduction	i
PART ONE · <i>The City of Planners</i>	
1. From Imperial Capital to Republican City	21
2. Power: The City and Its People	54
3. Tradition: The City and the Nation	78
PART TWO · <i>The City of Experience</i>	
4. Production: Beijing in a New Economic System	105
5. Consumption: Spatial and Temporal Hierarchies	142
6. Recycling: The Tianqiao District	172
PART THREE · <i>The Lettered City</i>	
7. Sociology: Examining Urban Ills	211
8. History: Recording Old Beijing	246

9. Literature: Writing New Beijing	266
Conclusion	297
Notes	309
Bibliography	345
Index	365

# Illustrations

1. Beijing's geographical location and historical development	vi
2. An overview of the Imperial City from the city wall	vii
3. Ragpickers	5
4. The reconstructed Qian (Zhengyang) Gate area	23
5. Beijing in the Qing	26
6. Traffic at a city gate	28
7. Street construction in Republican Beijing	39
8. Districts of Republican Beijing	45
9. Planned annexation of Beijing's surrounding rural areas	50
10. The streetcar system	68
11. Public parks in Republican Beijing	83
12. Two Americans dancing in front of the Temple of Heaven	94
13. Man making a cloisonné bowl	115
14. Man pasting characters onto a lantern in a lantern-making shop	117
15. Woman spinning cotton outdoors	133
16. An antique shop	139
17. Market system of Qing Beijing	146
18. Market system of Republican Beijing	149
19. A shopkeeper with household goods for sale at an outdoor market	166

20. Woman selling paper flowers at New Year's	168
21. Location of the Tianqiao district	179
22. A medicine seller performing in front of a crowd at Tianqiao Market	191
23. Street entertainers performing on stilts for a crowd at Tianqiao Market	195
24. A beggar boy	217
25. Pilgrims watching temple society members performing a show	283

# Foreword

The modern city is not only a locale of social difference; it is marked by a “complex overlap of temporalities.” A generation ago, Fernand Braudel insisted on “the plurality of social time,” speaking of the “many-stranded and contradictory notions of time in the lives of men, which make up not only the substance of the past but the very fabric of social life in the present.” Perhaps because he offered such a powerful example of the importance of *la longue durée* in his great book, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Phillip II* (1949; English edition, 1972), historians have focused on that aspect of his notion of time in history. But for him the social world was made up of many temporalities, many histories, and the social life of cities exemplifies his point, which was, in part, a statement about the relation of past and present.

Madeleine Yue Dong’s book *Republican Beijing* reveals the city to be an important site for experiencing multiple temporalities and bringing them into relation. Thus the city offers a place, a laboratory, for exploring the cultural history of temporality as it finds expression in everyday life and in artistic representation. Dong elaborates the place of the past in the present; her important theme is the centrality of the past, of history, of memory, even of nostalgia in the modernizing and self-consciously modern city. It is an important contribution to the study of modernity as well as of tradition, or history, or, as tourist offices call it, “heritage” in modern cities.

Her study of Beijing is framed by the period 1911–1937, and it is centered on the Republican period in China. Not only an important moment in Chinese history and in the history of Beijing, this era of high imperialism is also a period of global urban transformation. Cities in the decades before World War I were linked by trade and investment (proportionately larger than at the end of the twentieth century), the movements of people, and the transfer of ideas and urban technologies. Modernizing and modern planning projects were underway on every continent, in metropoles and in colonies—and in such semicolonies as China and Latin America.

Though her focus is on Beijing, this larger context warrants address, for the expansion of context strengthens her argument and invites dialogue between Dong and historians of other cities. Partly the dialogue that it invites points to comparative histories of cities in that era, but even more important will be deeper exploration of the movement of urban aspirations and ideas and planning practices among and between cities. Dong seeks to undermine the simple West/East dichotomy, with its implication of a one-way traffic of modernity from the former to the latter. Historical exploration of the global flows of the symbols of urban modernity promises to add importantly to the more complex story she tells and reveals its larger relevance.

We talk in the present about the possibility that modernity does not belong to any one nation, not the United States, or any block of nations, or the West. Even when referring to developments a century ago we must entertain some version of this possibility. Think rather of something like an international bazaar orbiting the world, filled with a variety of icons and practices that represent urban modernity. It is true, of course, that certain nations and cultures contributed more to the array of goods than others, and some even had the power to impose. Still, no one was exclusively a contributor (or imposer) or exclusively a borrower. Visitors to the bazaar hail from both metropole and periphery. Metropoles borrow from each other; but so do peripheral cities. And some metropoles develop modern urban practices in their colonies and then bring them “home.”

To explore such a history of cities and global developments of modern city culture a century ago, we need to recognize a history of metropolitan cities as a genre of its own: not isolated from other histories, including national histories, but a history that recognizes the development of the modern metropolis as a historical process of global proportions. While this book is written within the burgeoning historiography of Chinese cities, it is very attentive to similar studies of big cities on other

continents—Carl Schorske's study of Vienna, Jeffrey Needel's of Rio de Janeiro, and a number of studies of Paris. Now the students of those cities—and more—must engage the work of Dong and other recent studies of Beijing and Shanghai.

Dong, like Michel de Certeau, explores the relation of everyday life in cities to the sense of history and to modernizing planning agendas. But she goes beyond most accounts of the everyday by understanding that one cannot study the everyday without examining the state and its relation to everyday life and the “making” of history in the modern city.

Many students of everyday life unduly celebrate the “banal and trivial.” Like those celebrants, Dong examines with great sympathy the ways ordinary people manage their lives, with little change over time. But she goes farther than that by examining the precise relation of the everyday and state power, at least in the context of the public spaces of the metropolis. One small but fascinating example concerns the effort by planners to reform the Hutongs—the cluster housing historically characteristic of Beijing and other Chinese cities. One of the problems the planners faced—a minor one perhaps, but one bothersome to the authorities—was the naming of the Hutongs. They were often identified by local landmarks, a local merchant, a well or old stream, or the like. The problem was that such naming practices resulted in many duplications. That several Hutongs carried the same name undermined the rational principles of modern planning, and planners sought to bring order to the city. The planners, therefore, renamed all those Hutongs that duplicated names. The response of the residents was neither simple acquiescence nor resistance. They operated on two channels—retaining the old names for spoken reference, allowing the authorities to write the new names on signs and documents.

Dong's telling of this little story reminds me of my own everyday experience in New York. I live a block from the Avenue of the Americas, a name given to a major north-south street as part of an effort to emphasize the solidarity of Latin America and the United States. The name has its larger purposes, and it is used on maps and street signs. But in the local vernacular the street remains Sixth Avenue, and such it is for me. Why? Rebellion? Not quite. Pragmatism is the issue. It makes experiential sense for Sixth Avenue to be between Fifth Avenue and Seventh Avenue. But if the planners and politicians want to call it the Avenue of the Americas for their purposes, it is no problem for me. And my spoken use of the vernacular is no problem for them.

These little examples point to a major urban theory developed by the Latin American writer and critic Angel Rama. In his posthumously pub-

lished book *The Lettered City* (1996), he describes the hegemonic authority of the “lettered” elite in defining the culture and meaning of Latin American cities. He describes the city of the educated, of those who use maps, of those who monopolize power. It is also the city of the planners. In his account the lettered city, sustained by its sponsoring class, dominates urban life. But Dong reveals both conflict and gentle subversion challenging the power of the lettered city. She locates a series of exchanges between the lettered city (envisioned by the planners and social scientists) and the city of experience. Dong’s notion of the interaction and of the practical legitimacy of the vernacular languages and histories in the city is similar to Rama’s argument, yet much richer.

She theorizes a relationship between the practice of everyday life and the past in a way that has important implications for our understanding of modernity. Taking as an exemplary site a particular market in Beijing, Tianqiao, she develops her point out of specific exchanges and cultural meanings associated with them. Everyday practice in this public space points to a much larger set of class and temporal relations. Out of her account of the market in used items, she develops the notion of “recycling.” This rich idea reveals the dynamic of the relation of past and present in the modern city. At Tianqiao, the past achieves presence in any economy of circulation of used objects. These objects, especially clothes and decorative objects, both of which carry in their design and material of fabrication, the mark of temporal origin, acquire new meaning with new owners in new contexts.

The order and efficiency of Tianqiao were those of recycling. Tianqiao was made of the same materials as the rest of the city, but it occupied a different position in the chain of circulation. The businesses there differed from both the old stores serving the imperial household and officials and the new department stores catering to the city’s emerging new elite class; the entertainment there resisted mass reproduction.... Tianqiao’s dynamics grew out of its position as the city’s recycling center. Recycling was not simply bringing back the old. Instead, it involved applying labor to fragments of the past to rekindle and create new values in them.

Likewise memory and heritage (and the physical remnants of the past). Here Dong reveals a process at work that explains why the presence of the past in modernity is more than merely persistence. History and modernity are mutually constitutive. Just as she puts pressure on the West/East dichotomy, so too the dichotomy of past and present. One has instead an interactive or circular model, a recycling.

Capital cities are expected to represent the nation. Occasionally, the nation's major city is not the capital—Sydney, Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paulo, Shanghai, New York. And there are cities that have had to deal with losing their status as capitals—Rio de Janeiro, New York, and, during part of the Republican period, Beijing. Whether a major city is or is not a national capital, it must establish its relation to national history, or what in China was often called the “national essence.” Beijing provides Dong with an excellent opportunity to examine all of these possibilities, in addition to the transformation of an imperial city (the ultimate lettered city, perhaps) into a Republican capital—and then a former capital. These issues and phases are all central concerns of the history of metropolitan life on all continents.

Many of Dong's themes come together in her analysis of the writer Lao She, who captures in literary form the recycling that brings together historical feelings and modern ambitions, recognizing their inseparability. We often think of such writers as turning away from the modern city in their fascination with the old and ordinary. Yet what they offer is a dialogue of old and new. After reading Lao She—and Dong's notion of recycling—one gets a richer understanding of, for example, the great photographs Atget made of Paris in the era of Haussmann. They record more than loss; they are also works of recycling that recuperate the old, refusing its disposal, and giving it a place in the new city. History is thus a part of modernity, whether one despises it or wraps it in the sentiment of nostalgia.

Nostalgia is part of modernity and modern city life, and Dong opens that question up. Partly, she is helped in her work by the striking tendency among intellectuals in today's Shanghai and Beijing (and Republican Beijing) to see the future in the past, to find in nostalgic memories the outlines of a city to come. The very particular twentieth-century history and politics in China no doubt contribute to this complicated understanding of past and future, of constructed amnesia and fantastic memories and futures, but it is not unique. In post-Communist Budapest there was a remarkable nostalgia for the prewar Hapsburg Empire, and only a few years ago the city of Buenos Aires pursued a vision of its future by celebrating the rich success of the city of 1910. Dong has touched a rich theme for urban studies in her exploration of the dynamic that projects urban pasts into the future.

*Thomas Bender*



# Preface

When I went to Beijing for the first time in the autumn of 1982 to attend college, I was fascinated, on the one hand, by things such as the escalators at the train station and the subway that were still novelties in China, and, on the other hand, by the buildings that were hundreds of years old and by the street names that no longer had any meaning in contemporary language. While the enchantment of the modern conveniences soon turned into just a familiar part of life in the capital city, my interest in the city's history grew. Exploring the labyrinth of the city's alleyways by bus and bicycle occupied all my free time during my first summer break at Beijing University. The city's past, although present everywhere, could not be easily comprehended by a casual observer like myself, but my adventures in the city made me aware that Beijing was knowable and accessible. This confidence I gained about the city in its alleyways turned out to be handy in the spring of 1989; I could always maneuver the streets and get where I wanted to be when the main arteries were blockaded.

Yet the city that I found pleasing on account of its intimate scale had its daily inconveniences for many of its residents. The charm of the old courtyard residences was compromised by the lack of basic facilities such as running water and toilets, and many of the houses leaked during the rainy season. The rooms were hot, cold, damp, and dark, depending on the season and weather. With several families crowded into

one courtyard, the residents did not enjoy even minimal privacy. Moving out of the courtyard was the dream of many families.

The intimate city disappeared within a decade's time. I could not recognize Beijing when I returned to do research for this project in 1995, my first visit in six years. People were moving into tall apartment buildings, and their living conditions seemed to be improving. I was caught up in the prevailing sense of excitement about all the changes, the overwhelming availability of everything, and the mixing of all kinds of people. But I soon became aware of the negative side of the changes. Many parts of the city were no longer pleasant to wander in, and getting on one's bicycle meant negotiating the exhausts from cars, the crowded traffic, and the intimidating new overpass system. I once went to visit a friend who lived on the twenty-fifth floor of an apartment building. The elevator was not working that day, so I decided to climb the windowless stairs. When I was halfway up, the power went out. I was stuck in total darkness in the middle of the stairs. With my heart pounding, I wondered whether I should keep going and feel my way up or turn around and go down. Later, I learned that this happened all the time; my friend often had to walk up the stairs in the same darkness, her young son in one arm, bags of groceries in another. The little boy's favorite place was "his river," which, my friend told me, was nothing more than a dirty ditch, because he had no other place to play in his neighborhood. When he was taken to Kunming, he saw white clouds, which he said were beautiful. When asked what the clouds looked like to him, he answered that they looked just like the "plastic bags flying in the sky of Beijing."

The little boy's stories made me sad. Do we have to choose between courtyard residential houses without running water and toilets and such apartments? Do we have to choose between showcase projects on Changan Avenue and in the financial district and neighborhoods without any reasonable public space for the residents? Have people received their fair share of benefit from the recent development in China that is astonishing by any standard?

Focusing on the daily experiences of the residents of today's Beijing gave me a vantage point for thinking about the recent changes as well as the history of the city in the early twentieth century. I was intrigued by the debate on development and preservation when I started this book; now, as I finish it, I realize that what matters the most to Beijing residents is beyond the debate. The eight-lane highway from Fucheng Gate to Shijingshan passes in front of the home of my friend's little boy. Its construction was one of the proud achievements of the 1990s. As I

cross it, dodging the heavy trucks that are carrying steel from the iron and steel plant, I am reminded of the warning signs on I-5 between San Diego and Los Angeles that picture an immigrant family running across the wide, intimidating highway. As I stand at one of the intersections, holding the hand of the little boy, who is now an elementary school student, I pray that we can once again cross the road safely and hope that the city government will ask people what they want before it starts the next project, that a mechanism for citizen participation in city planning will become reality, and that if the next road built in the city cannot make people's lives easier, it will at least not make them harder.

What I have learned from the history of Beijing in the past few years is that the city's past and present should not be primarily about construction or the lack of it but rather about people's experience of the city. A city can gain real energy and dynamism only when its residents are allowed space to breath and live. *Human scale* should be a term referring not only to architectural dimension and style but to urban planning in general. The residents of the city, rather than development or preservation, should always be the first concern. Beijing should belong to its residents before being a showcase to the world.

It is a great pleasure to thank the individuals and institutions who helped me in the process of writing this book. Grants from the Hepps Fellowship of the University of California at San Diego and the dissertation fellowship at the University of California provided crucial support for the initial research and writing. The completion of the book was made possible by Stanford University East Asian Center's Junior Faculty Research Fund and support from the University of Washington, including the Royalty Research Fund, a Junior Faculty Development Award, and the Fritz Endowment of the China Studies Program. The staffs of many archives and libraries in China and the United States assisted my research, including the library and archives at the Hoover Institution, the Library of Congress, Harvard-Yenching Library, libraries at the University of California at Berkeley, Beijing Library, the Capital Library in Beijing, the Beijing Municipal Archive, Beijing University Library, Qinghua University Library, and Princeton University Library.

Joseph Esherick, Dorothy Ko, and Paul Pickowicz guided me through the writing of my Ph.D. dissertation, from which this book has been developed. George Lipsitz led me to many comparative and theoretical readings that had been unfamiliar to me. Cynthia Truant introduced me to the study of European and particularly French urban and

cultural history. Discussions with Takashi Fujitani and Stefan Tanaka shaped some of the earliest questions for the project. I am also grateful to the graduate students of U.C. San Diego, especially Joshua Goldstein, Michael Chang, Julie Broadwin, Susan Fernsebner, James Cook, Liping Wang, Andrew Morris, Mark Eykholt, and Zhiwei Xiao, for creating a stimulating environment.

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# Introduction

“Old Beijing” (*lao Beijing*) has been a subject of growing fascination in contemporary China’s capital since the 1980s. While physical remnants from the past are being bulldozed every day, making space for glass-walled skyscrapers or high-rise apartment buildings (*talou*), nostalgia for the old city is booming. Unable to rebuild the city walls that were long ago torn down, and unable to preserve the close relationships among neighbors that were characteristic of communities in the old city, those who yearn for “old Beijing” may find some comfort in the dozens of local snack foods and entertainment performances of that era that have been brought back from the twilight zone of memory and made available at tourist teahouses. While families are busy moving into apartment units with iron bar security doors and neighbors who never see one another, small alleyways (*hutong*) and courtyard residential houses (*siheyuan*) have entered the list of attractions for foreign tourists. While the fashion of the city is to install plastic unit bathrooms (*zhengti yushi*) imported from Japan that allow a shower in a small apartment, the old-style bathhouse, which also served as a “community center,” has become a theme for cinematic representation. The after-dinner chess game under a tree in the street is no longer a familiar scene now that the city’s evening air is polluted by noisy automobiles, but TV programs on “old Beijing” and local forms of entertainment are now weekly events. Each district of the city has compiled its history, emphasizing its famous business establishments and tourist attractions. For-

mer business practices, from how a certain restaurant cooked a famous dish to how shop clerks treated their customers, are objects of imitation in the city's service industry.

Many literary and photographic representations of “old Beijing” have appeared. Tourist guides, photographs, and hundreds of essays about the city published during the Republican years (1911–37) have been collected and reprinted. Sidney Gamble’s 1919 social survey of Beijing has been published in Chinese eighty years after its first appearance in English. All the works of Lao She, the most eminent literary spokesperson for “old Beijing,” have been reprinted, and many of them have been made into movies, performed on the stage, or serialized on television. “Old Beijing” fever does not stop at reprints. Several “encyclopedias” of life and culture of “old Beijing” have been compiled. “Beijing flavor literature” (*Jing wei'r wenzue*) has become popular in the literature market. Several writers have made their reputations by recreating in their works the “old Beijingers” who devoted their time to pet birds, flowers, cricket fights, and antiques. The most highly regarded of these new writers are those whose language and detailed descriptions convey “an authentic Beijing style.” When people in today’s Beijing search for an identity for the city different from that of the socialist capital, or when they try to express disapproval of the unprecedented scale of reconstruction in the city, many turn to the “old Beijing.”

What, then, is this “old Beijing”? In many ways, what is today believed to be “old Beijing” is not so old. It is not imperial Beijing but the historically recent Republican Beijing. The kinds of material life being re-created today come primarily from the Republican years. The snacks from “old Beijing” that show up in today’s markets do not come from the imperial palace; they were sold in the alleyways by vendors in the Republican city. The Tianqiao district, where the construction of a “folk art center” has been proposed, became open to ordinary people only after the last emperor fell in 1911, and many of the commercial establishments that have claimed a “long tradition” from imperial times underwent fundamental transformations to survive the changes of the early twentieth century. The present mode of literary representation of the city also bears the imprint of the Republican period, especially in its strong sense of nostalgia. New writings on “old Beijing” have many of the same traits as writings from seventy to eighty years ago: for instance, an obsession with details and anecdotes about everyday material life practices.

The fascination with “old Beijing” is in part a product of the commercialization of history, and it does not interrupt the public’s rush to a

more comfortable lifestyle away from the crowded courtyards and alleyways. But in a situation where residents have little to no voice in decision making on development projects that have been radically transforming their living space, asserting the value of “old Beijing” has also been one of the most often adopted means of commenting on many of the changes occurring in the city today. The city’s past does not necessarily stand for a life to which people wish to return; nonetheless, it provides a vocabulary and reference for the city’s residents to criticize things they do not want to see today. Those fascinated with “old Beijing” do not focus on the modernization projects that began to transform the city’s infrastructure in the early twentieth century; nor are they particularly concerned with preserving a “traditional” imperial Beijing. The aspects of the city that they dwell upon are not scenes of former grandeur: bypassing the great sights and landmarks, they instead focus on small, even trivial features of the city’s former everyday life. Recollection of that life has made the tumultuous early twentieth century, a time of political instability and economic hardship, a source of inspiration for many in today’s Beijing. Republican Beijing, far from being forgotten, has left a powerful historical legacy.

Among the most persistent and familiar figures in the streets of Republican Beijing were the paper collectors and ragpickers. Easily identifiable by the large baskets on their backs, these women or young boys were chosen in both photographic and literary representations of the city as symbols of the reality of everyday life. Hedda Morrison, a German photographer who worked in Beijing between 1933 and 1946, explained, “Collecting paper and rags was one of the poorest occupations. Nothing that could possibly be reused or recycled was ever wasted, and the paper collectors supplied the raw material for recycling into coarse paper.”<sup>1</sup> In “Chuntao,” a short story about Beijing in the early 1930s by the eminent modern Chinese writer Xu Dishan, the heroine, Chuntao (Spring Peach), was a paper collector, one of those women whose cries of “Matches for written paper!” penetrated even the deepest alleyways every day. But to Chuntao and her partner, there was more to the paper they collected than just raw material to be sold. Instead of simply selling the paper and letting its written contents vanish in the recycling process, they carefully sorted it according to what was on each piece. While a small piece of calligraphy by Kang Youwei could bring them eighty cents, a letter from the king of Korea with the seal of the Ming emperor could mean a real fortune. Used stamps and cigarette boxes with fancy

pictures were picked out to be sold again. What Chuntao loathed the most was the paper from the modern institutions such as schools and banks, which was heavy and foul smelling and could not be sold for much. However, even these poor-quality scraps found a market as wrapping paper for shops. Chuntao's work involved not only turning waste into useful material but also recognizing and assigning value to a certain time and its historical connotations. The material objects and the history they stood for were weighed together in one process.

Chuntao's work is an allegory of Republican Beijing's recycling of fragments of its past: Chuntao made her living by sorting through objects from the past just as the city mobilized its history to define the present. The city was rich in what Chuntao considered valuable; despite all the changes in Beijing, traces of the past were omnipresent. One would be constantly reminded of the city's past, not only by the architecture so characteristic of imperial times, but also by the people of the city and their various activities, many of which are captured in Hedda Morrison's photographs. In one such photograph, a persimmon vendor puts down his fruits in front of the Gate of Heavenly Peace (Tiananmen) and carefully arranges them on green vegetable leaves to complement the attractive golden color of his produce. In another, a secondhand metal vendor at the Tianqiao Market (located on what was formerly forbidden imperial land in the southeastern corner of the city) concentrates on cleaning a small pot. His wares range from decades-old, elegantly decorated brass hot pots to new-style eyeglasses, all scrubbed shining and tidily arranged on a mat on the ground. Still another photograph shows an old man in Beihai Park engaged in the popular pastime of skating. This old man is a master skater who has long been a regular at the lake; in his younger days, he performed for the Empress Dowager Cixi.<sup>2</sup>

These images bring back the fleeting moments of these people's lives in Republican Beijing. Did it occur to the persimmon vendor that he was sitting in front of what used to be the imperial palace, a place that had been forbidden to him twenty years ago? Did the old master skater recall his glorious days of gliding on the Beihai when it was still an imperial garden and not a public park? What did the imperial past mean to the city's residents? How did they think about the interweaving of the old and the new that created the texture of their daily life? Living in a city so laden with history, how did they imagine their futures? What concerns, dreams, aspirations, and anxieties marked the struggles of their daily lives? Republican Beijing is often seen as a transitory mo-



Figure 3. Ragpickers. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

ment, a present crushed between the weights of an oppressive traditional past and an unalterable modern future. But what if the past was not a remote, abstract concept, and what if the vision of the future was not clearly predictable and certain? What happens if we “blast open the continuum of history”<sup>3</sup> and refuse to see, as from a teleological perspective, the Republican period as merely a passing moment of little significance for Beijing’s history?

Answering these questions demands that we employ a new analytical framework, and the developments in the field of modern Chinese history in the past two decades, especially studies of cities in the late imperial and Republican periods, have made it possible to do so. Until the 1970s, cities and urban life were not of major interest to scholars re-

searching modern Chinese history, perhaps because, as Mark Elvin and G. William Skinner have suggested, scholars were “bemused by the fact that the Maoist revolution came from the countryside and seemingly (though only seemingly) bypassed the cities as agents of change.” Elvin and Skinner’s edited book *The Chinese City between Two Worlds*, published in 1974, counteracted this trend by asserting the historical significance of urban life in China: as the authors explained, “China’s first encounter with modern industrial civilization took place in the cities; it was in the cities too, that Chinese efforts at modernization began.”<sup>4</sup> But the book as a whole made clear how difficult it is “to sort out ‘modern’ phenomena from continuing late traditional ones.”<sup>5</sup> In particular, as Elvin and Skinner summarized, “Many existing Chinese institutions grew at an accelerated pace until well into the twentieth century. This was true, for example, of guilds, charitable foundations, and small market towns wherever there was the economic vitality to sustain them. Some modern developments, such as the city-based political power of the gentry and merchants that underlay the 1911 revolution, turn out to be trends that were unmistakably present by late premodern times.”<sup>6</sup>

Scholars have investigated a much broader range of issues related to urban life in modern China since the 1980s. Studies on the development of new institutions and infrastructure, such as the municipal government, the police, schools, bureaus of public hygiene, banks, and public utility companies, have brought to our attention a whole system of urban administration never previously examined.<sup>7</sup> Works on urban society that draw on social history and gender studies make the meaning of this new system complex and specific by demonstrating that people’s experiences of a city are conditioned by and at the same time construct their class, gender, ethnic, and even native-place identities. Many have focused on the experiences of the industrial working class, sojourners and migrants from the countryside, and women of different classes and statuses, and have thereby offered a much needed complement and challenge to earlier studies, which looked primarily at May Fourth intellectuals and the communist revolution.<sup>8</sup> Scholarship on urban society has been central to some of the most important theoretical debates, especially those on civil society and the public sphere. Despite scholars’ disagreement on whether such concepts can be applied to studies of China, the debates have been productive in revealing important patterns of power relations and structures of social organizations.<sup>9</sup> Inspired by and keeping pace with new develop-

ments in cultural history, numerous studies in the last decade on urban culture have examined the city as a site of both cultural production and cultural representation. Connections between urban popular and consumer cultures and issues whose significance extends beyond the city itself, such as nationalism, the construction of gender identity in a changing society, and Chinese modernity, have been examined through tourism, newspapers, popular novels, pictorials, radio broadcasting, movies, and other popular forms of entertainment.<sup>10</sup>

Each of these studies might focus on only one aspect of a specific city, but together they present a much more complex view of modern Chinese history. Whereas Elvin and Skinner's book essentially started with the modernization of "traditional Chinese cities," the recent studies have devoted much attention to the dynamic relationship between the modernization process and the various social forces involved—professional associations, underground societies, native-place associations, men and women workers, students, technocrats in urban administration, writers, and consumers. These studies have demonstrated that the cities of modern China were not simply either centers of state control or mirrors of Western models. The recent scholarship has amounted to a new understanding of the relationship between the state, the market, popular and regional cultures, and nation building.

Many of these new insights have been gained from the numerous studies on Shanghai published in the past two decades.<sup>11</sup> But whereas Shanghai has received a great deal of scholarly attention, non-treaty port cities have received very little. Cities that did not emerge in the nineteenth century but had a longer history and were not centers for colonial forces faced different challenges, for they occupied different positions in international and national orders both materially and symbolically. Thus the lack of studies on non-treaty port cities could lead to a skewed understanding of Chinese modernity by reinforcing the tendency to equate the modern and the Western and by prioritizing the aspects of modernity expressed through bourgeois culture.

Republican Beijing has been studied in works on national politics, local politics, and individual institutions.<sup>12</sup> Of particular importance is David Strand's *Rickshaw Beijing: City People and Politics in the 1920s*, which studies the transformation of state-society relations and the growth of political consciousness among the residents of the city during the warlord years. From the establishment of the chamber of commerce and various professional associations to the formation of an organiza-

tion of rickshaw pullers, Strand's book demonstrates in an admirably concrete way how the city's residents negotiated with the new government, gave meaning to new public spaces such as the streets and parks, and adapted the new political vocabulary to their own interests.

This book differs from Strand's in two significant ways. Instead of treating the city as a stage for major historical figures and events, it brings together the political, economic, social, and cultural forces in Beijing life involved in the transformation of the old imperial capital and its re-creation as the "cultural city" of modern China. Beijing in the Republican period was not only a city of warlords, protesting students, and literary figures but also a city of storytellers, wrestlers, snack vendors, and landscape architects. It was not only a center of politics but also a place where people made their livings every day. Second, Strand's book focuses primarily on the warlord era before 1928 and only briefly deals with the arrival of the Nationalists and the incongruence of their social vision with the realities of Beijing life. This book, in contrast, stresses the importance of the years of Nationalist rule in Beijing's history. For Beijing, the Nationalist government's takeover of the country meant the relocation of the capital to Nanjing, followed by economic decline, stronger statism, and tighter social control, as well as a new form of cultural construction that stressed national identity. The year 1928 marked major shifts in the government's strategies of nation-state building that are clearly shown in the history of Beijing. For these reasons, the period covered by this book extends beyond 1928 into the 1930s, when the city received a new image by being designated as the "center for traditional Chinese culture."

The relationship between the present of Republican Beijing and its imperial past has been an issue central to scholarship on the city. In his work on the development of public utilities in Republican Beijing, Mingzheng Shi argues that the city went through a modernization process that nonetheless represented growth without development due to the city's limited financial resources.<sup>13</sup> Yingjin Zhang, on the other hand, refers to Beijing as a "traditional city" and discusses it in contrast to Shanghai, the "modern city."<sup>14</sup> Zhang points out "the lack of appropriate and effective intellectual schemata with which to conceptualize and re-present the city in all its complexity," but he then describes a spectrum with "China, tradition, and the countryside on the one side, and the West, modernity, and the city on the other" and assigns Beijing a position somewhere in the middle.<sup>15</sup> While Shi stresses change and

limited “modernization,” Zhang emphasizes Republican Beijing’s “traditional” nature.

These two approaches, although contradictory on the surface, both set up an opposition of the traditional versus the modern, or the past versus the present, and do not provide a way out of the circuitous game of debating whether Republican Beijing was more modern or more traditional. There is no doubt that Beijing was undergoing an historical moment occupied by both the old and the new, and enough evidence can be marshaled to support either a “modern” or a “traditional” label. The replacement of the imperial spatial order with one based on principles of modern urban planning, the transformation of the city’s infrastructure, and the emergence of new institutions of urban administration all pointed to a departure from the city’s eight-hundred-year history as an imperial capital. Yet with its remaining city walls, narrow alleyways, imperial palaces and gardens, slow-paced lifestyle, and lack of industrial production, Republican Beijing did not appear to be a twentieth-century “modern city,” if Western cities and treaty ports like Shanghai were the standard. Both arguments remain within the framework of linear history, implying that the Chinese traditional past is inevitably doomed and that a modern future defined by certain Western models is the goal to be reached. The city is placed on a teleologically conceived spectrum from “traditional” to “modern,” and then the speed, or more commonly the sluggishness, of the transition to modernity is measured, particularly in reference to the time required to complete modernization projects.

Another consequence of these approaches is even more disabling. If modernization according to Western models is the ultimate goal, local people’s mentalities and values become irrelevant. Valuing of anything “old” must be perceived as a futile conservative effort to defend outdated traditions. For example, Sidney Gamble, an American sociologist who conducted research in China in the early twentieth century, observed that “it is one of the familiar contrasts of Peking to find the old and the new side by side and apparently exerting but little influence on each other,” yet he still confidently believed that Beijing was undergoing a “change from the old to the new.”<sup>16</sup> To Gamble, such change should follow an American model of social engineering.<sup>17</sup>

Strand presents a more nuanced view that stresses the complex overlap of temporalities in Republican Beijing.<sup>18</sup> When introducing early-twentieth-century Beijing as the context for his groundbreaking study

of the growth of political consciousness, Strand calls our attention to the layers of history in Republican Beijing:

Some cities are like palimpsests. The imperfectly erased past is visible even though only the imprint of the present can be clearly deciphered. By contrast, Beijing in the 1920s, as a human and physical entity, clearly preserved the past, accommodated the present, and nurtured the basic elements of several possible futures. Few cities in China in the 1920s looked so traditional and Chinese and at the same time harbored the essentials of modern and Western urban life.<sup>19</sup>

Strand draws attention to ambiguities in Republican Beijing's physical image and is particularly insightful in pointing out that "several possible futures" were available to the city. But elsewhere he characterizes the condition of the city as one of "incomplete transformation":

In fact, the city's physical ambiguities provide a metaphor for the uneven and incomplete social transformations of the Republican period. With everything added by the way of new technologies and social practices and little taken away through the uniform application of factory system, modern administration, or thoroughgoing social revolution, Beijing cultivated incongruities and forced accommodation between old and new forms of production and social action.<sup>20</sup>

The message here is mixed. The "accommodation between old and new forms of production and social action" is an intriguing issue that needs to be further explored. But although recognizing the Republican period as a "transitory stage" permits acknowledgment of the material evidence of overlapping time periods, describing the city's experience during this time as one of "uneven and incomplete social transformations," in a somewhat teleological way, still assigns more significance to the future than to the present.

Zhu An, an eminent historian of the Republican period,<sup>21</sup> made what might be the most sensitive observation on the complex entanglement of the old and the new in Republican Beijing:

The nearly thirty years between 1900 and 1928 were, for Beijing, a time of struggle between the old and the new. All that was old still refused to totally surrender but had to guardedly accept some of the new. It was like forcibly putting new clothes on an old skeleton. The new clothes themselves were not first class, and the old skeleton could not avoid losing its original shape.<sup>22</sup>

As this comment shows, Zhu An does not see the transition from the old to the new as occurring automatically, nor does he romanticize or

idealize either the new or the old. He does not reduce a complex experience into one of the new replacing the old. Instead, by describing the “new clothes” as being very often “forced” on the “old skeleton,” he emphasizes the struggle involved in the relations between the two and the resistance against, as well as the cautious acceptance of, the new.

To analyze this complex history of how the people of Beijing dealt with the conflicts between the old and the new, this book develops the concept of “recycling.” “Recycling” describes and theoretically frames a primary mode of material and cultural production and circulation that came to characterize Republican Beijing, a nonindustrial city encountering an industrializing world. Faced with various crises during this period, many of the people, and even the government, of Beijing dealt with problems of the present by recycling material and symbolic elements of the past in order to gain some control over the transformation of their city. The concept of recycling breaks down the separation of old and new and instead stresses a dynamic relationship between the two. As Prasenjit Duara eloquently puts it, “Neither the notion of simple continuity nor that of invention can do justice to the subtle transactions between the past and the present. The past does not shape the present simply by persisting in it. It enables the transformation of the present and in that transformation, is itself transformed.”<sup>23</sup>

The work of anthropologists Helen Siu and Yunxiang Yan, who have adopted the concept of recycling in their work on ritual ceremonies and gift exchange in contemporary China, demonstrates that recycling continues to be a mechanism adopted by people today to cope with changes. Siu uses the concept to analyze the resurgence of popular rituals such as weddings and funerals in south China in the 1980s. She observes that “the basic features of traditional weddings and funerals and their ideological assumptions continue to have appeal” but that they are utilized for benefits (such as network building) in the mundane affairs of social living “where the power of the socialist state has long been internalized.” Because the socialist state has penetrated so deeply into Chinese society, its “proposed retreat” in the 1980s “triggers new anxieties as well as energies.” To cope with the changes of this era, the residents of the village Siu studies “shrewdly reconstitute ritual fragments to interact with the encapsulating political structure, reproducing, improvising, and changing their cultural meanings.” Siu concludes that “the resurgence of these rituals in their transformed state represents cultural fragments recycled under new circumstances” instead of mere revivals of tradition.<sup>24</sup> Similarly, in his study of gift giving in north China,

Yan stresses the new patterns in this practice, the practitioners' redefinition of networks, and their adjustment of methods of conforming to conventions. Like Siu, Yan argues that the system of popular rituals in contemporary China is "a process of 'recycling tradition,' rather than a revitalization of tradition."<sup>25</sup>

My book shares Siu and Yan's view that what remains of the past can serve as an important resource for coping with the present. This study of Republican Beijing demonstrates that recycling has a history of its own. In fact, it is entirely possible that the "traditions" Siu and Yan see "recycled" in the present were in fact themselves transformed or recycled versions of earlier practices.

This book discusses the ways in which Republican Beijing treated its history in three areas—transformations in the city's spatial order, the material life of the city's inhabitants, and cultural representations of the city. It attempts to extricate the present of Republican Beijing from a history conceived in terms of a linear progression by uncovering the dynamic relationship between material life and cultural identity and by recognizing the active, creative ways in which the residents of Beijing dealt with the political, social, and cultural changes of their times. Beijing was the capital city of the new Republic of China from 1911 to 1928. Once the Republic was established, the centuries-old imperial systems of city administration and spatial organization could no longer serve the new state's needs. Those eager to transform Beijing into a Western-style modern city felt that much had to change. In the first year of the Republic, the newspaper *Da ziyoubao* (Great Liberty News) stated that "a nation's capital city has to have three crucial conditions: convenient transportation, wide and clean streets, grand and ordered buildings. Paris in France, New York in America [sic], Berlin in Germany, and London in Britain are such examples."<sup>26</sup> A municipal government, the Municipal Council, was established that shared this vision. Urban construction projects were planned and implemented, and a new urban spatial pattern began to replace the old. Republican political ideals—popular participation, the promotion of commerce and industry, and mobility in general—replaced hierarchical ordering and segregation by ethnicity and status as the principles dominating city planning and determining the pattern of neighborhoods. The building of a mass transit system affected everyday activities for city residents, enabling them to take longer trips throughout the city and making them anonymous in crowds outside their immediate neighborhoods.

In 1928, however, when the Nationalist government took control over the country and moved the central administration to Nanjing in

the lower Yangzi region, Beijing became a regular city with a drastically lowered political status and budget, and the direction of urban development changed. In the pre-1928 projects the government had focused on constructing roads and opening public parks to promote education and activities deemed appropriate to citizens of a republic; now it shifted its focus to presenting the city as a Chinese “cultural center” and tourist attraction and emphasized capitalizing on instead of razing the remnants from the city’s imperial past.

While Beijing was being made into the nation’s cultural center, it remained a place of specific history and meanings for ordinary people and the setting where they conducted their daily life. Much of Republican Beijing’s specific way of treating its past was related to its economic conditions. From 1912 to 1928, Beijing was only nominally the capital of the new republic; the central government had little control over the warlord regimes in the provinces. As a result, the amount of wealth flowing through the city steadily declined. The city’s economic condition further deteriorated after 1928. Moreover, Beijing not only lacked the preconditions for developing modern industry but also lost its potentially important position in the old trade route systems linking south China with the northwest, the northeast, and Mongolia. While the city’s limited volume of exports relied on handicraft production, a much larger volume of industrial goods poured in to supply the needs of everyday consumption. Modern banks replaced the old-style credit system but did not contribute to the local economy. What prospered in Republican Beijing was a new form of handicraft industry and the trading of secondhand goods. Consequently, a dual system ruled Republican Beijing’s economic life, in which a modern economy treated the city as a market and a preindustrial economy sustained the majority of the city’s population.

In these dire conditions under which Beijing was being integrated into the modern economic and political world system, the city’s residents prized the past in all forms of old and used goods, ranging from rags to antiques. The city was filled with pawnshops, secondhand goods stores, old book and antique businesses, and numerous night and dawn markets that used the cover of darkness to obscure the true nature of their secondhand merchandise. An omnipresent recycling process brought the fragmented and stratified markets together into one circulation system and served as one of the crucial factors in shaping the city’s identity. The Tianqiao district, essentially Beijing’s “recycling center,” is a telling example. It was Beijing’s most important collection and

distribution center for secondhand goods, where worn-out objects were dusted off and given new value through artful prevarication. For most of the city's residents and visitors, Tianqiao embodied the essence of Beijing urban life, and the attraction of the place came from the social energy created by recycling. The ordinary residents of the city demonstrated at Tianqiao their resilient ability to reformulate what the powerful had imposed on them, and a new urban consciousness was born with the recycled objects. The Tianqiao Market, in short, was a cultural expression of recycling.

In Republican Beijing, artistic and literary representations of the city focused on the details of daily material life, such as snacks sold in the alleyways and seasonal celebrations. In most of these representations, nostalgia was the main mode for expressing emotional attachment to the city. Scholars of an older generation, with obvious efforts at encyclopedic completeness, collected and categorized everyday practices and local customs and transformed them into knowledge. To them, Beijing was a local culture that represented absolute values. In contrast, new intellectuals whose presence in Beijing was tied to the modern educational institutions presented Beijing as a city of enjoyable parks. Instead of focusing on everyday practices, they described the city's imperial past in terms of abstract aesthetic principles and constantly compared Beijing with other cities in China and the world. When Beijing was threatened by the Japanese invasion in the mid-1930s, these two groups began to converge, both focusing on an "old Beijing" as the center of traditional Chinese culture. This "old Beijing" toward which many felt nostalgic, however, was not the imperial Beijing of the past but instead the living Republican Beijing. A present that was expected to be ephemeral was being remembered as a past that needed to be preserved as a valuable asset for future generations. Remembering Republican Beijing as the "old Beijing" began, not in the 1980s, but eighty years ago. When it was still a living experience, Republican Beijing was already becoming a nostalgic memory.

The present of Republican Beijing, although in constant crisis, refused to disappear between a suffocating past and a future represented by the West that seemed constantly receding and unattainable. It deserves to be recognized in its own right. As the urban historian Donald J. Olsen writes of nineteenth-century Europe, it was "neither an eighteenth century gone bad nor a twentieth century struggling to be born, but a period with its own concerns, its own values and aspirations, its own moral and intellectual assumptions, which need to be taken seri-

ously.”<sup>27</sup> Recycling, stressing the possibilities available to people living in that time and space and the conscious labor they applied in their everyday practices, is a process by which Republican Beijing’s residents explored potentialities from the past and transformed them into useful things for the present. What gave Republican Beijing its energy was not the passive acceptance by the city’s residents of the new replacing the old, the modern conquering the traditional; rather, it was their active creativity in giving meaning to the present in their lives. The concept of recycling thus illustrates a means by which the residents of the city actively dealt with the uneasiness involved in resisting and accepting changes and created positive, definitive meanings for the present in their lives.

This book shares some theoretical assumptions with Joseph Levenson’s *Confucian China and Its Modern Fate* and Hobsbawm and Ranger’s *Invention of Tradition* but differs fundamentally from them in other respects. Levenson’s book introduces the concept of “museumification” to describe a primary mechanism through which modern China dealt with its “Confucian past.” That past, for Levenson, survived as fragments that could not amount to a meaningful new structure and could derive their meaning only from a modernizing national context: “Many bricks of the old structure are still around—but not the structure. Fragments may survive because they meet a modern taste, not because (more than the fragments forgotten) they must be conveying the essence of an invincible tradition. And the taste, the language of the culture, cannot be explained as created by the fragment. Rather, the language is being enriched in its vocabulary.”<sup>28</sup> Levenson acknowledges the existence of relics from the past but sees them as surviving only in museumification and possessing only what he calls “historical significance” because they are “pointers to a past that does not appeal and does not threaten.” The best of them, he argues, are “aesthetically significant—merely aesthetic, fragments of a vanquished, vanished whole.”<sup>29</sup>

Levenson’s concept of museumification as a modern rendering of a supposedly fragmented tradition lends crucial insight to an important phenomenon in modern China and explains some elite intellectual and national concerns very effectively. But it encounters two problems when adopted to interpret the full experience of the Chinese people in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. First, Levenson’s argument falls short when applied to social history, especially practices of everyday life. It overlooks practices that embody past values for reasons other than “taste,”—for instance, survival. Second, his argument implies that

the Chinese were adopting a “modern taste” that was predetermined by outside forces and excludes the possibility that this “modern taste” was formed by integrating fragments from the past rather than by totally abandoning them. Levenson likewise does not leave room for the possibility that the “modern taste” is never formed in isolation, either in the West or in the non-West, and that Western and non-Western representations can in fact inform each other, as in the case of orientalism and self-orientalization.

Levenson’s argument is to some extent similar to Hobsbawm and Ranger’s theory of the invention of traditions. The essence of museumification is that the past is, or has to be, safely dead when modernity arrives. In other words, modernity ineluctably pulverizes, fragments, and kills the past. Hobsbawm and Ranger modify Levenson’s theory by pointing out that not everything in the past is treated as an obstacle in modern times and by stressing the utility of the past in the construction of the modern nation-state. Inventing traditions involves a process of abstracting the past into aesthetic and cultural principles for the purpose of organizing the present through ritual and symbolic means. As the authors state, “Inventing traditions, it is assumed here, is essentially a process of formalization and ritualization, characterized by reference to the past, if only by imposing repetition.”<sup>30</sup>

My own study differs from Hobsbawm and Ranger’s in that it goes beyond excavating invented symbols and state-dominated rituals to uncover what is buried in the miscellaneous details and contingent forms of everyday life. Whereas the invention of tradition entails the development of utterly new habits under the banner of timeworn custom, recycling involves the expedient patching up of genuinely old and all-too-used articles in an attempt to pass them off as authentically new. The past is not only directly manipulated by modern institutions such as the museum and the state but also utilized in practices of daily life. Hobsbawm and Ranger suggest that, in their schematic, “traditions’ and pragmatic conventions or routines are inversely related. ‘Tradition’ shows weakness when it is justified in pragmatic terms. Conversely, objects of practices are liberated for full symbolic and ritual use when no longer fettered by practical use.”<sup>31</sup> The theory of invention of tradition thus does not address what is not so clearly “liberated” into symbolic and ritual use but remains in the realm of the mundane. Further, it endorses an opposition of the modern and the traditional. Recycling, in contrast, focuses on small, trivial features of everyday practices. The past does not just exist as aesthetic principles chosen for their suitabil-

ity to “modern taste”: rather, “modern taste” is created with the very fragments of the past.

The history of Republican Beijing raises the question of what role the past plays in defining Chinese modernity and demands that we think about modernity, not in terms of a framework that opposes the modern to the traditional, but instead in terms of a narrative that accommodates both imported and native resources. Recycling, with its concomitant social and cultural elements, such as nostalgia, is a key quality of Chinese modernity. Modernity, in this book, is not limited to material modernization expressed in a society’s meeting a set of homogeneous, universal criteria for development, such as infrastructure, skyscrapers, or public utilities. It extends beyond these to refer, first, to a condition of existence structured by large-scale capitalist industrial production, not necessarily at the local level but in an integrated world characterized by bureaucratic nation-states, and second, to the consciousness of people in a society of their position in this integrated world, as well as their active efforts to define the present through not only national and elite discourses but also everyday practices. In such a definition, modernity was not brought to China by and from the West but created in and through China in its interactions with the rest of the world. China was not a site of passive reception of modernity as defined by Western experiences but an active participant in its creation.<sup>32</sup>

This definition of modernity does not deny the distinctions between the new and the old as recognized by the contemporaries of the Republican period, but it rejects the simple categorization of practices as modern versus traditional as an analytical strategy and framework. Recognizably, the modern has historically often been linked to the Western, but coupling modernity with westernization in scholarly studies prevents us from maintaining the distance necessary for historical analysis; further, it deprives the concept of modernity of its analytical value. It is a common strategy for the modern to claim its total independence from the past, as Carl Schorske insightfully points out in his study on Vienna: by the late nineteenth century, “‘modern’ had come to distinguish our perception of our lives and times from all that has gone before, from history as a whole, as such. Modern architecture, modern music, modern philosophy, modern science—all these define themselves not *out of* the past, indeed scarcely *against* the past, but in independence of the past.”<sup>33</sup> Recognizing that, in the Chinese context, such severing of the modern from the past is a political strategy rather than historical reality will allow us to call into question and even break the assumed link be-

tween modernity and westernization, which inherently precludes a “Chinese past” in modern times.

The three parts of this book examine the city’s spatial transformations, the city’s material life, and representations of the city. Part I examines the city’s spatial transformations. The first three chapters focus on spatial and administrative transformations of Republican Beijing, the pattern of power relations revealed in the struggle among different forces to control urban spaces, and state-sponsored projects to construct new public, symbolic, and ceremonial spaces. Part II discusses the material life of the city’s residents. Chapters 4 and 5 study the city’s economic conditions and pattern of consumption. They lead to Chapter 6, a case study of the recycling center in the Tianqiao district. Part III focuses on cultural representations of the city. Chapter 7 examines in detail sociological studies of Republican Beijing. Finally, Chapters 8 and 9 examine different representations of Republican Beijing produced by the older generation of scholars and the new intellectuals.

PART I

# The City of Planners



# From Imperial Capital to Republican City

In 1925, Sun Fuxi, a writer, returned to Beijing by train after having been away for five years: “Having passed the Fengtai station, the train hurried up impatiently, speeding like a snake chasing light. I held my breath and could not help feeling drawn to Beijing’s indescribable power....In an ocean of green I saw from afar the brick city walls, buildings with yellow tiles, and red walls emerging on top of the waves of leaves. I could tell that this was Zhengyang Gate; this was the Forbidden City and all.”<sup>1</sup> Sun’s impression of the city was common among visitors to Beijing during the Republican period. The city was accessible by means of modern transportation, but it boasted a decayed yet still awe-inspiring magnificence inherited from the imperial times. The soldiers of Western armies first gained a complete view of Beijing and recognized its unique value and beauty after the 1860 and 1900 violence that devastated it. A major part of the city was made visible to its ordinary residents and visitors when the imperial mystery was laid bare in front of curious eyes after the establishment of the Chinese Republic in 1912. The city’s spatial order and architecture that reflected imperial power began to be systematically described in modern terms in Chinese, English, Russian, French, German, and Japanese at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Most visitors came to Beijing in the 1920s and 1930s by train, and the station at Qian Gate (also called Zhengyang Gate) was the city’s main railway terminal. One of the first things a visitor would see on

walking out of the train station was the great Qian Gate that stood proudly nearby. The white, arch-shaped decorations on the windows of its arrow tower were a permanent reminder of the burning of the building by the Eight Allied Forces in 1900 and its subsequent restoration by Curt Rothkegel, a German architect, who believed that such classical Western-style ornamentation suited this Chinese imperial structure. Dwarfed by the gate, the newly installed concrete-and-iron traffic dividers ran fencelike along the widened avenues, which were also relatively new features of the city. Neatly constructed curbs outlined small areas of grass and young pines. On the side of the smoothly paved wide avenue next to the gate a few cars were parked, and sometimes a motorcycle or two, but they were usually engulfed by rows of horse-drawn cabs and rickshaws waiting for business. Bicycle riders comfortably mixed in the flow of traffic. The pedestrians were a mixture of people of different classes whose clothes ranged from long flowing robes to Western suits to the baggy black cotton pants and white shirts worn by working-class men.<sup>2</sup>

The reconstruction of the Qian Gate area was held up as a state-of-the-art exemplar of the city's spatial transformation in the early years of the Republic. It embodied an important principle in the reordering of the city: unifying the different parts of the city and connecting the city to the outside world. The newly founded republic inherited a capital city that was dilapidated but still coherent in its spatial composition. The city's physical layout, which had once served the imperial state so well, was now unable to satisfy the needs for commercial and industrial development that the new Republican state envisioned; it had to be replaced by a new, more open spatial order conducive to increased mobility of people and goods. The principles of accessibility and mobility, as well as hierarchies based on new forms of power, replaced the ethnic segregation and compartmentalization that had helped the imperial court to express its power and maintain order. Although many projects of redesigning the city were started and never completed, some definitive changes occurred. The cosmological-philosophical, political, and social principles of the imperial spatial plan were gradually obscured by a reorganization of the city's built environment. On the eve of the Japanese occupation in 1937, the end of the period addressed by this book, the spatial order of Beijing was fundamentally different from what it had been at the turn of the century.

Paralleling the projects to connect the different parts of the city was the effort to make the city a complete, autonomous administrative unit.



Figure 4. The reconstructed Qian (Zhengyang) Gate area made traffic convenient, but the integrity of the original architectural design was broken. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

During the Republican years, Beijing's political and administrative status gradually declined: at first the site of the titular central government of the warlord-fragmented Republic, Beijing became a noncapital city under the Nationalist regime. A new municipal government autonomous from the central government and its surrounding rural areas was developed, counterbalancing the chaos caused by frequently shifting political powers. For the first time in history, Beijing became an administrative municipality, with one municipal government in charge of the whole city.

These irrevocable changes marked a new epoch in Beijing's long history. This chapter tells the story of Republican Beijing's modernization, focusing especially on changes in the city's basic spatial plan and administrative system. These top-down projects embodied the new Republican government's vision of a "modern" city. From the government's perspective, the physical evidences of Beijing's imperial past were obstacles to modernization and had to be removed.

### THE IMPERIAL CAPITAL

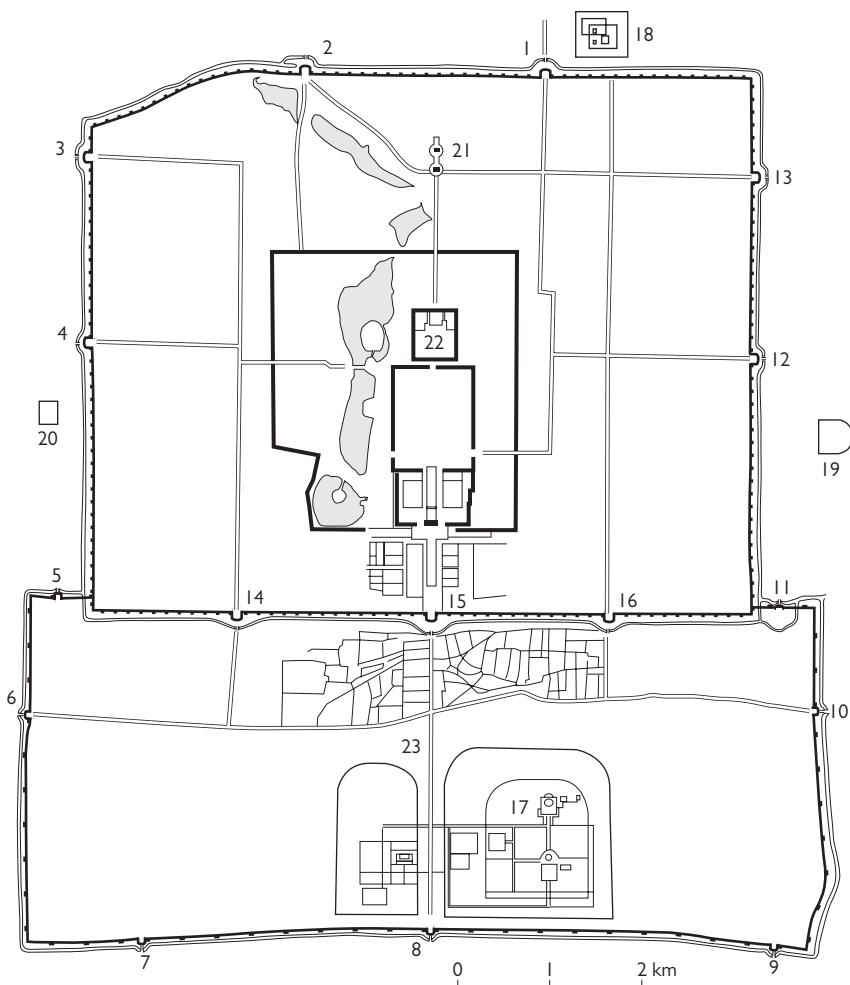
The foundation of what is now Beijing was laid during the Yuan dynasty (1215–1368). The capital of the Jin dynasty (1126–1215), which preceded the Yuan, was located in the southwest section of today's Beijing. After briefly residing in the Jin capital, which they had destroyed during their conquest of China, the ruling Mongols built their own new capital in 1267 and proudly named it Dadu (Great Capital) in 1272.<sup>3</sup> Slightly compromised by geographical limitations, Dadu was essentially built in accordance with the ideal set forth in *Zhou li: Kaogong ji* (The rites of Zhou: On craftsmanship). *Zhou li* stipulated that the imperial city should be a square formed by four walls, each of them nine *li* (about 2.8 miles) long and each punctuated by three gates. Nine thoroughfares should connect the whole city from east to west and from north to south. An ancestral temple (*zu*) should be built to the east of the audience hall and a temple of the earth (*she*) to the west. The city market should be located north of the palace.<sup>4</sup> Dadu attentively mirrored this ancient ideal except that the city walls were longer than nine *li* on each side: the circumference of the city was about 17.8 miles, with each side slightly over 4 miles in length.<sup>5</sup>

The Ming dynasty changed Dadu's name to Beiping (Northern Peace) when it established its capital in Nanjing (Southern Capital). During the reign of the Yongle emperor (1402–25) the city became the imperial capital, acquiring its new name Beijing (Northern Capital) and

a spatial layout that lasted until the 1950s. The Ming monarch built the city that hosted his throne on a scale of unprecedented magnificence, with the most majestic palace compound, the grandest buildings and courtyards, and the finest temples, bridges, and gardens in China's history. The Ming palace was built on the same site as the Yuan except that the north wall of the former Dadu was moved southward and all the city walls were rebuilt with bricks instead of dirt. In 1553, during the reign of the Jiajing emperor (1522–67), an oblong section was added along the south wall of the existing square city. The original part of the city was called the Inner City, and the newly added part was called the Outer City. The Qing dynasty inherited the Ming capital and preserved the basic layout of the city with only minor changes and the addition of new temples and altars; this was the Beijing one would see in the beginning of the Chinese Republic.<sup>6</sup>

Imperial Beijing was designed to be seen from the perspective of one pair of eyes: those of the emperor. And one location, the pavilion on top of Scenery Hill (Jingshan or Meishan), functioned as both horizontal and vertical focal point for the whole city. It was the exact center of an eight-kilometer (about five-mile) axis that ran between the north and south ends of the city. Liang Sicheng, the foremost scholar of Chinese architectural history and the most ardent advocate for Beijing, marveled at the effects created by this design: "This line defines the city's vertical rhythm in a pattern resembling ocean waves in the north-south direction and divides the east and west portions of the city symmetrically. Beijing's majesty is founded on the scale of this axis," "the longest and greatest" in the world.<sup>7</sup>

This axis ran through and connected layers of city walls. Looking out at the city from the top of Scenery Hill, which was an imperial privilege, one would be standing at the middle of three layers of walls that, from the center outward, demarcated the Purple Forbidden City (*Zi jin cheng*), the Imperial City (*Huang cheng*), and the rest of the Inner City (*Nei cheng*). The Inner City was further protected by an Outer City attached to it that shared its south wall. The Forbidden City in the center housed the palace compound, which was protected by a moat and two miles of massive red walls with four pavilions at the corners and four gates on the sides. Wu Gate in the south was reserved for the emperor only. Shenwu Gate in the north could be used by others residing in the Forbidden City, including eunuchs; civil officials entered the palace through Donghua Gate in the east; and military officers entered through Xihua Gate in the west.



- |                   |                          |
|-------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Anding Gate    | 12. Chaoyang Gate        |
| 2. Desheng Gate   | 13. Dongzhi Gate         |
| 3. Xizhi Gate     | 14. Xuanwu Gate          |
| 4. Fucheng Gate   | 15. Qian Gate            |
| 5. Xibian Gate    | 16. Chongwen Gate        |
| 6. Guangan Gate   | 17. Temple of Heaven     |
| 7. Youan Gate     | 18. Temple of Earth      |
| 8. Yongding Gate  | 19. Temple of the Sun    |
| 9. Zuoan Gate     | 20. Temple of the Moon   |
| 10. Guangqu Gate  | 21. Bell and Drum Towers |
| 11. Dongbian Gate | 22. Scenery Hill         |
|                   | 23. Tianqiao             |

Figure 5. Beijing in the Qing.

The Imperial City was a residence quarter for Manchu aristocrats and high officials. The circumference of its walls was about 5.6 miles (eighteen *li*). There were four main gates in this wall as well: Tianan Gate (Gate of Heavenly Peace) in the south, Di'an Gate (Gate of Earthly Peace) in the north, Dong'an Gate (Gate of Peace in the East) and Xi'an Gate (Gate of Peace in the West). As in the Forbidden City, the gate on the south wall (Tianan Gate) was reserved for the emperor. Between Tianan Gate and Zhengyang Gate was an additional gate of smaller scale but great symbolic importance because it bore the name of the ruling dynasty and regime. Its name changed along with the ruling powers: the Gate of the Great Ming (Da Ming men) in the Ming dynasty, the Gate of the Great Qing (Da Qing men) in the Qing dynasty, and the Gate of China (Zhonghua men) in the Republic.

Outside the Imperial City was the Inner City with its nine gates, three on the south side and two on each of the other three sides. Starting clockwise from the southeast corner of the city, they were Chongwen, Zhengyang (Qian), and Xuanwu on the south side, Fucheng and Xizhi on the west side, Desheng and Anding on the north side, and Dongzhi and Chaoyang on the east side. Between the walls of the Inner City and the Imperial City lived banner men and their families, who were responsible for guarding the palace and defending the capital. Each of the city gates except Zhengyang Gate had a banner, and the eight banners were yellow and bordered yellow, red and bordered red, white and bordered white, and blue and bordered blue.

The Outer City had walls lower than those of the Inner City, and its seven gates were of somewhat less importance. Again, starting clockwise from the southeast corner, they were Zuoan, Yongding, and Youan on the south side, Guang'an and Xibian on the west side, and Dongbian and Guangqu on the east side. In the interests of palace security, no permanent businesses, guilds, or forms of entertainment were technically allowed in the Inner City. Although these regulations were broken time and again throughout imperial history, the Inner City had relatively few businesses to serve the daily needs of its residents. This left the Outer City as the commercial center, satisfying its residents' material needs. When the Manchus entered Beijing, they banished Han residents from the Inner City. The Outer City, consequently, was where Han officials and merchants set up their residences.

The two cities were different not only in their functions but also in their spatial organization. The Inner City was strictly planned, while the Outer City grew almost randomly with the tides and currents of com-



Figure 6. The city gates had a grand appearance but could easily cause traffic congestion. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

mmercial development. Part of the central axis of the city, Zhengyang Gate Avenue, ran through the Outer City from north to south. In addition to this avenue, there were a few well-organized streets where the luxury goods required by the imperial family and officials were available and where wealthy and eminent Han officials lived. Apart from these, narrow, curved alleyways created a maze in which the city's servant class was enveloped. While the northern part of the Outer City was the bustling and prosperous commercial center for the imperial capital, a large area in the southern part, with imperial forbidden land, swamps, lakes, and lotus ponds, could hardly be distinguished from the countryside if not for the city walls nearby.

While the walls inside the city separated the residents according to their status and ethnic groups, the outer walls imposed an abrupt boundary between the countryside and the city, physically demarcating

the urban center. The outermost city walls that formed the square of the Inner City, and the oblong of the Outer City, sharply separated Beijing from the surrounding plain. They often shaped first impressions of the city, as one traveler observed: “Physically, until their disappearance after 1949, the massive walls of the outer city dominated the approach to Peking. They rose straight out of the flat countryside, and only when their limits had been breached did the city itself come into plain view.”<sup>8</sup>

The central axis, extending between the north wall of the Inner City and Yongding Gate on the south side of the Outer City, formed the baseline for the strategic locations of imperial ceremonial sites and major avenues in both the Inner and the Outer Cities. Inside Yongding Gate, the Temple of Heaven and the Temple of Agriculture stood on the east and west sides of the main north-south thoroughfare. Liang Sicheng pointed out that at the end of the long, straight Zhengyang Gate Avenue lined by impressive commercial establishments, Zhengyang Gate formed the first highlight of the Inner City. A decorative arch stood about a hundred meters in front of the gate, followed by a grand stone bridge that introduced and guarded the gate itself. After another, smaller gate, the Gate of the Great Qing, the Thousand Step Way led to the immense Gate of Heavenly Peace. Liang commented that “the length of the Thousand Step Way and the breadth of the front of the Gate of Heavenly Peace are the boldest spatial stroke one could imagine, effectively highlighting the keynote structures.”<sup>9</sup> Harmoniously laid out gates and halls continued further north from the Gate of Heavenly Peace. Roofs covered with golden *liuli* (encaustic) tiles rose one after the other, like ocean waves. The highest point along the first half of the central axis was Taihe Hall. From there, a gradual descent ended at Shenwu Gate. But further north, Scenic Hill stood high, forming a background for the palace. The pavilion on the top of Scenic Hill was the exact central, as well as the highest, point on the axis. Wave after wave of buildings echoed one another further north. Passing the Drum Tower and the Bell Tower, the axis ended at the north city wall, “evenly distributing its weight to Anding Gate on the east and Desheng Gate on the west.” Liang Sicheng exclaimed: “So much power in general design; such scale in spatial layout; [it is] second to none in the whole world!”<sup>10</sup>

More imperial ceremonial structures were erected throughout the whole city, almost symmetrically in relation to the reference points of the central axis and the palace: the Temples of the Ancestors, the Earth and Grain, the Sun, the Moon, and the Earth. In addition, they determined the layout of the city’s strategically located avenues and streets.

Paralleling the central axis on the east and west were two south-north avenues. Smaller alleyways ran east-west between the avenues and the city walls. This overall layout effectively created a sense of reverence for imperial power, as Liang Sicheng commented: “It was through the overall design that Beijing expressed great traditional Chinese architectural skills as well as the wisdom and powerful spirit ingrained in them.”<sup>11</sup> As in other imperial capital cities around the world, the edifices in Beijing conveyed the power of the emperor and the imperial state, as well as more complex ideological, cosmic, and aesthetic messages. Yet in Beijing, unlike many other cities, its imperial monumental structures were not “dwarfed by the city as a whole.”<sup>12</sup> The palace was not just part of the city; on the contrary, the whole city was a monument, a strong statement of imperial power. As one early-twentieth-century British woman in Beijing expressed her admiration, “Without doubt a great part of the charm of Peking is due to its majestic proportions. Nothing is petty, nothing small or insignificant.”<sup>13</sup> Liang simply extolled the city as “a peerless masterpiece of urban planning.”<sup>14</sup>

Coherence in the city’s design was expressed in details as well. Buildings were grouped into compounds rather than left as solitary structures—another reflection of the consistency and harmony of the city’s design. The Forbidden City, the imperial ceremonial sites, the Buddhist and Taoist temples, and the city gates were all carefully designed compounds. A central structure usually dominated each compound, such as Taihe Hall in the Forbidden City or Qinian Hall in the Temple of Heaven. It was surrounded by carefully balanced smaller buildings, open spaces, and gardens. The same was true with the city gates, each of which had a round protective wall called a moon wall (*yue cheng* or *weng cheng*) outside it, surmounted by an arrow tower. Temples, usually dedicated to the Goddess of Mercy (Guanyin) or the General Guan Yu, the two most popular protective figures, were built between the protective walls and the gate, completing the compound. The city gates were thus invested with both a practical function in transportation and a spiritual meaning. They not only embodied the principles visible in the spatial order of the whole city but also were testaments to the inseparability of the social and cultural dimensions of spaces.

Imperial Beijing was a city of hierarchy, expressed not only through the walls that marked status and ethnic segregation but also through architectural features. The imperial structures monopolized the use of many of the bright colors: bright yellow, green, and cobalt blue tiles for the roofs, a rich and velvety red for the walls and gates of the Forbidden City.

Scenery Hill in the imperial palace compound, as the highest point of the city, oversaw a mass of gray, single-level brick courtyard dwellings. The colors of the imperial structures were not to be imitated by commoners, and the height of imperial buildings was not to be surpassed.

The imperial hierarchy was further promoted by the carefully protected invisibility of state ceremonial sites. The geographical conception of the city's ordinary residents significantly differed from that provided by the imperial perspective. Viewing the whole city from the top of Scenery Hill was a privilege reserved for the emperor; ordinary people had no access to the grand overall design. The Forbidden City and a major part of the Imperial City were hidden behind high walls, and the imperial ceremonial sites, including the Temples of the Ancestors, Heaven, the Earth, the Moon, the Sun, and Agriculture, were all off limits to commoners. Two ballads from the late Qing and early Republican period sketch a picture of the common people's Beijing. Only one imperial structure, the Guozi jian, is mentioned as a landmark in the two songs. To the ordinary people Beijing was a city of gates and arches that they passed through, bridges that they crossed, temples and markets that they visited, and small streets that hardly ever entered official history. Their Beijing was made up of places that mattered in their daily lives; the Forbidden City presented only walls to them.<sup>15</sup>

By the late nineteenth century, however, the imperial palace was no longer the unchallenged single center of power in Beijing. The end of the Second Opium War in 1860 brought the establishment of foreign legations in Beijing. After the Boxer Uprising in 1900, they became concentrated in the southeast corner of the city, which became the Legation Quarter. At the same time, the invisibility of the imperial compounds was broken. In the past, only city guards on duty had been allowed to mount the city walls and catch a glimpse of the palaces. In 1860, Prince Kung, "anxious to propitiate foreigners," gave them permission to walk on the walls.<sup>16</sup> Further, some Western-style multistory buildings were constructed, breaking the palace compound's monopoly on building height. In her *Peking: A Historical and Intimate Description of Its Chief Places of Interest*, Juliet Bredon compared her impressions of the palace compound and the Legation Quarter when seen from the top of the city walls: "Delightful views of Peking may be had from the top of these fortifications. On a clear day the plan of the four cities is easily traced."<sup>17</sup>

Walking eastward, we look down on our left upon the Legation Quarter where many men of many minds have constructed an inharmonious whole, contrasting most unfavorably with the dignified unity of the Palaces

beyond. Truly the Chinese understand better than we how to adapt their buildings to the surrounding landscape, the frame to the picture, and the picture to the frame. On our right lies the Chinese city. In summer when all trees—of which almost every little courtyard contains one or two—are in leaf, it gives the impression not of a town but of a huge park dominated by the blue dome of the Temple of Heaven which rises like a graceful stone flower above the foliage.<sup>18</sup>

To many residents of Beijing, however, the disturbance of the city's architectural harmony by Western-style buildings was not limited to the "well-ordered ugliness" they brought to the city.<sup>19</sup> The local residents believed that the city of Beijing was symbolized by the body of a dragon. Chongwen and Xuanwu Gates were its two eyes, and Qian Gate was its mouth. The Jade Canal, originating from the Jade Fountain Mountain (Yu quan shan) west of the city, flowed through the city and emptied itself into the moat outside the south wall of the Inner City through "a black-mouthing tunnel with a rusty iron grille," known as the Water Gate (Shui guan). The Eight Allied Forces entered Beijing through this tunnel in 1900. At the Water Gate the first hole was punched in the city wall. There the first railroad tracks entered the city, and an opening was made to allow convenient access for people living in the Legation Quarter. "When a rift was made in the body of the dragon by the cutting of the Water Gate, the wealth of Peking—'the dragon blood'—oozed out through it, says a local legend."<sup>20</sup> "Economic pressure from the outside world with its diplomats, its missionaries and its quick-firing guns, inevitably brought about the dreaded changes."<sup>21</sup>

An increasingly sophisticated urban life also called for changes. Imperial Beijing was both an integrated and, in many ways, a divided city. Its privileged status as the capital city of the empire brought a prosperity that nurtured an active and sophisticated urban life. But by the late Qing, the contradictions between the Inner and the Outer Cities had grown obvious. In 1886, Li Ruohong, a Henan scholar who had gone to Beijing to take the civil service examination and later decided to live there, told potential visitors to the imperial capital the following about the city:

The capital city (Jingshi) is overflowing with abundant wealth. The lavishness of the city's markets, shops, and decoration is matchless. Shining, rich colors bedizen the ridgepoles and beams of banks, silk stores, tea, and shoe shops at Dashilar, Zhubaoshi, Xiheyuan and Liulichang, enchanting one's eyes.<sup>22</sup> Lanterns and candles brighten the meat markets, wine houses, and restaurants. Drinking games are enjoyed all the time as if it is forever the

night of the Yuanxiao Festival.<sup>23</sup> No other places can possibly compare to the capital city. People here are the best at entertaining. When friends come from the provinces, many invite them to banquets and the theater. They exchange gifts, call for entertainers to drink with them, and gather in groups to have a great time. Even ten thousand yuan is not enough to squander here.<sup>24</sup>

This prosperity and the minor vices associated with it, such as dishonest merchants, thieves, women who acted as bait for ruses, and greedy cart drivers,<sup>25</sup> appeared to be in conflict with, and even threatening to, the very source of the city's wealth and the reason for its existence: its status as the imperial capital.

This conflict resulted in another powerful image of late Qing Beijing: walls, gates, sentries, and fences.<sup>26</sup> In addition to the three walls encircling the imperial palace compound and separating the Inner and the Outer Cities, 1,461 sentries were stationed on the city walls and streets. Furthermore, 1,746 fences, each with a small door, blocked the city's avenues and alleyways. All the nine gates in the walls of the Inner City and the seven gates for the Outer City were closed in the evening, and so were the doors in the fences. Soldiers regularly patrolled the dark streets during the night.<sup>27</sup> Midnight at the three gates separating the Inner and the Outer Cities—Zhengyang, Chongwen, and Xuanwu Gates—was the time when the city of fun was transformed into the city as fortress. For many of the Inner City residents, the day's activities ended then and there. Between the time when the gates were closed in the evening and the next morning when they were opened again, the only chance for those who had gone to the Outer City for entertainment to get back home was at midnight, when court officials were let into the Inner City. The closing and opening of the gates became such a regular part of life in Qing Beijing that phrases accumulated around it, such as *deng cheng men* (waiting for the city gate) and *dao gancheng* (going into the Inner City at the end rather than the beginning of the day). By the end of the Qing, Xuanwu and Chongwen Gates were no longer locked at the end of the day, but the rules concerning Zhengyang Gate persisted, making an emphatic and obstinate statement about the symbolic significance of the practice.<sup>28</sup>

#### BEIJING SET IN MOTION: 1914–1928

Imperial Beijing's spatial organization served important political, social, and cultural functions that were both concrete and symbolic. But almost all the features that made Beijing a great imperial capital—the

massive walls, the centered symmetry, and the grouping of buildings into carefully balanced compositions—created difficulties in traffic, especially for east-west traveling. The new municipal administration that emerged during the Republic took it upon itself to re-create Beijing's spatial organization in order to change the city from an imperial to a Republican capital. The focus of this transformation was the improvement of transportation in the city. Whereas in imperial times everyone was forced by the city walls to slow down and stop in reverence to the emperors, in the Republican era mobility, between Beijing and other places and within the city itself, became the catchword for the city as a whole. A 1920 tourist guidebook for Beijing listed fifteen train stations along the city walls, fifteen taxi stands, and nineteen rickshaw shops. Twenty-one horse-drawn cart companies, rental shops for hand-pull carts, donkeys, and even more alternatives made transportation of goods quite easy. In addition, bicycles could be rented from twenty-four shops. A system of postal service reached the whole country and many places in the world.<sup>29</sup> A 1935 tourist guidebook proudly informed potential visitors how convenient it was to travel to and within Beijing, adding airplanes, buses, and streetcars to the list of available forms of transportation. By then, airlines connected Beijing to Tianjin, Shanghai, Nanjing, Guangzhou, Zhengzhou, Hankou, Changsha, Xi'an, Chengdu, Lanzhou, Yinchuan, and Baotou. Beijing was also accessible by train from almost all the major cities in the country. In one author's words, "[O]ne can leave in the morning and arrive [in Beijing] in the evening. People in the provinces really should visit Beiping."<sup>30</sup> Convenient transportation was becoming a new source of pride and a buzzword used in advertising the city.

Paralleling the expanding connections between Beijing and the rest of the country were infrastructural improvements within the city focusing on road construction and maintenance. The same 1935 tourist guidebook also claimed that "the condition of roads in the city and the suburbs has never been as good before; the orderliness of shops is unprecedented."<sup>31</sup> The powerful commercial impetus for free and efficient movement through the city ultimately shattered the impervious stillness and imperial permanence of the city walls.

The cosmological order of the imperial capital was most decisively broken by trains. Sections of the city walls were dismantled to make way for railroad tracks. The city gates, where most train stations were located, were torn down to accommodate the crowds of rail travelers.

The sound of the train became an integral part of the city, as described by the eminent writer Shen Congwen in 1925: “When I first came to Beijing, I liked to listen to the long whistle of the train. In this sound I discovered its greatness. Following the whistle of the train, my untamed wild heart often ran to the unknown horizon.”<sup>32</sup>

The first railway in Beijing was built in 1865 by a British merchant, R.J. Durante, to demonstrate to the Qing court the benefits of this modern invention. This 0.3-mile advertisement for modern transportation technology built outside of Xuanwu Gate enjoyed a very short life before it was demolished by order of the Qing court.<sup>33</sup> It was simply too shocking an innovation, and it seemed out of place in the imperial capital, which was accustomed only to sights and sounds of pedestrians, horse-drawn carts, or sedan chairs for officials.

The Forbidden City, interestingly, was the site of the first quasi-successful railway project in Beijing. In 1888, despite concerns that the railway might harm the “dragon vein” (*long mai*) of the Qing dynasty, the leader of the reform faction, Li Hongzhang, managed to present the Empress Dowager Cixi with a small train purchased from Germany as a gift and to build a railway in her garden. The six cars of the train were decorated in accordance with imperial etiquette: royal-yellow silk for the Empress Dowager; red silk for imperial family members, and blue silk for officials. To prevent the noise of the train from disturbing the geomancy (*fengshui*) of the Forbidden City, Cixi demanded that the train be pulled by eunuchs rather than an engine. The Empress Dowager took the train from her residence in Yiluan Hall to her dining hall, Jingqing zhai. Although the train did not bring Cixi out of the Forbidden City, she no longer opposed building railways in China. This toy train of Cixi’s existed for twelve years before it was dismantled in 1900—ironically, by expeditionary troops mainly composed of soldiers from Japan, Russia, Britain, the United States, and France.<sup>34</sup>

The first actual railway reached Beijing from the outside. In 1896, the terminal of the railroad between Tianjin and Lugou Bridge (Marco Polo Bridge) was initially established at Majiapu; in 1900, foreign expeditionary troops moved it to Yongding Gate and again to Zhengyang Gate.<sup>35</sup> In the same year, the railway for the first time physically broke the city walls, which had remained intact throughout the Ming and Qing dynasties. A short branch leading to Tongzhou was added to the Tianjin-Beijing Railway by foreign troops in 1901, breaking through Dongbian Gate in order to improve access to the grain shipped from the south through the Grand Canal.<sup>36</sup> Another rail line brought into the

city walls at Zhengyang Gate by foreign troops in 1900 was the Lu-Han (short for “Lugou Bridge–Hanyang,” changed to Jing-Han in 1905) Railway, a proud accomplishment of another late Qing reformer, Zhang Zhidong.

In 1907, after twenty-seven years of intermittent construction, the Jing-Feng (Beijing–Fengtian) Railway from Shenyang reached Beijing. The east and west sides of the protective walls of Chongwen Gate were torn down to make way for the trains, and a station was built at Dongbian Gate.<sup>37</sup> In 1908, despite its obvious threat to the livelihoods of people who made their living by transporting coal,<sup>38</sup> a railway was built between the Mentougou coal mine and Xizhi Gate in order to supply fuel for the city.<sup>39</sup> In 1909, the four-year construction of the Jing-Zhang (Beijing-Zhangjiakou) Railway, which had begun in 1905, was completed.<sup>40</sup>

Completed in 1915 and put in operation on the first day of the following year, a railroad encircling Beijing connected Xizhi, Desheng, Anding, Dongzhi, Chaoyang, and Zhengyang Gates. It was linked to the Jing-Feng line at Dongbian Gate. The railroad demanded straight tracks, to which the protective walls were hindrances. In addition, the gates were not originally designed for the large crowds deposited there by train.<sup>41</sup> To meet the increased demand for access created by the train, all the protective walls at the city gates involved in this project were torn down or doors were opened on them, so that the connections between the gates and their attached arrow towers were broken. In the 1930s, to straighten the Jing-Han Railway, the protective walls of Xuanwu Gate were also torn down. At that point, the most prestigious “three front gates,” Chongwen, Zhengyang, and Xuanwu, all lost their original integrity. These gates, which were both great achievements in Chinese architectural history and politically significant in the imperial period, held a special position in Beijing physically and symbolically. They surrendered to the steel tracks and locomotives a pride accumulated over hundreds of years.

Zhengyang Gate, which had originally been designed to halt incoming traffic, now became associated with the train and thus became a symbol of the city’s connection to the outside world. The railway station located at this gate was the terminal for the largest number of trains destined for Beijing and gave visitors to the city their first impression of it. A Western woman described entering the gate by train as an emotional experience: “The train from Tientsin ran in under the Tartar wall, stopping near the Ch’ien Men (Zhengyang Gate), the huge gate

which leads to the Forbidden City at the heart of the town. I was once so overjoyed to see those walls again as I came in from Peitaiho that I burst into tears, to my own amazement. No other city ever did this to me, before or since.”<sup>42</sup> It was as if the passengers themselves took on the power of the train, for the huge and once powerful gate was now approachable and almost intimately familiar to them.

The railroad permanently shook the city walls, rendering them superfluities left by an obsolete past, their practical functions and symbolic meaning lost. Seven doorways had been opened, and the protective walls of all the Inner City gates had been either dismantled or pierced. One arrow tower (Chongwen Gate) had been torn down, and two corner towers (northeast and southeast of the Inner City wall) and five arrow towers “hung outside the walls in loneliness.” Fifteen Western-style train stations now abutted the walls on every side.<sup>43</sup> Once the walls and gates were surrounded by the smoke and roar of the steel machines, they could never again be as grand and intimidating as before. As China was becoming a nation-state among others, Beijing was also changing in its relationship to other places in the country. The railroad started it all.

While the railroads were breaching the city walls from without, the upgrading of old streets and the opening of new ones achieved the same effect from within. After hundreds of years’ use, in the late Qing the streets were no longer in serviceable condition. The central part of the major roads, used by lighter traffic, rose high above the lanes for the heavier traffic. Being of loose dirt and unpaved, these roads gained the reputation of being “incense burners” (full of loose dust, like ash); they consisted of “three feet of dust even [on a day] without wind” and became “streets full of mud with a little rain.” “Rain turned the lower levels into dangerous, swift-flowing torrents.”<sup>44</sup> Visitors to the city complained that the streets were full of bumps and potholes. According to the Henan scholar Li Ruohong, “Yellow sand like face powder flies over the streets; one cannot recognize whether it is the South or the North City. Streets and avenues all smell filthy; one thinks about leaving the city as soon as one arrives.”<sup>45</sup> The streets were filthy not only from animal excrement but also from residents’ emptying their chamber pots and dumping their garbage there. To make matters even worse, many people relieved themselves in the streets in order to save the money charged to use a toilet. Coal ashes and broken bricks from construction piled up “like mountains.” As the result of years of accumulation of garbage, the streets became higher than the foundations of houses. “To

enter the gate of a yard is like walking into a valley,” commented the famous late Qing reformer Kang Youwei.<sup>46</sup>

Qing streets were not highways of free-flowing traffic. The modern view that streets are exclusively for traffic was not a notion familiar to Beijing residents, who had their own motley uses for them. Bredon observed:

[T]hough in old times men were less comfortable than now, they had the consolation of a certain happy-go-lucky personal freedom. No police regulations enforced neatness and order. The streets were the living rooms of the lower classes who, unaccustomed to privacy, did not want it. If a man found his shop crowded and desired more room, he encroached upon the sidewalk. A householder threw his rubbish outside his front door if he felt so minded. A peddler, driving a hard bargain, might block a small lane for hours with his portable stall, unrebuked.<sup>47</sup>

The condition of the streets in the capital city, however, became a symbol of China’s backwardness and an embarrassment to many patriotic Chinese. When Kang Youwei, who had been impressed by the orderliness of streets in colonies such as Hong Kong, saw these “mountains” and “valleys” in Beijing, he could not help commenting on the condition in his petition to the emperor: “[S]treets are higher than people’s houses; dust fills up streets; and filthy air steams. All of this causes diseases. It indeed poses a big problem to people’s health.”<sup>48</sup> In 1924, the journalist Shao Piaoping was still criticizing the conditions of streets in Beijing as an embarrassment for China.<sup>49</sup>

In the very early years of the Republic, the city government realized that “during this time of increasing transportation and population, convenience is a critical issue.”<sup>50</sup> The work of the municipal government was concentrated primarily on street construction and maintenance. Over 75 percent of the 266 volumes of archival materials left by the Department of Public Works of the Municipal Council between 1914 and 1927 were related to street widening and repair.<sup>51</sup> When the Republic was established in 1912, there were no asphalt or concrete roads in Beijing, and only about 33.87 miles were built with macadam. Between 1914, when the Municipal Council was established, and the end of 1918, 121 roads were repaired, expanded, or constructed. In 1949, there were 158,73 miles of roads built with asphalt, concrete, and macadam, a fivefold increase from the beginning of the Republic. The construction of new roads in the suburbs started in 1917. By 1949, their total length reached 247.6 miles, at least one-third of which was built with asphalt, concrete, or macadam. New lights were added to major streets, making it much easier and safer to walk in the city at night.<sup>52</sup>

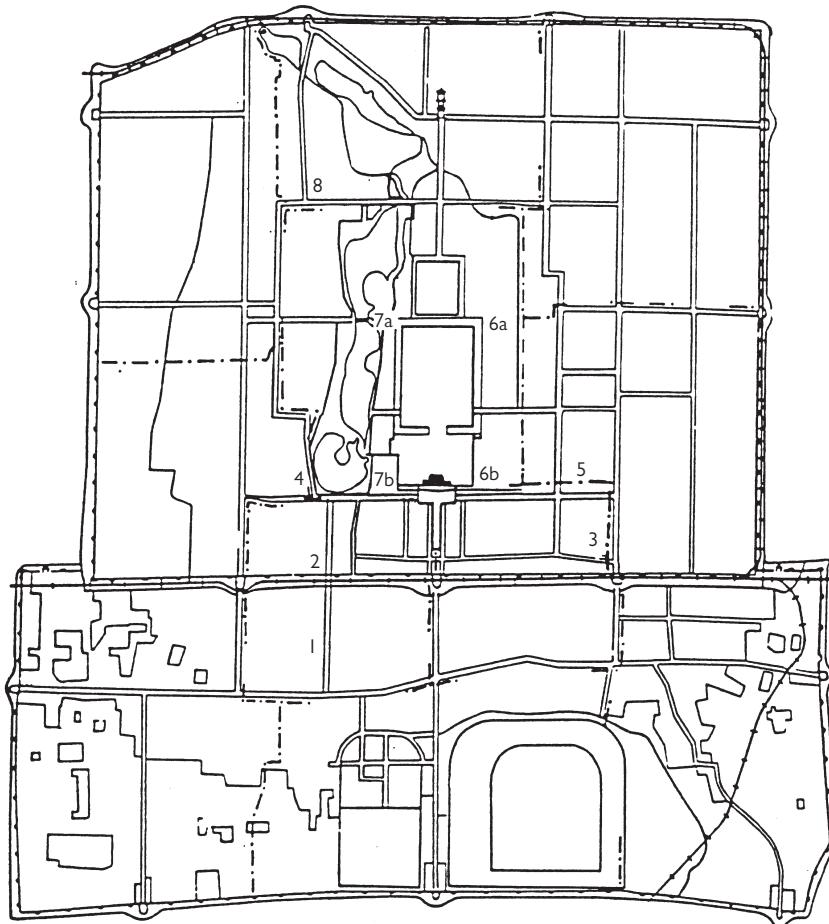


Figure 7. Street construction in Republican Beijing.

Not everyone in the city benefited equally from the roadworks; instead, these contributed to the creation of a new hierarchical spatial organization. New technologies of road maintenance were introduced in the Republican period. The use of steamrollers made stronger macadam roads possible, and asphalt paving began to appear.<sup>53</sup> In 1918, a standard budget for road maintenance was formulated. But the advantages

of modern technology and regulation did not spread throughout the city evenly. The 1918 budget stipulated that each square meter of street was allotted one *yuan* per year, but special districts (streets with heavy traffic, wide streets, and streets used by heavy-load vehicles) were allocated more.<sup>54</sup> With the additional money allocated to them, roads in commercial areas and rich neighborhoods were greatly improved, while most streets in Beijing were still dirt and macadam and the alleyways remained dusty or muddy depending on the weather.

The first asphalt streets were built in 1915 in the Legation Quarter. Their unmatched cleanliness and orderliness served as a model for the rest of Beijing. The streets in the Legation Quarter were cared for by the Bureau of Legation Quarter Administration, and originally the Chinese were not allowed to travel on these asphalt roads unless they sat in horse-drawn carts. But part of the money for maintaining the streets in the quarter was paid by the Chinese government. In the winter of 1909, the Inner City Police Department and the Bureau of Legation Quarter Administration reached an agreement that the Municipal Council would allot five thousand *yuan* for the maintenance of streets in that area. Only then could Chinese pass through the streets in the district.<sup>55</sup> In September 1914, the bureau canceled the contract, but in 1917 it asked for the subsidies again, arguing that there were more cars traveling in the quarter. The council discussed the issue with the Police Department and decided to subsidize the cost of road upkeep in the Legation Quarter with two thousand *yuan* a year from the vehicle tax.<sup>56</sup>

The transportation projects were not limited to improvement of existing roads; they in fact redefined the city's spatial order. During the Republic, the walls that had served for so long as boundaries of the city became barriers to be overcome, and their role in defining the city's spatial order was replaced by thoroughfares. The expansion of east-west and north-south routes was one of the first projects undertaken by the municipal government. Each thoroughfare plowed through an imperial history written in stone and brick. Just as the city walls had been opened to make way for the train, the Imperial City walls were repeatedly ruptured to facilitate road transportation. After the first opening in these walls was made at the Water Gate in 1900, where residents of the Legation Quarter breached the Imperial City walls to make their own north-south commuting more convenient, the walls were penetrated at Beijianting in March 1916, at Zaolin huozi (Fuyou Street) in September 1917, at Sankong xuanmen in October 1917, and at Changpuhe in Oc-

tober 1918.<sup>57</sup> Three more gates at Changqiao, Nanchizi and Nanchangjie were also opened up during these years.<sup>58</sup>

Two of the major east-west avenues went through the heart of the Imperial City. Chaoyang and Fucheng Gates were connected by streets. To open this artery, three gates at Beihai and portions of Shenwu Gate were torn down.<sup>59</sup> The most important east-west thoroughfare was Changan Avenue, which passed in front of Tiananmen and became the city's busiest street. Opened in 1914, its construction involved clearing away the barriers clustered in front of Tiananmen, including the Thousand Step Way (Qianbu lang) and Chessboard Streets (Qipan jie).<sup>60</sup> In 1937, Changan Avenue was extended beyond the city walls, adding two more openings in the city walls to the seven created to accommodate the railroads.

Many of the projects took a long time to complete, not simply because of financial constraints, but also because of political reasons. The most important north-south transit project, Xinhua Street, was first proposed in 1914 but was not opened in its entirety until 1926 due to the continually unstable political situation.<sup>61</sup> The street started in the north at the West Changan Arc (Xi changan pailou) and ended at Luomashi Avenue. A concrete bridge traversed the moat, with the Beijing-Hankou railroad, telegraph, and telephone lines underneath it. To build Xinhua Street, a new gate (Heping Gate) had to be opened in the south wall of the Imperial City. The original rationale for opening the gate was to facilitate Yuan Shikai's travel from his presidential residence and to make the model market Xiangchang more accessible so as to promote urban commerce. Yuan Shikai approved the proposal, but it soon came to a halt. Wealthy merchants in the Zhengyang Gate area worried that their businesses would be adversely affected because pedestrians would no longer need to go through their district once the new gate was opened. Rather than directly presenting their case, they argued on the basis of *fengshui*, warning Yuan that this new gate would be disadvantageous to the country and his presidency. Yuan Shikai was convinced, and the project was halted, leaving a large section of Xinhua Street between the Inner and Outer Cities unfinished. It was only after Duan Qirui came into power that the project was finished on his orders, and the gate was named Heping (Peace) Gate. Shou Xi, a Manchu clerk at the Ministry of Education, appreciated the festive atmosphere brought about by the opening of new streets and commercial areas. Pleased by the cheerful crowds he saw on the southern section of Xinhua Street at Haiwang Village Park (an extension of the Changdian fair for the Chi-

nese New Year), Shou Xi exclaimed: “This probably is what ‘a peaceful time’ should look like.”<sup>62</sup>

In the following year, the northeastern warlord Zhang Zuolin entered Beijing and changed the name of the gate to Xinghua. In 1928, when China was reunited, the national army arrived in Beijing and restored the name Heping.<sup>63</sup> The gate’s name changes attracted criticism. The historian Chen Zongfan observed: “The name changed three times in less than two years.”<sup>64</sup> With his characteristic sarcasm, the writer Zhou Zuoren commented on the name change from Heping to Xinghua: “There have been wars in China every year. Beijing’s neighboring areas have also seen wars. It is indeed a bit pretentious for the gate to be declaring peace. It is not necessarily a bad thing to change the name: the name can be changed to anything as long as the openings are not closed again.”<sup>65</sup>

But some other “projects” were finished quickly. By 1927, the walls of the Imperial City were almost all gone, and little but the Di’an and Xi’an Gates remained.<sup>66</sup> They vanished so rapidly in part because they were built with high-quality bricks, unlike the city walls, which were only dirt-filled brick shells. The government made a profit recycling the bricks, and some people who helped dismantle the walls absconded with them.<sup>67</sup> In 1927, Prime Minister Pan Fu ordered an investigation of the dismantling and selling of the Imperial City walls and lamented their destruction in a letter to the Beijing Municipal Council:

The walls of the Inner and Outer Cities of Beijing are of large scale and grand style and are the focal points of Chinese and foreign attention. The local government should preserve these historical sites.... Recently, many sections of the walls have been torn down. Dirt and relics are all over the place. They have become eyesores and create inconvenience for passersby. If not for the need for transportation, why have they been dismantled randomly without any planning? I have heard a lot of talk about some people in charge of the matter themselves selling bricks and stones in conspiracy with some evil merchants and profiting from the business. This is very shocking to me. If this is true, what kind of government is this! The specific regulations in the law regarding punishment for those who destroy urban structures are not to be ignored.<sup>68</sup>

Strand finds that warlord Zhang Zuolin’s “impoverished officials contrived to sell brick from the city walls and ancient trees from imperial temple grounds to pay government salaries.”<sup>69</sup> Ironically, the high quality of the Imperial City walls, which had made them so worthy of preservation in Pan’s eyes, was precisely what made them valuable for recycling and led to their rapid dismantling.

The newly gained mobility in the city was gradually subjected to regulation. Beijing's streets in the Republican period held many kinds of vehicles: hand-pulled carts for garbage, water, vegetables, excrement, coal, and construction materials; vendors' carts; bicycles owned by clerks and students; and automobiles used by diplomats, foreign military personnel, high officials, rich merchants, and prestigious individuals such as the Beijing University president Hu Shi, who followed American styles and was the proud owner of a 1934 Dodge.<sup>70</sup> Of all these vehicles, the rickshaws were subjected to the strictest regulation, with five rules pertaining to them enacted in 1913 alone. Detailed regulations on registration and vehicle condition, as well as on the age, health, and appearance of rickshaw pullers, were all clearly outlined.<sup>71</sup> The municipal government also enforced regulations on taxation of all vehicles within or entering the city. Vehicles, categorized as being either for private or for commercial use, all had to be registered and to display their licenses when required.<sup>72</sup> The regulations on right of way reflected a new aspect of Republican society—social stratification in speed of travel. Speed was not a concern in the Qing era: the Empress Dowager Cixi refused to ride in a car because she could not allow a driver to sit in front of her, and even her train was pulled by eunuchs. In early Republican Beijing, the rule on right of way can be described simply as “rights to the faster.” All human-powered vehicles were confined to the left edge of the road, and automobiles were to use the center. The former always had to make way for the latter—a graphic illustration of the more general deference that those of lower status owed to those of higher status.<sup>73</sup>

The patterns of tax evasion revealed how various social groups manipulated the codes. Cars and bicycles accounted for the largest number of tax evasions, the former relying on their owners' status and the latter benefiting from their vast number. In 1935, 880 private and 250 commercial cars were paying taxes, but about 120 automobiles had not paid taxes for several years, and the city government had lost track of them. Rickshaws and carts, in contrast, could rarely evade taxation. In 1935, there were 1,800 private and 40,200 commercial rickshaws paying taxes. It was also easy to collect taxes from carts because most of them belonged to shops.<sup>74</sup>

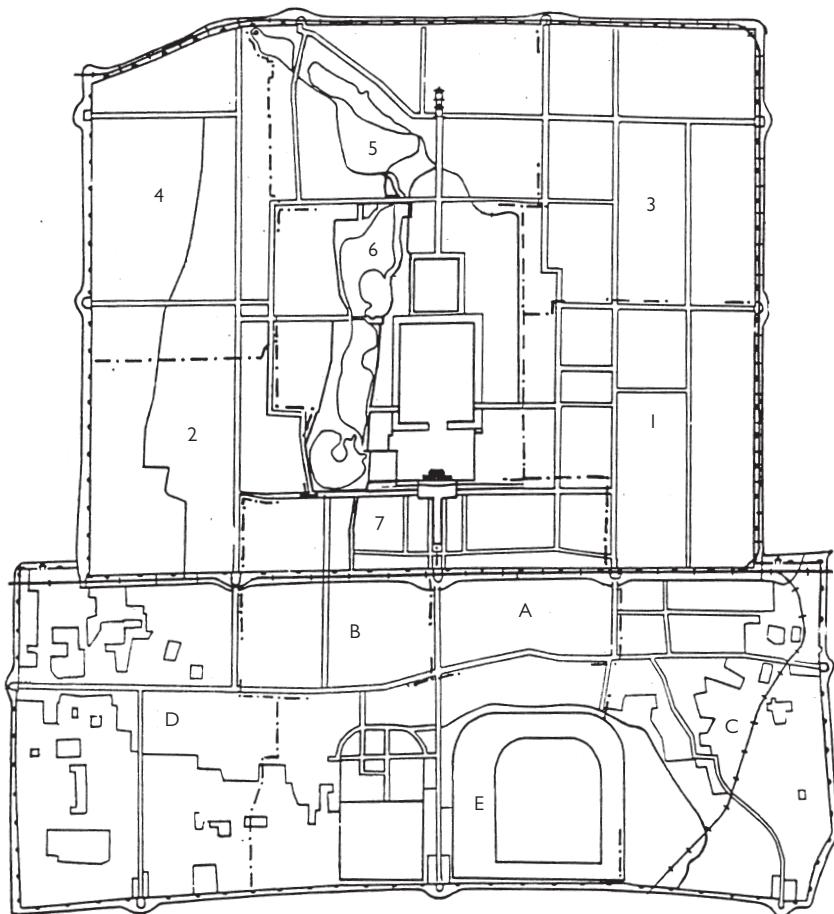
What clearly emerged in this transformation was a new social hierarchy expressed and confirmed in spatial terms. Budgets for street maintenance were unevenly distributed, with the richer neighborhoods benefiting. Asphalt streets rarely, if ever, reached poor neighborhoods.

A hierarchy determined by speed replaced the one set by vehicle opulence in previous times. Although the transportation and street projects were carried out in the name of the general public interest, they were creating new forms of social stratification.

#### A CITY IN AND OF ITSELF

Most of the spatial changes in Republican Beijing were initiated and sponsored by the newly created municipal government. During imperial times, the concept of urban administration was unheard of, and the city was administered by a complex network of overlapping bureaucracies. The complexity of imperial Beijing's administrative system reflected the city's intricacy. It was a system created for supplying and maintaining security at the imperial court. The intention was not for the city to function as an urban center in relation to the country as a whole and to its outlying rural areas—although it might function in such a role de facto—so the city was not administered as a unit. Similarly, the relationship between the Inner and the Outer Cities was dominated by an effort to separate rather than to integrate. Although the Outer City embodied urban life in Beijing, it was treated as inferior to the Inner City in importance.

During the Republic, a unified municipal administration autonomous from the central state was established and maintained relative stability and continuity in authority, enabling some construction to occur in the city during an extremely chaotic time. During the Qing, the administrative system was organized into layered jurisdictions radiating outward from the center of the city: the Capital City (*Jingshi*), the Capital Counties (*Jingxian*), and Shuntian Prefecture (*Shuntian fu*). The Capital City included the districts enclosed within the city walls and some suburbs.<sup>75</sup> The two Capital Counties, Daxing and Wanping, took charge of the rural areas east and west of the city's jurisdictional limits respectively. Both counties had their headquarters in the city. Above the two counties was the highest local jurisdiction, Shuntian Prefecture, whose office remained unchanged and stayed at the same location from the Yuan to the Qing. Shuntian Prefecture was in charge of securing grain for the capital and its suburbs and providing servants for the palace. It held local-level examinations and assisted in organizing the national ones. In addition, it sponsored annual ceremonies prescribed throughout the empire, such as the “spring gift presentation” (*jin chunli*), the “ceremony of cultivating the imperial land” (*gengjie li*), and the “village drinking ceremony” (*xiang yinjiu li*). Beijing also became the hometown for all Manchu banner men; they registered



- 1. Inner One District
- 2. Inner Two District
- 3. Inner Three District
- 4. Inner Four District
- 5. Inner Five District
- 6. Inner Six District
- 7. Inner Seven District

- A. Outer One District
- B. Outer Two District
- C. Outer Three District
- D. Outer Four District
- E. Outer Five District

↔ Railway

Figure 8. Districts of Republican Beijing.

their home place as Shuntian Prefecture even if they were stationed far away from the capital.

Beijing therefore was simultaneously under the jurisdiction of the Capital City, Daxing and Wanping Counties, and Shuntian Prefecture. The Capital City, however, was not as clearly defined an administrative unit as the counties and the prefecture. Except in the last two years of the Qing, the Inner and Outer Cities were separated, and each was further divided into five districts. In a system inherited from the Ming, the censors, or constables, of the Five Cities (*Wu cheng yu shi*) were responsible for public order in the five districts of the Outer City: the East, South, West, North, and Central Cities. A Manchu and a Han constable were assigned to each of the five districts. Since these constables of the Five Cities were the sole administrative authority in the Outer City, they assumed a broad range of duties, including arresting thieves, judging legal cases, capturing fugitives, carrying out prohibitions against gambling, monitoring popular religious groups, controlling local bullies, checking on popular customs, and enforcing moral standards.<sup>76</sup> In addition to the constables of the Five Cities, the Qing added the Gendarmerie to further control public order in the capital city. During the reign of the Kangxi emperor in 1691, the Gendarmerie, which had been the head office of the eight banners, was assigned the duties of maintaining public order, patrolling and repairing streets, controlling traffic, and arresting malefactors in the capital city. The Gendarmerie was responsible for watching, locking, and opening the nine gates of the Inner City and the seven gates of the Outer City. Manchu soldiers were assigned at the gates of the Inner City and Han soldiers at the gates of the Outer City.<sup>77</sup> Shuntian Prefecture, together with Daxing and Wanping Counties under it, assisted the constables of the Five Cities and the Gendarmerie in carrying out these duties.<sup>78</sup>

After the fall of the Qing, Beijing remained the capital city from 1912 to 1928, so its privileged position was protected in many ways. But major changes occurred in the administration system, the most important ones being the creation of the Municipal Council and the replacement of Shuntian Prefecture with the Capital District (Jingzhao). Despite some disruptions caused by the warlords, Beijing's municipal government remained remarkably stable and gradually was able to carry out the city's modernization projects amidst the cataclysms of civil war. Meanwhile, however, the city's exclusive status in the nation was seriously challenged.

The establishment of the Municipal Council integrated the city's management into a single new administrative unit. This marked a qualita-

tive change. A predecessor of the Municipal Council was created in 1900 after the Boxer Uprising, which was the first time Beijing openly identified its interests as a city independent from the court and the authorities of the prefecture. Although the New Policy Reform in the last years of the Qing dynasty included some proposals about modifying the old administrative relationships, it never progressed beyond the planning stage; most reform efforts dwindled quickly along with the declining fortunes of the dynasty, leaving the underlying principles of city government intact.<sup>79</sup> With the support of Yuan Shikai, who identified city administration (*shizheng*) as “a world trend,” a Municipal Council was experimentally established in 1914.<sup>80</sup> Zhu Qiqian, chief director of the Department of Internal Affairs (*Neiwu zongzhang*), headed it. In acknowledgment of its many achievements, its term was extended in September 1916. Two years later, the institution was formalized with a personnel quota. The council remained in charge of the city’s public works and shared administrative responsibilities with the Police Board until 1928.<sup>81</sup> During these years, the Municipal Council took charge of planning and implementing construction work, maintaining streets, running government hospitals and parks, managing city-owned property, drafting ordinances, regulating traffic, and taking care of utilities and public hygiene.<sup>82</sup>

In October 1914, Shuntian Prefecture became the Capital District (*Jingzhao difang*), with a total of twenty counties under its jurisdiction, four less than Shuntian Prefecture had previously had. However, except for the loss of the four counties (Ninghe, Wenan, Xinzhen, and Dacheng) given to Zhili Province, the Capital District and Shuntian Prefecture were virtually identical in territory.<sup>83</sup> The new district encompassed not only counties in Beijing’s vicinity but also some in Hebei Province.<sup>84</sup> During the fourteen-year existence of the Capital District, ten men served as Capital District Prefects. As existing documents at the Beijing Municipal Archives show, the Capital District did not play any important role in the city. All public works were conducted by the Municipal Council. The prefect’s sole legacy to the city was the transformation of the Temple of the Earth into Jingzhao Park. Despite the institutional continuity, the new Capital District did not have as much influence on the city as Shuntian Prefecture because the prefecture had administered the banner system, the civil service examination, and the Qing court, all of which were now abolished.

Beijing’s administrative system and status experienced another major change after the success of the Northern Expedition. As the armies of

the Northern Expedition marched victoriously toward Beijing in 1928, a debate raged between Nationalists and Beijing residents about the future location of the central government. Northerners proposed keeping the capital in Beijing, arguing that Nanjing was too close to Shanghai, the symbol and center of Western powers in China. As the place where many past dynasties had been extinguished, Nanjing had a history associated with a decadent and extravagant lifestyle. In contrast, Beijing had been the capital under the Yuan, Ming, and Qing, all powerful and prosperous dynasties. Southerners, in contrast, insisted that Nanjing was the capital city chosen by Sun Yat-sen and that the will of the nation's Founding Father could not be disobeyed. Moreover, since Beijing had been the capital of the imperial state, it was portrayed as closely linked with the outmoded Qing official lifestyle.<sup>85</sup> These were, of course, all secondary factors. The location of the capital was essentially determined by pragmatic military and political concerns. The Nationalists chose Nanjing as the new capital because Chiang Kai-shek's power base was in the south. On June 28, 1928, the Nanjing government changed the name of the former capital from Beijing (Northern Capital) to Beiping (Northern Peace) Special Municipality (Beiping Tebie Shi). In 1931 it became Beiping City (Beiping shi).

One of the issues discussed at the first meeting of the Beiping municipal government in August 1928 was determination of new boundaries for the city. Throughout the Qing and the early Republic, the administrative system had not been divided along urban-rural lines, and indeed Beijing had relied heavily on supplies from adjoining rural districts. In 1928, the headquarters of Hebei Province was moved to Beiping and took over the twenty counties previously constituting the Capital District. Meanwhile, the two county seats of Daxing and Wanping moved out of Beiping. In 1931, the headquarters of Hebei Province was transferred to Tianjin but still maintained control of the twenty counties. What Beiping faced in 1928 was shrinking territory and resources. For the first time in its history, Beiping was simply a city with a small suburb that had no control of the surrounding agricultural regions.

To make the best of this devastating situation, the Beiping municipal government set forth a proposal with four guiding principles: administrative convenience, enhanced transportation, geographic coherence, and increased potential for the city's future development. The new proposal, although ultimately unsuccessful, demonstrated the municipal government's desire to include all the resources crucial for Beiping's future development as a modern metropolis within the city's boundaries.

To ensure the water supply for Beiping, the planners wished to expand the eastern boundary of the city to a line from Sunhe zhen (Sun River Town) in the northeast to Maju qiao (Maju Bridge) in the southeast. The plan also suggested the annexation of Tong County, where the power plant supplying Beiping's trolley system was located. Also included in the new boundaries was Mentougou, the terminus of the Beiping-Mentougou Railway and Beiping's most important coal supplier. It was included under the reasoning that "it should be beneficial to the city's income when we reform the mines and develop industry in the future." Beiping municipal leaders also recognized the value of a transportation hub. Marco Polo Bridge (Lugou qiao), being a key point on the Beijing-Hankou Railway, also became part of Beiping. Fengtai, a key point on the Beiping-Mukden (Fengtian), Beiping-Suiyuan, and Beiping-Hankou Railways, was included in Beiping's new boundaries as well. In the north, the Tang Mountains, connected to Beiping by two bus routes, were targeted for annexation. According to the municipal leaders, the Tang Mountains, with their warm springs and resort palaces, formed a unit with the gardens and forests in the west and were an important resource for the city's tourist industry, as well as for the well-being of the city's residents:

Today progress in urban planning is most importantly expressed in the idea of "garden city" so that people can escape the dust and noise and fulfill their own development. The northwest suburbs host many mountains and hills, continuing into the Tang Mountains. The view is beautiful and charming. It is a large area of highlands for Beiping. We should use this area to contribute to the "garden city." Either inheriting the old sites or constructing new areas can be easily achieved.<sup>86</sup>

The Yongding River and some farmland in the Nanyuan area were also included in the proposal to supply the city's need for vegetables and food.<sup>87</sup> The desire for Beiping to become a complete metropolitan unit and a vision of its future requirements as a modern city were clearly expressed in this revision of the city's boundaries.

The city's annexations naturally provoked protest from Hebei Province. In November 1928, the Hebei government sent an open letter to the central government, the Beiping municipal government, and several newspapers. The letter argued that during the imperial period the capital city's boundaries had been drawn up solely to consolidate imperial interests but that a modern city's boundaries should be drawn so as to benefit people's livelihoods. The letter expressed the concern that after the towns and villages close to Beiping—often the most prosperous ones in their respective counties—were annexed, the remaining areas would not

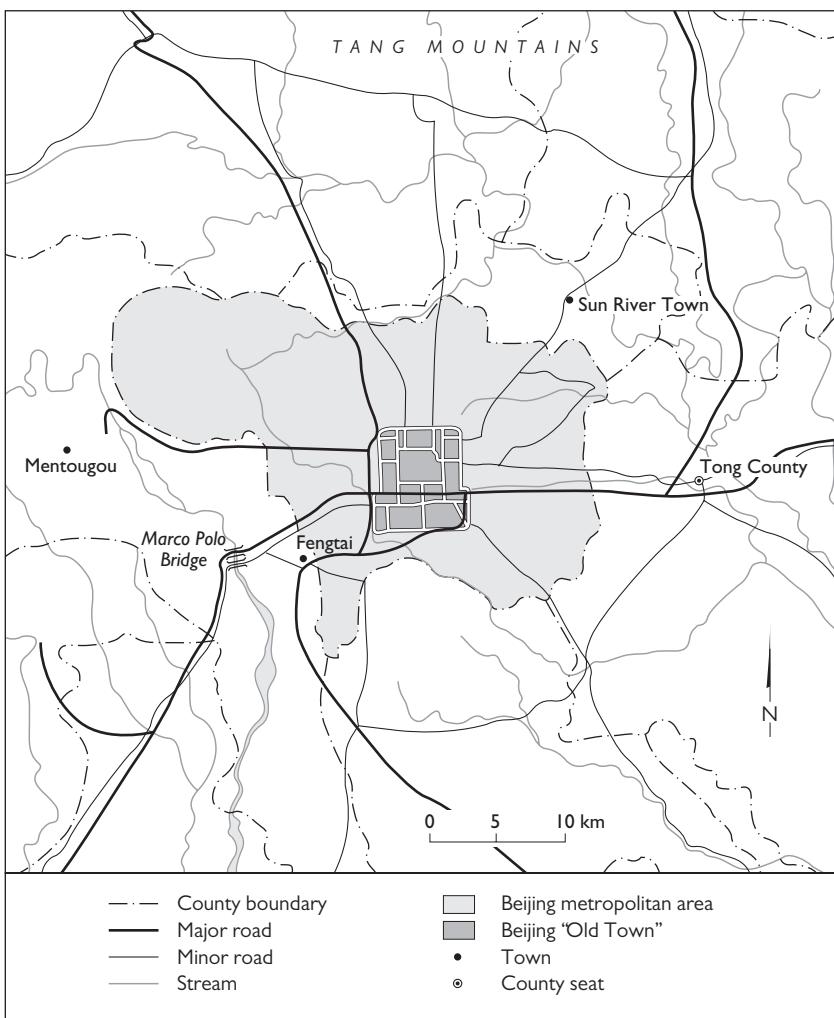


Figure 9. Planned annexation of Beijing's surrounding rural areas.

be able to form functional counties and would not have enough resources to run schools, control rivers, and conduct other projects in the public interest. The representatives of the villagers argued that what might be proper for the city would not necessarily be best for the villages.<sup>88</sup>

Beiping was defeated in the battle to expand its boundaries. Nevertheless, the principles on which the proposed revisions of the city's boundaries were based prevailed in determining the new direction for Beiping after 1928. The city had to survive on its own against varied competitors and threats.

Changes in Beijing's taxation system were probably the best indicator of the city's decline in national status and its simultaneous transformation into an administratively autonomous and self-sufficient unit. During the Qing, Beijing did not have its own separate income and budget. Fifteen tax stations at the city gates and eight more in the suburbs collected eighteen categories of taxes altogether. Eight of these were national taxes, including customs at Chongwen Gate and taxes on tobacco and liquor, animals, slaughtering, pawning, contract signing, categorical merchandise (*ya shui*), and land. Ten were city taxes levied on shops, vehicles, brothels, entertainers, and theaters and gathered for charity, the support of the poor, public order and benefit, and the police. Almost all the city taxes were established at the end of the Qing as part of the New Policy Reform. The responsibility for collecting these taxes was divided among various offices. Daxing and Wanping Counties were in charge of land tax and contract tax on private properties. The tax on banner properties, animal taxes, and slaughter taxes were controlled by the Left and Right Wing Tax Bureau. The Chongwen Gate Tax Bureau took charge of customs, tobacco, and liquor taxes. The Inner City Police were in charge of taxes related to public order, vehicles, and charity. The Bureau of Industrial Tax collected taxes on entertainment, prostitution, shops, and theaters and collected money to support destitute residents. A department of Shuntian Prefecture was in charge of the categorical merchandise tax. The pawn tax was under the control of the Office of Municipal Finance.<sup>89</sup>

From 1914 to 1928, several institutions were still involved in collecting taxes in Beijing, including the Finance Department of Shuntian Prefecture, the Municipal Council, the Police Department, and the Bureau of Commercial Taxation. The system was further centralized after 1928. A national budget and a local finance system were established. After the creation of the Beiping Special Municipality, the city government began to have a complete system of financial institutions. The Fi-

nance Department under the municipal government, assisted by the Departments of Public Work, Public Health, and Public Security, took charge of the city's taxation. Under the Qing, there was no separation between national revenue and local income; the imperial court drew revenue freely from the nation's coffers. During the early Republic national revenue stopped flowing into Beijing, and after 1928 national and local finances were officially separated.

Another dimension of change in Beijing's status was its relationship with the rural areas. As the national capital in the Qing and the early Republic, Beijing controlled both the walled urban district and its surrounding rural areas. The Republican years witnessed a gradual separation of Beijing from the countryside, but at the same time the city created new mechanisms to mobilize rural resources.<sup>90</sup> The unprecedented conflicts that emerged between the urban and the rural testified to Beijing's new identity as a modern city.

One incident illustrates this new relationship and the new tensions between the city and the countryside. When the trolley was introduced to Beijing, the trolley company decided to build its power plant in Tongxian, a county next to Beijing. The residents of the county learned of the projected plant only after the company had purchased the land and was preparing to build a railroad on top of a dam to ship equipment. Two "Citizens' Congresses" were called to oppose the construction because residents believed the railroad would damage the dam and threaten their safety. They also feared that their lives would be endangered if the power plant's boilers exploded and suggested that the power plant of the Beijing Electrical Company had been built in Shijingshan, far away from Beijing, for the safety of Beijing. The trolley company's power plant, they argued, would be "more than forty *li* (12.4 miles) from Beijing, but . . . within three *li* (0.93 miles) from our county seat. People in Beijing are afraid of danger, are we not? . . . Fathers and brothers, wake up and fight against it!"<sup>91</sup>

The "Citizens' Congress" also pointed out that the company had bought the land covertly: it was not registered with the county government, nor did the company contact local gentry and notables. "This is proof of how they look down upon people and the county government. . . . They see our public land as their private property, disturbing our community at will."<sup>92</sup> The conflict was solved eventually, but construction was delayed for several months. Beijing could no longer count on the same subservience from its rural surroundings as had existed during imperial times. Willingly or not, Beijing was becoming a modern urban center and entering a new relationship with the countryside.

During imperial times, the prodigious city walls served as a tangible physical boundary between the city and the country. The physical boundary, however, was transcended and penetrated by a shared set of administrative systems, and distinctions between urban and rural lifestyles were not accentuated. Beijing was the political center and consequently was a de facto cultural and economic center as well. After the establishment of the Republic, Beijing gradually became separated from the countryside. Formerly subsumed under several counties, Beijing emerged as a single administrative unit. Its success in siting a power plant in Tongxian over local opposition illustrates that in its new status as a node of modernization, as well as a commercial and political power, it maintained a certain leverage over the rural areas. Over time, the city's powers would expand and became centralized, assimilating outlying areas in the process. In 1925, Beijing household registration began to include the suburbs beyond the city walls.<sup>93</sup> But at the same time, Beijing lost its imperial privilege to draw resources unrestrictedly from the countryside. No longer the sacred home of the emperor, it had to renegotiate its identity and relationship with other places on new terms.

When the Republic was established in 1912, Beijing had to redefine its *raison d'être* and the principles underlying its organization as a city. Beijing underwent a transformation on several key dimensions. One dimension was an adjustment in the relationship between the demands of urban development and the creation of a new spatial order. Another dimension was a change in the relationship between the city and the countryside. During this politically chaotic time of constant crisis, Beijing asserted an unprecedented identity as a new kind of urban center, a city. It began to follow new principles of organization in administration and spatial patterning. Just as the administrative territory of Beijing would ideally be unified, so would the cell-like, fragmented spaces of Beijing be opened up, integrated, and made to cohere in order to promote commercial development. But this latter process would be bumpier and more contentious than the process of administrative reorganization and would ultimately be left incomplete. As the next chapter will show, local residents challenged the initial vision of Beijing as "modern city." And as Chapter 3 will demonstrate, this initial vision of Beijing as "modern city," which treated elements from the past as a burden, was revised after 1928 when the city began to acquire an identity as the "center of traditional Chinese culture."

# Power

## *The City and Its People*

The Republican government's effort to transform the imperial capital was not simply a matter of liberating a dormant, pent-up desire for mobility harbored by Beijing residents. Instead, the new axiom of mobility's benefits needed to be promoted and at times even imposed upon residents whose shops, neighborhoods, or livelihood lay in the path of the trolley tracks and steamrollers. Behind the city government's demolition of physical barriers to mobility, both within the city itself and between the city and the world beyond, was a new vision and form of urban planning that tackled Beijing in its entirety, interjecting state involvement into spaces that had formerly been left, under the imperial system, for commoners and hence neglected. During the Qing dynasty, Beijing's organization into hierarchical, cellular areas in many ways reflected the ideal imperial polity. The people of the capital city were divided by status; Manchu and Han, the imperial family and their servants, officials and commoners, were all assigned, and in some sense confined, to their specific spaces or neighborhoods. As was evident in the physical plan of Qing Beijing, the Outer City in which commoners lived was almost entirely ignored by imperial planners. The Republican state, on the other hand, aimed to redefine the people as a "public" and to bestow on everyone an essentially equal status—a logic, not coincidentally, wholly consonant with the ethos of modern commerce. The spatial order of Republican Beijing had to be reconfigured in accordance with this new polity.

The ordering of urban space became an important arena in which the new state and its people encountered each other. It undoubtedly involved a process in which the state exercised its power, but, as Jonathan Simon points out, “For most of our history, power has generated resistance by the subjectivity it creates as by-product in the people on whom it is exercised.”<sup>1</sup> The Republican government’s comprehensive urban planning forced people to understand the city differently and to organize their daily lives in new ways, entailing a larger spatial awareness that took the entire city of Beijing as a reference. Both the state and the people utilized the new political concepts and ideals, such as “the public” and “people’s livelihood,” to argue their cases, and the political history of Republican Beijing’s spatial transformation can be described as a series of struggles and negotiations between the state and the people over opportunities arising in the course of the transformation of the city. This chapter will study how several major interest groups—the municipal government, commercial forces, and ordinary urban residents—struggled over the meanings of political concepts, commercial interests, and cultural and historical identities of local communities. The operation of and interaction among the forces will be investigated specifically through the Xuanwu Gate project, the establishment of the streetcar system, and the naming of streets.

#### **DEFINING “THE PUBLIC INTEREST”: THE XUANWU GATE PROJECT**

In contrast to the Qing administrative approach of segregated, localized management, the Republican government applied an overarching, comprehensive view of the city, a spatial vision accompanied by a sociopolitical concept, “the public interest.” Consequently, ensuing struggles among the various forces were not confined to the material outcome of urban development but also involved its political and social results and meanings. The city’s residents were first of all concerned with the effects of the spatial transformation on their own fortunes, but in the process of fighting for their material interests, they became more concerned with the meaning of new political concepts. The new Republican political ideals that invoked the concept of the public were used by both the government and residents in battles and negotiations over control of urban spaces. As a self-appointed agent of modernization, the city government often claimed that its construction projects were for the benefit of the public, and in theory it represented the ideas of autonomous

administration and resident participation. But in practice there was no community or resident participation in decision making. The municipal government maintained that the conditions were not yet ripe for Beijing's residents to practice self-government, much as Sun Yat-sen thought that China was not yet ready for democracy. The Municipal Council took it upon itself to seize the initiative because "the concept of mutual benefit between the private and the public is yet to be taught.... Only when those who are in charge of the program are selfless and show sincerity to the city's residents can the programs be carried out."<sup>2</sup> Although the construction programs were not designed with citizens' input, the council nonetheless believed that they were in the interests of the city's residents. It argued that it would win the support of Beijing residents by meeting the urgent needs of urban development and improving living conditions in the city.<sup>3</sup> In reality, however, urban transformation often disrupted the livelihoods of particular groups of citizens and merchants. The residents directly challenged the emptiness of the concept of "the public interest" and claimed that their own interests should be respected as part of that larger interest.

One factor that played a crucial role in the battles between the government and residents was access to information, which often determined the fate of a specific community and individual households. Most negotiations on issues related to urban spaces were carried out between the government and individual households, the former armed with the most up-to-date information and the privilege to manipulate the laws and regulations and the latter without access to necessary information. A "public" that could either legally mediate between the two sides or function as a source of information was absent. The lack of access to information fundamentally affected people's daily life experiences and constrained their ability to deal with the government, which dominated the transformation of Beijing's spatial order.

One of the first steps the government took to acquire comprehensive knowledge of the city was to create modern maps. The imperial state had never mapped the city as a whole on a regular basis. The earliest official map of the entire city was made in 1750, the fifteenth year of the Qianlong reign. Like a Chinese painting, it was printed on several scrolls, so that the whole city could not easily be seen at once. Despite its impressive accuracy, it was an iconic map. Specificity rather than uniformity was emphasized: landscape and all important buildings appeared as distinctive objects; important landmarks, even major residential compounds, were all accorded particular attention, reminding the

viewer of the modes of life, history, places of memory, and sociality of specific locations in the city. The city did not appear as in modern maps—abstract space plotted on a standardized spatial grid that could be freely measured, erased, planned, and rebuilt.

Believing that a detailed map was the basis for modern urban development, the Department of Internal Affairs sent out experts in November 1912 to conduct a geographical survey of Beijing. They spent ten months drawing up a new map of the city. This new map, however, soon became obsolete due to rapid changes in the city's streets. In addition, the first map failed to provide information on street elevation and the direction of runoff flow, both crucial to street improvement and sewer repair. Accordingly, in July 1914, the Municipal Council organized a team of technicians to measure the whole city again. Two years later, a topographic map was completed.<sup>4</sup> Elevation markers were sprinkled throughout the city. Using the knowledge it had acquired in the process of mapmaking, the city government formulated plans for the construction of North and South Xinhua Streets, the opening of gates in the city wall at the Huashi Bridge, the development of the Tianqiao district, the streets in the “model area” inside Zhengyang Gate, and the setback lines in major streets.<sup>5</sup> Since these early efforts, Beijing has been mapped regularly, providing the government with up-to-date, comprehensive information on population, land values, poverty, disease, and many other issues.

The government also collected information on real estate transactions and property values. The Qing government had three main means of monitoring real estate transactions: exchanges between private individuals had to bear a government stamp; licensing was required when government or Qing court land was transferred to private hands; and a contract had to be signed when a temple's ownership changed. Since only house size and plot boundaries were noted, this documentation was insufficient to provide a reliable picture of real estate values and land use patterns in Beijing. In 1914, when the Municipal Council was established, it ordered the registration of all real estate transactions and the issuance of new documents clearly distinguishing land areas from built structures. The government thereby acquired a file on property ownership and trends of changing land value in Beijing.<sup>6</sup>

These early efforts to monitor real estate transactions in the city were further centralized under the Nationalist government. In November 1928, a Land Bureau (*Tudi ju*) was established as part of the Nationalist government's reorganization of the administration of Beijing. All property owners in the city were given a deadline to register their real

estate with the Land Bureau. On the day set for an on-site investigation, all interested parties were required to attend with their relevant documents in hand. A fine was levied if an owner failed to register. The bureau checked the accuracy of the registration and issued the owners new documents, charging a fee of 0.2 percent of the property value.<sup>7</sup> This process of registration with the Land Bureau supplied the government with detailed information on the address and location of property, the use of the land, the plot boundary, the plot's size and price, documents related to the land, and the owner's name, sex, native place, address, and profession. The same information was also required of renters. Any changes or transactions also had to be registered. Violation of any regulations was fined.<sup>8</sup>

In addition to acquiring information, the government began to regulate land use. Draft regulations on government acquisition of private land were passed in 1915 and finalized later. The Municipal Council legitimized its new policies in the name of "the public interest": "The need to take over private land for public use developed together with the emergence of the public interest. The most critical factor in the process was the taking over of land by the government....The price for land to be taken over should be determined by legal institutions so that the transactions can be fair. In short, private rights should be protected while the public interest is promoted."<sup>9</sup> The Republican government first took control of imperial and governmental land and properties from the Qing. It also assumed the right to take over private land to use for development projects: that is, it claimed the right of eminent domain. In the Republican period, no distinction was made between "public land" and "government" or "state property": in other words, *public* meant *state*. Community property, such as churches and schools, was treated the same way as private property. When the Municipal Council was established in 1914, it immediately started investigating the situation of "public land." By comparing current land distribution with old maps and gazetteers, the council confirmed some land as "belonging to the city." Imperial land became government property.<sup>10</sup> The government paid three types of compensation: the value of the land and everything on it, the value of the land and moving costs, or the value of part of the estate where any improvements on the land were deemed too old for future use. The Beijing Municipal Council applied these regulations in the course of pursuing urban development programs—for example, the Xiangchang Market, North and South Xinhua Streets, the opening of Donghua and Xihua Gates, Nanchizi and Nanchang Streets,

and Rongxian Hutong—and enforcing setback lines in some districts. The regulations were specifically limited to transportation projects; all other transactions were to be negotiated according to the specific situation.<sup>11</sup> This left some room for both the government and residents in terms of compensation. From 1914 to 1918, approximately one thousand families were compensated under these regulations; the Municipal Council paid them 280,000 *yuan* in total.<sup>12</sup>

As part of the effort to control land use, the government began to regulate construction as well. In its 1916 regulations on construction, the Municipal Council stated that “these regulations are the basis for re-ordering the whole city. As the foundation for every project, they should not be taken lightly.... We expect cooperation [from residents].”<sup>13</sup> The law required that all construction along streets be inspected by the Municipal Council, including the building of new houses, rooms, walls, gates, and billboards and the addition of poles that intruded into streets. Families were required to turn in blueprints of all construction projects and to apply for official approval. Houses at intersections were required to have rounded corners.<sup>14</sup> Sidney Gamble observed that

applications for permits are received every Monday, and under ordinary circumstances are approved and returned the following Monday.... [T]he police are especially careful to see that there are no encroachments on public property and that any houses now on public land are removed.... A deed, showing the location of the buildings on the lot, is final evidence only when stamped by the Municipal Council. The police approval is not final.<sup>15</sup>

From 1915 to 1918, 83 percent of construction applications were approved, 14.5 percent were ordered to withdraw further from streets or to follow special limitations, and 2.5 percent were turned down.<sup>16</sup>

In Gamble’s opinion, the system worked quite smoothly, with the keenest attention paid to facilitating implementation of the state’s public projects. The Municipal Council also gave an optimistic picture of the residents’ reactions to the government projects and regulations:

In the beginning people did not cooperate. They had many doubts about the Municipal Council’s taking over their land. The Municipal Council wrote the regulation in vernacular language and explained it to people. They started understanding it and did not block the city’s projects anymore. Everyone sees that the city is becoming more and more orderly and prosperous and that there will be more cases of land takeover. There should be no further problems as long as we can process cases according to the law.<sup>17</sup>

This confidence, however, was misplaced. As the following discussion of the Xuanwu Gate project will show, the government in fact won very little cooperation from the residents.

One of the three gates in the south wall of the Inner City, Xuanwu Gate was considered a barrier to the increased traffic in the Republic. Although the Municipal Council had been planning demolition of its protective walls for some time, the earliest documentation that can be found in the Beijing Municipal Archives of the government's actual intent to do so is dated 1918.<sup>18</sup> A letter from the Municipal Council to the Department of Internal Affairs and the Beijing Police Department explains the motivation for the project:

In recent years, the western part of the city has been prospering and traffic is heavy. The Xuanwu Gate area is a key point in Inner-Outer City transportation. The narrow gate is joined by a barrier formed by the protective walls outside the gate, making transportation extremely inconvenient. In order to promote commerce and improve transportation, the Municipal Council plans to tear down the protective walls and to construct streets there. The arrow tower, following the example of the Zhengyang Gate, will be kept to preserve the historical site.<sup>19</sup>

The plan envisaged tearing down the protective walls and straightening the railways. Two openings would be made in the city wall on the two sides of Xuanwu Gate to facilitate the flow of traffic entering and leaving the Inner City. Streets and an underground sewage system would be built. The Municipal Council and the Jing-Han Railway Company would share the responsibilities for the project. The shipping of construction materials and the purchase of residential houses would be the railway company's job. Tearing down the walls and paving the new streets were tasks for the Municipal Council, toward which the railway company would contribute five thousand *yuan*. Due to unstable political conditions, implementation of the plan did not begin until 1928, when the Nationalist government resurrected it.<sup>20</sup> Almost twenty years elapsed between the earliest documented decision to tear down the protective walls of Xuanwu Gate and actual completion of the project. An important cause of this delay was resistance from residents in the area.

Xuanwu Gate area residents did not welcome the project. Unable to predict the government's moves, many of them had just spent large amounts of money setting up shops there. On December 29, 1928, the Department of Public Works instructed the Department of Public Security to order the residents and businesses in the Xuanwu Gate area to move.

The residents were quick to respond; people in the neighborhood began collective actions. On February 26, 1929, merchant Li Mengji and some of his neighbors wrote a petition to the Department of Public Works stating their refusal to leave. Knowing that the government presented promotion of economic growth as the legitimatization for the project, the residents began by phrasing their objections in economic terms:

We rented four sections of the empty ground inside of Xuanwu Gate's protecting walls in 1923. At the time, the ground was very bumpy. The dips were four to ten feet deep....It took us a total of 2,500 *yuan* just to level these dips in the ground. We then built over thirty houses on the plot, which took us more than 4,500 *yuan*. We have invested a total of about 7,500 *yuan* on this piece of land. We are exhausted, as are our financial resources. Our businesses have not been here for very long, but we have suffered many wars. Although we have been trying our best, the life of our businesses is still [vulnerable] as a thin thread....It is very hard for us to leave this land. Moving away from this place will put us in debt, hurt our property and the reputation of our businesses. We will also lose the relationship we have built up with our customers over the years. This will be a negative influence on society. We sincerely ask for your permission to allow us to keep our businesses.<sup>21</sup>

The residents then argued in terms of the rights they had as citizens of the nation:

We were expecting a revival when the nation was united, but right at this time, the Department of Public Security ordered us to prepare to move because the protective walls were to be torn down. We had tears in our eyes when we heard the order. How can we hope to make a living if our roots are cut? It is necessary to make transportation convenient, but at the same time, attention should also be paid to people's livelihood. We can limit the scale of our businesses so that we would not affect the project. After the walls are torn down, we can apply to rent empty ground to revive our business. In this way, transportation will be improved, and businesses can be preserved. Both the reform of the transportation system and people's livelihood can benefit from the project.<sup>22</sup>

The response of the Department of Public Security and the Department of Public Works was simple and straightforward: "All shops must move as soon as the project begins."<sup>23</sup> The merchants did not stop there; they petitioned the mayor directly. The mayor agreed with their petition: "The merchants do have a point."<sup>24</sup> On March 4, 1929, the Department of Public Works decided to allow the merchants to stay while the walls were demolished. On March 15, 1929, Public Works informed the Department of Public Security:

The place these merchants occupy is within the range of our project. They should move out immediately to support this public work. Considering the difficulties the merchants face, they can postpone moving during the tearing down of the walls. But during construction we will need space to put dirt and bricks; we still need to use their land. We will consider their petition and give them some empty land once the project is completed.<sup>25</sup>

The government ignored both requests for more information and petitions for compensation from the residents. One shop owner asked to look at the plan for the project in order to know what to expect and where to move but never heard from Public Works. Another coal merchant asked for compensation for his condemned shop and warehouses but had no luck. Jiang Yulin, the sixty-one-year-old owner of Deyishun Coal Shop, listed how much he had spent on his property and asked for money from the government but received no reply.<sup>26</sup>

More protests followed after the project began—a tactic of protracted warfare, a time-prolonging maneuver on the part of the residents. Public Works told the Fuzhong Company, a coal shop, that it needed to “temporarily” borrow a piece of land located next to its storage. On July 11, 1930, the owner of the shop petitioned the department, complaining that it took capital to build the eight-room storage space, which, moreover, was full of coal, and that business would be adversely affected if the warehouse was torn down. The company asked for compensation from the government but was unsuccessful.<sup>27</sup>

The biggest protest occurred in 1930 when the project reached the point of preparing land in order to extend the tracks northward. The Jing-Han Railway Company had previously acquired the right to use the land west of Zhengyang Gate and north of Xibian Gate and had paid rent to the city government. But residents had been occupying the same land even before the railway company acquired its rights; some began paying rent to the company, others rented from the government.<sup>28</sup> In June 1930, the Department of Public Works investigated the residential area called Bird Market (Niao Shi) between the moat and the city wall because it would be in the way when the railways were straightened. The residents were not told why their houses were being investigated. Qi Dekui, a sixty-eight-year-old man living in the neighborhood, sent a petition to the Department of Public Works with twenty-two signatures “representing over one hundred families.” The petition argued:

Although we are ignorant, there are some people who know a little bit more among us. The way we see it, if it is the government that needs this land, you have to provide detailed regulations regarding people’s liveli-

hood. You should distinguish the prices of the houses according to their quality and pay people when tearing them down so that people will not complain. In addition, the residents should also be informed beforehand. There is no rationality in your keeping silent about the project and all of a sudden deciding to force us to tear down our houses to evacuate the land. Since the reform, protecting the lives and property of the people has become the most important issue for the government. People's livelihood and rights should not be hurt. If the government needs the land, it should inform the residents. This time, the measuring of our houses was done secretly. We worry that some dishonest people will act as the middlemen, collect money and act as agents, making profit in the process. Let us give some examples. When the west and east markets in the Tianqiao district were opened, some people bought all the land and then sold it in pieces. Conflicts deriving from this have lasted for years and still have not been settled. We can roughly see how...strongly it contradicts people's interests. If the merchants dared to behave like this in the Tianqiao district, which was government land, what will happen to our property, which is private? ...The government should not force the over one hundred families and shops in this street to lose their homes and businesses. Not only can the people not tolerate this kind of action, but the government should not hurt the merchants and people. If the government plans to take over our property, we dare not resist. [But] the government must have regulations with the prerequisite of not hurting people's livelihood and not violating people's rights. After our houses were measured by the Department of Public Works, we began asking around but have not been able to find out the truth.... We representatives [of the neighborhood] petition the Department of Public Works to explain clearly the purpose of the investigation...so that people's doubts can be relieved and their hearts pacified.<sup>29</sup>

The petition demonstrates the residents' extensive knowledge of incidents that had occurred throughout the city and their lucid understanding of the government's strategy of concealing information. Their demands for access to information and the protection of the law rang true to the Republic's own ideals. Yet fearing land speculation, the government would naturally want to limit the residents' access to crucial information.

On September 22 and 23, 1930, the Departments of Public Works and Public Security went to the Bird Market neighborhood again to determine which houses had turned in their ownership and found out that only a few had done so. The investigation continued for over a week. Qi Dekui, the owner of house number 258 on Xuanwai Avenue, came out to stop the work. The officials conducting the investigation reported, "He was very rude and could not be reasoned with. The other families, encouraged by his behavior, watched this and did not cooperate with

the investigation.”<sup>30</sup> The Departments of Public Works and Public Security decided after discussion that the investigation would be continued on January 10, 1931. The project would go forward and “nothing will be postponed.”<sup>31</sup> The government eventually acquired the land in 1933 after another two years’ struggle with the residents.<sup>32</sup>

Like those residents, Wang Jiaoxu, the resident monk at the Guandi Temple at Xuanwu Gate, also refused to move. After receiving orders to move away, Wang petitioned incessantly, arguing that the example of Zhengyang Gate, where the temple had been spared in the reconstruction project, should be followed at Xuanwu Gate in order to preserve ancient architecture. He held out until 1933, when the Department of Public Works decided to give him the land that belonged to Tonghe Fuel Shop.<sup>33</sup> But the land and houses were smaller than the temple, so Wang refused to move. He asked for more money and demanded that the land allotted him be expanded twenty-six feet southward.<sup>34</sup> The department was resolute in its reply: Wang’s request “cannot be satisfied. We should ask the Department of Public Security to send some policemen to force him to move. He is not allowed to delay any further.”<sup>35</sup>

An incident forced a resolution of the matter. In January 1934, thieves stole some items from the shop that had been given to Wang. To keep the shop safe, the government ordered him to move into it immediately on January 17, 1934.<sup>36</sup> On the last day of that month, the Department of Public Works sent a letter to Public Security: the government would take over the land of Tonghe Fuel Shop and build the temple there. The Department of Public Security was instructed to make Wang move immediately.<sup>37</sup> On February 12, Public Works sent a letter to Wang Jiaoxu, ordering him to “move immediately and never make trouble again.” No more compensation would be forthcoming.<sup>38</sup> Wang finally vacated the shop in August 1934.<sup>39</sup> A smaller new temple was built to the east of the original lot.<sup>40</sup> Wang built two extra rooms but did not register them. The Department of Public Works discussed the situation but did not make a fuss over it, merely telling him to register the rooms with the department.<sup>41</sup>

While the residents were frustrated in their effort to acquire information from the municipal government, they were also unable to find alternative sources of information. The newspapers commented on the project, but not in a way that would matter to or help the residents. Beijing’s *Chenbao* twice mentioned the project. In April 1929, when the project was just beginning, the paper published an editorial commenting that it would suffice to open only two gates in the wall. The reason for the suggestion was that a “foreign friend” had eulogized the pro-

tecting walls as architecturally superb, rounder than the Round City (Tuancheng) in the Beihai Park. The journalist, after taking a look himself, was convinced and agreed that they should not be torn down. The Department of Public Works sent him a letter arguing that during the warlord period the “eating [selling] of the walls of the imperial city” was tolerated. In contrast, in the present project, the material from the protecting walls would be used to repair sewers. The journalist argued that the “the imperial city walls were meat wrapped in skins” (the bricks in the walls were of high quality) but that this wall was now “bones in skins” (the bricks were dirt filled); he concluded that “only idiots want to eat bones.” To him, just because the building materials of the walls would be recycled was no excuse to tear the walls down. About two months after the project had begun, in late May, the Department of Public Works suspended it, but *Chenbao* did not let the issue rest. It commented, “[T]wo months have passed, and for some reason the Department of Public Works has suddenly stopped the project. The walls are partly torn down. People passing by see piles of broken bricks on the ground, there is nothing one can call convenience for transportation; yellow dirt is exposed on top of the walls, there is nothing to be called beautiful.”<sup>42</sup> Tianjin’s *Dagongbao* also publicized the project. It reported that the workers at Xuanwu Gate had discovered two huge cannons cast in the Yuan dynasty and two Yuan tombs. The Beiping municipal government asked the Committee of Ancient Article Preservation to investigate the situation.<sup>43</sup> The newspapers were obviously more interested in issues of national cultural preservation than in the interests of the local residents.

This monopoly on information was crucially important to the government, enabling it to present itself as the only power with the “scientific knowledge” and thus the authority to make master plans for the city. Residents, in many cases deliberately left uninformed about plans, and in all cases facing an information deficit when compared to the state, were muscled aside in the creation of a new spatial order. Limited information seriously hampered the ability of ordinary residents to participate in and respond to the government’s projects. Without the necessary information to predict the future, residents were trapped in a constantly defensive position.

The government, of course, had reasons to be secretive. Building projects were expensive, and the land speculation and heightened expectations for compensation caused by a leak in planning information could make construction costs skyrocket. Therefore, the state cannot be viewed

simplistically as the blameworthy party that withheld “public space” from the “public.” Rather, the point is that contestation over the ideal of “the public interest” was rooted in a struggle over rights to material spaces. By centralizing information and amassing resources, the state could almost always claim to have a broader vision of a greater public interest. In sum, in the early Republic, there was a gross imbalance of power between the forces battling over public space, and over the very concept of “public interest,” and the government worked hard to maintain its more powerful position.

#### LOCAL INTERESTS AND DEVELOPMENT: THE STREETCAR SYSTEM

Urban reconstruction also meant potential commercial profit. Beijing’s commercial communities made active efforts to benefit from the projects, as did the government and the holders of large amounts of capital from the city and elsewhere. The best illustration of this was the controversy surrounding the construction of the streetcar system in Beijing.

The streetcar system was the most significant change in Republican Beijing’s vehicular traffic.<sup>44</sup> In 1925, the bells of streetcars joined the roar of trains as “modern” sounds in the city. If the railways played the leading role in breaching the city walls, the trolley tracks drastically altered the street system inside the walls. Streetcars also changed the scale of the city, providing faster access between areas and further integrating Beijing’s cellular neighborhoods. The old means of transportation, horse- and mule-drawn carts, sedan chairs, and the rickshaws introduced in the beginning of the twentieth century, were not suited for mass transportation. Needless to say, the idea of mass transportation was fundamentally in conflict with that of Beijing as imperial capital. After the city walls and streets had been opened up, the question of a mode of mass transit arose. An article in the *Great Liberty News* (*Daziyoubao*) observed that

all the famous metropolitan centers, for example, London, Paris, New York, have spacious streets and networks of trolleys. In some of the busiest areas there are even trolleys above and below the ground. They try their best to make transportation convenient and the city look great. Beijing’s streets are very dirty, with dust flying into people’s eyes. The heavy carts... make the streets crowded and noisy. The bad condition of transportation, with countless barriers, wastes people’s time and energy.<sup>45</sup>

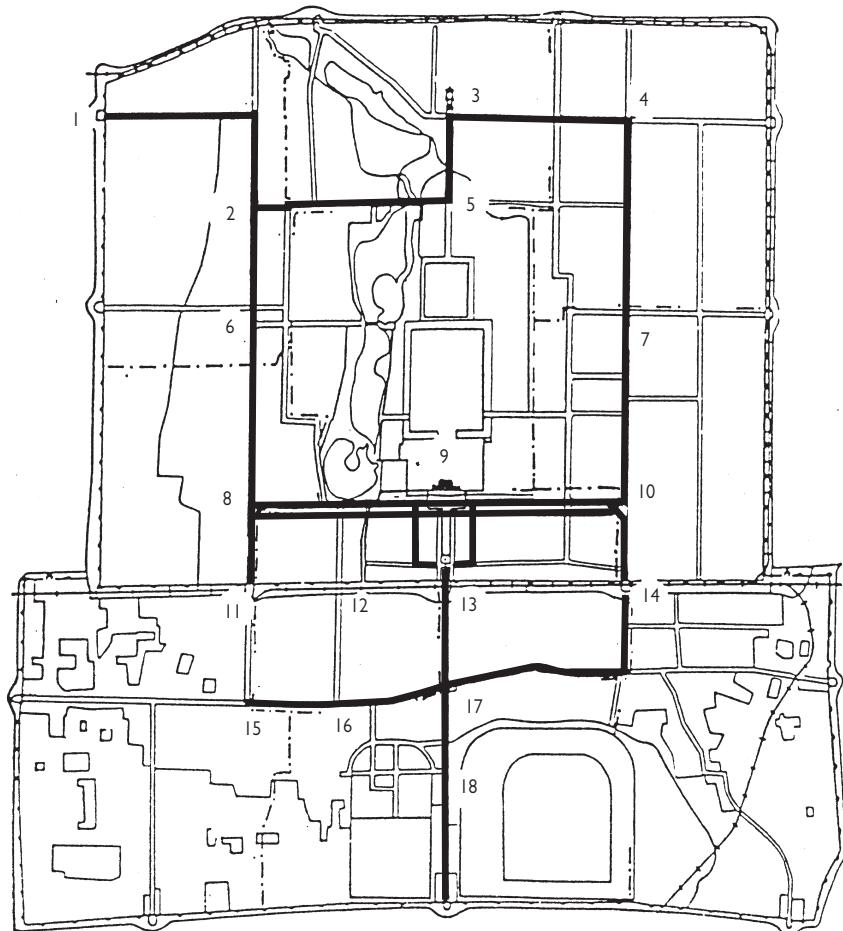
The article argued that it was necessary to build a trolley system because Beijing could not be a modern city without streetcars.

Merchants had long been aware of the potential for profit in establishing a streetcar system in Beijing. As early as 1913–14, Shanghai entrepreneurs Shen Aicang and Yu Qiaqing organized the Beijing Huashang Trolley Company, but it failed after one month. After their attempt, Chen Xuanshu and Chen Xingfang planned to collaborate with some British companies, but the government did not approve their plan. In October 1913, the Beiyang government organized Beijing Streetcar Limited. But due to inadequate technology and capital, the plan dragged on into June 1921, when the company was finally established. After three years of construction, the first streetcar went into operation on December 17, 1924.<sup>46</sup>

The trolley company took a slow, cautious approach in developing the system, warning that “this is a new invention in the capital city. Limited by their old thinking, people here cannot comprehend it right away.” The company started with one route and ten cars and declared its intention to open more routes when “people were used to it and realized the convenience brought by the streetcars.” Four more routes were opened by 1925.<sup>47</sup> The trolley system essentially covered the whole city, making north-south and east-west travel much more convenient and faster than before. By 1943, there were a total of seven routes. Several adjustments occurred later, but no new lines were added. The following is a list of the routes and their length:

1. Tianqiao—Xizhi Gate, 9.638 km.
2. Tianqiao—Beixinqiao, 7.941 km.
3. Xizhi Gate—Xisi—Xidan—Dongdan—Dongsi—Beixinqiao, 9.985 km.
4. Taipingcang—Huangchenggen—Di'an Gate—Drum Tower—Beixinqiao, 4.520 km.
5. Xuanwu Gate—Xidan—Dongdan—Chongwen Gate, 5.105 km.
6. Chongwen Gate—Caishikou, 4.44 km.
7. Tianqiao—Yongding Gate, 4.15 km.<sup>48</sup>

Distances across the city shrank. The streetcar began to break down the barriers that had isolated the life-worlds of Beijing neighborhoods, partly transforming the city from a honeycomb of compartments into a more integrated whole. Despite its relatively high fare, the streetcar had



- |                  |                   |
|------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Xizhi Gate    | 10. Dongdan Arch  |
| 2. Taiping cang  | 11. Xuanwu Gate   |
| 3. Drum Tower    | 12. Heping Gate   |
| 4. Beixin Bridge | 13. Qian Gate     |
| 5. Di'an Gate    | 14. Chongwen Gate |
| 6. Xisi Arch     | 15. Caishikou     |
| 7. Dongsi Arch   | 16. Hufang Bridge |
| 8. Xidan Arch    | 17. Zhushikou     |
| 9. Tianan Gate   | 18. Tianqiao      |

Figure 10. The streetcar system.

an effect on people's way of life. In 1925, when the system first went into operation, about five thousand people used it daily. The number increased to over sixty thousand the next year and maintained that level until 1948; thus on average 2.5 percent of the population in Beijing were taking one round trip on streetcars every day, and 15 percent were taking a trip once a week.<sup>49</sup> In the 1940s, taking the trolley had already become recognized as one of the four cheapest things to do in Beijing.<sup>50</sup> The establishment of the trolley system also fueled the development of the Tianqiao district, which will be discussed in Chapter 6.

From its inception, the streetcar system was a plum that everyone fought over. Manipulation of information was crucial for those who tried to benefit from the project. Start-up capital was supposed to be half government and half private, and each share of stock sold for one hundred *yuan*. Stocks were to be sold from May 16 to 30, 1921, but sales suddenly closed at six o'clock on the evening of May 16. Many warlords, officials, entrepreneurs, and big merchants, aware that the trolley company had not only a foreign loan but also government support, found ways to buy up the stock. The biggest stockholders were the Jincheng Bank and Salt Industry (Yanye) Bank.

Denied access to inside information, ordinary Beijing residents and small merchants were initially uncertain about the company and realized only too late that it was a golden opportunity. Many sent in letters accusing the company of scheming with the government and big merchants. The president of the Beijing Chamber of Commerce, Sun Xueshi, representing merchant opinion, twice petitioned the government to postpone the establishment of the company.<sup>51</sup> In the petitions, he pointed out that the trolley company's contract stipulated that Beijing residents' opinions should be considered in the company's policy making and that Beijing residents were supposed to hold 50 percent of the company's shares. But in fact, 40 percent of the stock was ultimately held by Shanghai bankers. Sun argued:

There are 1.2 million people in Beijing.<sup>52</sup> How can a few profit seekers represent them? Even if one argues that Beijing residents are poor, how can one be sure that not even one of them can afford to pay 100 *yuan*? The stockholders are far away in Shanghai.... When did they become Beijing residents? Many did not even use their real names [when purchasing the stock].<sup>53</sup>

Having lost the chance to become a stockholder, the Beijing Chamber of Commerce now opposed the streetcar system. It first argued that the trolleys would "put Beijing people's lives and property in danger."

It pointed out that whereas neither the Shanghai nor the Tianjin trolley system had necessitated tearing down houses, the Beijing plan required condemning many dwellings. People's losses should be taken into consideration. Second, the petition argued that given Beijing's large and dense population, the use of electricity, telephones, and electric lights had already precipitated several accidents and the trolley cars would be likely to cause even more. Third, the petition noted, Beijing's populace included a large mass of destitute rickshaw pullers, many of whom would lose their jobs if the trolley started operating. In sum, trolleys were closely related to a whole variety of urban interests. In other countries, trolley companies were run by "citizens' organizations" that could balance these interests and represent the majority of citizens. The trolley company of Beijing was controlled by "a few capitalists" who ignored people's interests and cared only for profit.<sup>54</sup> The second petition further emphasized that the power holders in the company were all southerners and that most of the trolley equipment was imported from foreign countries, amounting to a loss of rights to foreigners.<sup>55</sup>

Deprived of crucial information and excluded from the planning process, Beijing residents could fight back only when the tracks reached their own backyards. When the streetcar company laid tracks in the section between Zhushikou and Ciqikou, shop owners along the street strongly opposed construction, alleging that laying the tracks would block the sewers and affect traffic and that the passing of the trolleys would shake their houses. The merchants told the company to change the route. Only after the company agreed to set up a workshop for the poor and change the proposed double track to single track did construction continue.<sup>56</sup>

As in the Xuanwu Gate project, some urbanites cared more for the historical sites of the city than for technological advancement or the small merchants' interests. Qin Zizhuang, referring to himself as a "citizen" (*shimin*) in his letter, appealed to the people of Beijing to stop the project. He stressed the damage the trolley would wreak on Beijing's historic sites. Qin worried that the trolley, passing through the Tiananmen area, would damage the architecture and that "a historical site of hundreds of years will be fragmented by a few people's desire for profit." He argued that every country's capital city had some grand avenues that were the first spots toured by domestic and foreign visitors. Even if the whole city was to be cluttered with the trolley company's poles, Qin wanted some "pure land" left. The Tiananmen area, although not identical to Paris or London, was, he thought, "fairly close" to them and would be totally damaged if penetrated by trolleys. "If this

can be tolerated, the annihilation of the country can also be tolerated; if one does not fight for this, one would not fight for one's own person. Family and country are in danger." He asked people to use all means to stop the project.<sup>57</sup>

The conflict between the streetcar company and rickshaw pullers was certainly the most charged, and David Strand's *Rickshaw Beijing* describes it vividly.<sup>58</sup> Rickshaw pullers saw the streetcars as threats to their livelihood, and each time the company offered new services, they contested the improvement. On October 22, 1929, the conflict reached a climax when rickshaw pullers smashed several streetcars.<sup>59</sup>

Clearly, many players were involved in the development of the streetcar system. Strand stresses how, on balance, city government policy favored people's livelihoods over technological development. The city government supported the streetcar company in general but sometimes showed ambivalence when acting as mediator. The chamber of commerce was also inconsistent, first backing the plan in hopes of profiting from the development but later opposing it on discovering that they were excluded from direct profits. Those uprooted by the trolleys were very antagonistic to the project, even though the streetcar system could bolster business in their neighborhoods. The rickshaw pullers were the most aggrieved because the streetcars potentially threatened their livelihoods, but they had few channels, other than rioting, for demanding rights in the city. Ordinary citizens, however, manipulated the new rhetoric of citizenship and national pride. Basically, no one refused to enjoy the convenience of a modern means of transportation, but no one liked it clattering through his own backyard. All groups excluded from controlling or profiting from the system opposed it. The Republic offered a new vocabulary for people to argue their viewpoints. When the government used the concept of citizenship, it stressed people's responsibility to further the development of the nation (i.e., "the public interest"), but when the people themselves used the same concept, they presented a different emphasis, focusing on their own material interests phrased in the new vocabulary of citizens' rights. At heart, however, these were conflicts over concrete interests, not debates over abstract concepts of rights. Attitudes were less coherently ideological than contextual.

#### THE RIGHT TO NAME

Comprehensive planning had limitations. Although the municipal government managed to open up avenues in the city, it was unable to im-

plement much tangible change in the *hutong*. These tortuous, narrow alleyways formed by the space left between *sheyuan* (residential courtyards) functioned as the pathways connecting residential houses to major streets. As the most basic elements of Beijing's spatial organization, they were left intact for the time being.

The government's efforts were concentrated more on disciplining people's behavior once they appeared in open spaces than on breaking into their private spaces. The new avenues and streets were where state and society encountered each other, as Strand demonstrates in his book *Rickshaw Beijing*, and they served as public spaces for events like the May Fourth and the May Thirtieth Movements. But they did not provide the municipal government with much more access to the neighborhoods. In contrast, late-nineteenth-century Paris witnessed spatial transformations on a large scale. Inspired partly out of fear of the populace, Haussman's plan for building new avenues in Paris sought to break up centers of insurrection by gaining access to the slums where the working class lived. The result, however, was that in peaceful times the avenues that Haussman constructed became public space, and during revolutions the people built barricades with paving stones to block access by government troops.<sup>60</sup> In contrast, Beijing's alleyways and courtyards were left alone unless specific construction projects passed through them. Since cars and streetcars did not enter the small *hutong*, many of these narrow alleys remained intact. As a result, many streets remained narrow and meandering, and many pockets in the city were left untouched.

Government regulations did penetrate the small alleyways to some extent by formulating rules on setback lines. To achieve the goal of efficient commercial traffic, streets needed to be regularized and kept in order. Although imperial Beijing had been strictly planned with major avenues going straight in cardinal directions, the smaller streets and alleyways on either side of these avenues were neither ordered nor straight. Many districts in Beijing resembled labyrinths. The width of streets varied greatly, from three to thirty meters,<sup>61</sup> and the width of the same street could also vary in different sections,<sup>62</sup> so that many streets were unsuited for modern transport. Setback regulations had existed under the Qing but had not been strictly enforced. The municipal government argued:

When Beijing was established as a capital city, the streets must have been very orderly. Many changes have occurred as time passed. Many houses have extended outward, taking over streets. Streets have become narrow and there is no order among the houses. Without good streets, transporta-

tion is being blocked, which forms a great barrier to the development of commerce.<sup>63</sup>

The council swiftly dealt with the problem. In 1915, it assigned a team to measure the streets for the setback lines. Three years later, the team was reorganized, enlarged, and divided into three groups. A new map of the city was submitted to the Municipal Council in the same year.<sup>64</sup> Setback regulations were published in 1918 and revised in 1919.<sup>65</sup> These were relatively lenient regulations. The council reasoned, “To fit the specific conditions of Beijing where the *hutong* are all curved, and to consider people’s livelihood, the method of predetermining width is inappropriate.... The width of a street has to be determined according to all the houses in the specific street.”<sup>66</sup> Structures of large scale and special value were to be preserved, and a street’s width was to be gauged according to the quantity of traffic. Even for the major avenues where width was important, the aim was to make an effort to tear down as few houses as possible. In small alleys, as long as the houses were behind one unified line, the width of the alleyway was not a grave concern. Some streets were to remain curved because straightening them would involve tearing down many houses.<sup>67</sup>

Despite the city government’s effort to emulate Western cities, at the level of the *hutong* and *sihayuan* Beijing’s spatial transformation differed not only from that of European cities like Paris in its early industrial age but also from that of colonial cities like Cairo. Timothy Mitchell argues that

modern villages were intended to organize and make legible the life of ordinary Egyptians, introducing an architecture that would make even women and their families visible to the “observation of the police.” The new, open streets of modern Cairo and other Egyptian towns embodied a similar principle of visibility and observation, the principle of the exhibition.<sup>68</sup>

Beijing’s new spatial development did not show clear signs of such concern. It is undeniable that the state for the first time gained access to penetrate and control the small alleyways despite the leniency of the policies and made compromises with the residents, with the proviso that car and streetcar traffic would not be affected in the future.<sup>69</sup> But the state’s use of spatial reorganization as a social regulator was mostly only a potential for the future.

The residents and the government also engaged in battles over the naming of *hutong*. There were over two thousand *hutong* during the

Qing dynasty, and this number increased to over three thousand in the Republic. Before the Republican period, *hutong* were named by the people living in them. Most of these names were plain and straightforward. *Hutong* were named after landmarks (temples, wells, fences, etc.), the shapes of the alleys (carrying pole, pants, sheep horn, pig tail), alley celebrities (Widow Wang, Woman Song, Bald Zhang), markets, or the residents' occupations (flower, grain, meat, pot mender, pimp). Because *hutong* were named locally by their residents, many bore the same names. There were, simultaneously, sixteen *hutong* called Biandan (carrying pole), fourteen called Jing'er (well) and Huazhi (flower stem), eleven called Koudai (bag or pocket), eight called Luoquan (circle), seven called Jian'gan (arrow stem), seven called Zhenwu Miao (Zhenwu Temple), and seven called Tangzi (ancestral hall).<sup>70</sup> This caused little confusion because people's daily activity mostly did not extend beyond their own immediate communities.

Over three hundred *hutong* names were changed during the Republican period.<sup>71</sup> Waves of name changing swept through at least three times: in 1916,<sup>72</sup> 1919,<sup>73</sup> and again in 1928.<sup>74</sup> The general principle was to change the names from the “vulgar” (*su*) to the more “cultured” (*wenya*). A famous example is related to an eminent political figure, Duan Qirui. In 1924, when the Beiyang warlord Duan Qirui became the temporary president of the Republic, he changed the name of the street in which he lived from Jizhua (chicken feet) to Jizhao (good omen). Lu Xun commented sarcastically in an essay, “When some people become upstarts, they change their genealogy and adopt a new style. Of course they are unwilling to leave their residence a vulgar name.”<sup>75</sup>

Some typical examples of street name changes were from Choushuikeng (pond of filthy water) to Cuihuawan (emerald flower creek); from Gouyiba (dog tail) to Gaoyibo (old man with high morality); from Zhuyiba (pig tail) to Zhiyibo (old man who knows morality); from Guochiang (stove) to Guoqiang (strong nation); from Doufu (tofu) to Duofu (abundant happiness); and from Lushi (donkey market) to Lishi (respect scholars). Some original *hutong* names that contained the character pronounced *ku*, meaning “pants,” on account of their shape—for example, Kujiao (pants cuff) and Kutui (pant legs)—were changed so that this character was replaced by one meaning “storage,” which is also pronounced *ku*.<sup>76</sup>

Many street names in Manchu, Mongol, and other languages were changed into Han Chinese. Magala Temple was changed to Pudusi. Uighur Village became Wei Gong (Gentleman Wei) Village. Streets

named for Qing institutions were renamed after their Republican versions: for example, “Street of the Board of Punishment” was changed to “Street of the Department of Law.”

Streets in imperial Beijing had rarely been named from the perspective of the city as a whole or by people from outside the neighborhood. Although many streets had the same names, these names were far from random. Rather, they were closely related to people’s daily lives and reflected people’s relationship to the neighborhoods in which they lived. Only when the city was opened up, postal systems were developed, and travel became easy and often unavoidable did this localized existence fade and the problem of confusing streets with the same name emerge. The Republican government named streets with the entire city, not the local neighborhood, as their point of reference. The purpose of naming had changed from serving the daily needs of residents to making a location more recognizable to outsiders.

But many people insisted on calling their *hutong* by their original names even when names had already been changed on the maps. It was a struggle between spoken and written names. Most of the changes were made in the government’s written record, but even so, these new names were pronounced very similarly to the old ones. Although the government could change the names in written records, it was unable to control what people preferred to call their own alleys. A discrepancy emerged between names officially recorded and those used in people’s daily lives. In 1934, street name markers were placed at all *hutong* entrances, but the old names echoed in people’s daily speech for years to come.<sup>77</sup>

Not only did the alleyways remain too narrow and tortuous for modern transportation, but they also kept their local names, confusing outsiders for decades. The government’s charts of street names became pieces of paper with characters irrelevant to the alleys they were meant to designate, a naming system divorced from reality that only created more confusion. The newly written names entered national history and geography, gradually replacing the old. But the local names stayed alive in folk songs, ballads, dramas, and stories told by old people in the alleys—a reminder to later generations that life in the small alleys was not always in harmony with or embracing of the nation.

The centralization of information about the city was necessary to translate state-dictated principles of order into overall urban planning in a real estate market characterized by growing commercial forces. This

centralization was conveniently guided by the state's own plans of development and investment. But the state's vision of the modern city was reappropriated by the residents, thereby transforming seemingly technical problems of spatial reconstruction into political problems. This was in some ways inevitable in that the projects of Republican spatial reorganization were legitimized in the name of the people and the public interest, claims of universal value that "formed the ground of legitimacy for bypassing a political participation seen as short-sighted, self-interested, and destructive of the public interest."<sup>78</sup> The inherent inconsistency in the state's policies and the emptiness of these new political concepts created space for negotiation by the city's residents.

In many cases, the government's monopoly of knowledge marginalized the city's residents, whose lack of information hampered their ability to deal with issues on a large-scale or long-term basis and thereby almost always denied them the means to see beyond their own communities. They learned of trouble when it knocked on their doors, but in any confrontation with the government's master plans, theirs were always "local interests" that should give way to the broader "public interest." Local interests were always condemned. Of course, there was no monolithic "public interest" among the city's various groups in the first place, and when people were denied information about city planning, "the public interest" often seemed synonymous with "state manipulation." The problems ordinary residents faced led to inconsistencies in their attitudes toward the spatial reorganization. Shop owners often protested the opening up of new streets designed to promote business, even though such changes could eventually benefit them. Technological progress, central to the creation of a nation-state, was not something for which they intended to sacrifice their own interests. People adopted attitudes toward changes in the city's spatial organization according to the specific situations in which they found themselves. In terms of de Certeau's concepts of strategy and tactics, the people had tactics but no strategy, and what they gained by tactics they could not hold.<sup>79</sup> The protracted nature of the conflict between planners and people suggested not only that the people had some power to defend themselves but also that they were developing a shared sense of power on a larger scale. The city was already integrated culturally and was becoming more so through streetcars, newspapers, and new spaces for public life. But there was considerable evidence of isolation and lack of access to power and information.<sup>80</sup> There is no room for us to romanticize the new or demonize the old. A new system or hierarchy in

urban life was taking shape, producing its new privileged as well as oppressed classes, and both privilege and oppression were being expressed in new forms.

Struggles between these forces gave Beijing's spatial transformation its own pattern. The reshaping of Republican Beijing's urban form was basically initiated and planned by the state. But the state's push to establish a certain urban identity was certainly balanced to a considerable degree by residents' struggles for their material interests in the spaces being transformed. The results of these struggles differed from those of many Western industrial cities as well as those of colonial cities. First, the replacement of the "use of coercion and commands to control a population" by the "partitioning of space, the isolation of individuals, and their systematic yet unseen surveillance," which characterizes the modern disciplinary mechanism in Foucault's and Mitchell's view, was not accomplished in Beijing, especially not in the small alleyways, during this time.<sup>81</sup> One could reasonably argue that the steps taken by the city government would facilitate surveillance of the urban population, but the transformation did not lead to major state penetration of society at the level realized in cities like Paris or Cairo during this time, due to both the weakness of the government and resistance by the local people. Control over urban space as a social regulator had become an important consideration, but it had not fully become daily experience. Second, city residents did not establish any new form of social organization to advance their interests. The battles were fought between the state and isolated individuals or small communities.

# Tradition

## *The City and the Nation*

The year 1928 marked a watershed in Beijing's history; its impact was compared by some to the shock of the Boxer movement in 1900.<sup>1</sup> The city was seriously challenged by the central administration's move to Nanjing after the establishment of the national government. Having monopolized the position of capital city uninterruptedly for centuries, Beijing had grown used to all the privileges derived from its dynastic-capital status. Since the city's well-being indicated the legitimacy of imperial rule and national power, the government and residents of Beijing had long taken the freedom to appropriate national wealth for local use, so much so that the city had hardly developed a self-sustaining economy. Losing its status as the capital thus had more than a symbolic meaning for Beijing; it posed a sobering threat to the city's livelihood and future prospects.

For Beiping residents the eight years from 1928 to 1936 were a time of devastating chaos interspersed with occasional periods of hope for a new stability. In 1928, the city was regarded as an "unlucky" place to live, and many left without a backward glance. But in early 1930, some residents saw possible "signs of revival" for Beiping to be the capital city again as Chiang Kai-shek's alliance with the warlord Yan Xishan broke down and the city became a center of anti-Chiang forces.<sup>2</sup> The new Beiping government, led by Yan Xishan, declared its independence from the Nanjing central government, passing new laws and collecting its own taxes. In early May, Yan called an "enlarged meeting of the Na-

tionalist Party's Central Executive Committee," and a new Beiping-based national government was organized. Yan Xishan was "elected" president. But Yan would not enjoy his new position for long. To fight the forces that Chiang Kai-shek had dispatched, Yan went to the front at Shijiazhuang on the very night of his inauguration. Chiang Kai-shek convinced the warlord leader from the northeast, Zhang Xueliang, to fight against Yan. On September 22, when Zhang's army occupied Beiping, the Nationalist government recovered control of the city.<sup>3</sup>

Beiping's dream of revival collapsed as quickly as Yan's short-lived government. Nevertheless, even after the Nationalists regained control, the city witnessed the return of many things that the Northern Expedition had tried to eliminate:

[A]ll the slogans [put up by the armies of the Northern Expedition] were taken down; the blue paint [on the surface of buildings] faded; and riding jackets [*magua*, a kind of short jacket worn by men in the Qing] again became the required attire for clerks. The titles of *Daren* and *Laoye* (master) have made their way back, as have Qing-style greeting rituals and funeral ceremonies.<sup>4</sup>

The chaos created by these rapid changes in the domestic political situation was amplified by Japanese aggression from the north. In 1931, Japanese armies occupied the northeast and quickly approached the Great Wall north of Beiping. Air raid shelters were dug at Huairontang in the center of the city, where the highest political figures resided. Despite the Japanese threat to the north, the return of some eminent scholars to Beiping boosted the city's morale and resurrected in the city a strong sense of itself as the cultural center of the nation. This lasted until 1933, when the Chinese army was defeated at Yuguang and Beiping was again seriously threatened. The Tanggu Agreement signed on May 30 stopped the Japanese army north of the Great Wall. With the growing Japanese threat, however, the national government shipped much of the Palace Museum's art collection and archives to Nanjing in 1934, raising fears that the national government was incapable of protecting Beiping and causing a sense of insecurity among the city's residents.<sup>5</sup> In 1935, the He-Umezu Agreement was signed, establishing the Japanese-supported "North China Autonomous Zone," in which Beiping was included. The agreement stipulated that no "anti-Japanese activities" would be tolerated. The two sides once again halted open hostilities, since neither the Japanese nor Chiang Kai-shek's forces were ready for full-scale warfare. This truce lasted only until July 7, 1937, when the

Japanese resumed aggression against China in a war that would last until 1945.

There were no illusions about Beiping's condition in 1928. The city was weak in both industry and transportation. According to Zhang Youxin, a major contributor to the semiofficial journal *Review of City Administration* (*Shizheng pinglun*), the city had only about seven thousand industrial workers, and only one in eight of its families was involved in business. A large portion of the population was unemployed. A 1931 report revealed that "in Peiping, during the year from July, 1928, to June, 1929, 32.7 per cent of the labor union members were unemployed. In actual numbers there were 29,902 out of a total of 91,476 members in 52 unions unemployed. This was due in large part to the removal of the capital to Nanking."<sup>6</sup> Zhang observed that some of the world's former capital cities had sustained themselves as ports or centers of transportation after their loss of political centrality. This option, however, was not open for Beiping. Although the city was the terminus of the Beiping-Hankou, Beiping-Suiyuan, Beiping-Mukden (Fengtian), and Beiping-Pukou (Nanjing) Railways, the real transit point for these lines was Fengtai, outside the city itself. One way out of the dilemma, Zhang argued, was to develop transportation to "end Beiping's geographic isolation." His solution was ambitious: extend the Zhangjiakou-Kulun Railway to connect with the Siberian Railway, and expand the Beiping-Suiyuan line into Xinjiang. The extension of these two railroads would attract more European visitors and businessmen to Beiping. Zhang also envisioned a central station built in Beiping's southwest corner for transfer between the Beiping-Hankou, Beiping-Suiyuan, and Beiping-Pukou lines. But even Zhang himself was aware that this plan was well beyond Beiping's authority and capacity.<sup>7</sup>

There were pressing immediate problems in addition to the long-term ones. When Beijing had been the capital, forty million *yuan* had been spent there annually by the central government, not including spending by visiting officials. After the political center moved to Nanjing, Beijing's economy deteriorated sharply.<sup>8</sup> The Beiping municipal government acknowledged that

after the recovery of Beiping [in the wake of the Northern Expedition], the whole city was celebrating, and the residents were excited. But the capital unexpectedly moved to the south, the ministries were abolished, and the city became desolate. In addition, rich households left Beiping, leading to decreased wealth in the city. Beiping's finances are in crisis and it is ex-

tremely difficult for the city to maintain its previous condition. The bandit warlords have also exhausted the city's wealth.<sup>9</sup>

Faced with these difficult conditions and unable to rely on the central government's financial support, Beiping had to reconsider its *raison d'être*.

A "Proposal for Beiping's Development" was circulated among departments in the Beiping municipal government in 1929, half a year after its formation. This proposal set up "the fundamental principles for Beiping's development in order to maintain its permanent prosperity after the capital moved away."<sup>10</sup> The proposal suggested a number of long-term goals for Beiping's development: to make the city a center of "national tradition" (*guo gu*) and "scholarship and arts" (*xueshu, meishu, yishu*), "an expression of Oriental culture" (*dongfang wenhua biaoxian*), an inland industrial center, a center for tourism, and a center for national defense. The Nationalist government failed to develop Beiping into an inland industrial center; its other projects, however, contributed to making the city the nation's "cultural center."

Several wide avenues, many paved streets, streetcars, and railroad tracks: by the time the Nationalist army reached Beijing in 1928, an asphalt and iron grid defining Beijing's new spatial order had been well established. Facilitating transportation and mobility had been high on the agenda that the municipal government had tackled. But along these thoroughfares stood imperial structures from previous eras, reminders of a former time and a different world. Beijing's imperial past was a material reality that confronted all political powers in the Republic. The establishment of the Nationalist government in 1928 marked an important dividing line in this respect. With a centralized government in control of a basically unified country, China for the first time became something close to a nation-state. An official version of nationalism and stricter control by the Nationalist party state strongly influenced Beijing's urban development from 1928 to 1937, when the Japanese army invaded north China. If the transformation of the city before 1928 was the outcome of relatively diversified forces and voices, the years afterwards saw the emergence of a more systematic approach to urban planning and reconstruction of the city's past, as well as clearer efforts to connect the city's past to a unified national history.

Beijing had relied on its position and privileges as the capital city throughout the imperial period and the warlord years, but after 1928 it was forced to find a new mode of existence. After 1928 it at once ceased

to be the political center of the country and became part of a unified nation. Its struggles during those years reflected a complex interaction between the national and the local. The new local strategies that emerged to enable Beiping to deal with the relocation of the central administration embodied a new national politics of cultural identity and nationalism. What happened to the imperial relics in Beiping during those years reveals much about the ways in which urban spaces and life were related to state politics, ideals of urban planning, and concerns with Chinese cultural identity.

#### EARLY REPUBLICAN MODELS

The new Beiping municipal government took charge of a city that had already undergone fundamental transformation in the period 1911–28 after the downfall of the Qing. The changes, in addition to the improvement of transportation, were most visible in newly designated public spaces, as Mingzheng Shi demonstrates in his work.<sup>11</sup> These spaces designed for public use had a diverse range of social and cultural implications and actual subsequent uses that demonstrated the city's complex relationship to its past. Three examples of public spaces—Central Park, Citizens' Park, and the revolutionary monuments—can best illustrate the range of political and cultural implications of spatial changes in Beijing.

During the early Republican period, most of Beijing's public parks were transformations of what had been forbidden spaces, such as imperial gardens, ceremonial sites, and the Forbidden City itself. The Qing Temple of the Earth and Grain became Central Park at the instigation of Zhu Qiqian. When the Empress Dowager Longyu died in March 1913, Zhu, then the Minister of Transportation, was responsible for public order outside Tiananmen. At that point, he first noticed that the Temple of the Earth and Grain was falling into disrepair, with guards using the site to raise pigs and graze sheep. When Zhu became Minister of Internal Affairs of the new Republican government in October 1913, the Qing imperial household had already turned the temple over to the government, and Zhu formally suggested making it a public park. To save money for the financially strapped Ministry of Internal Affairs, he suggested that a committee composed of citizens donating more than fifty *yuan* or institutions donating more than five hundred *yuan* be organized to develop the park. By the spring of 1914, Zhu had collected over forty thousand *yuan*.<sup>12</sup>

Central Park opened on October 10, 1914, the National Day of the Republic. At the time, "the park was mostly empty ground, there was

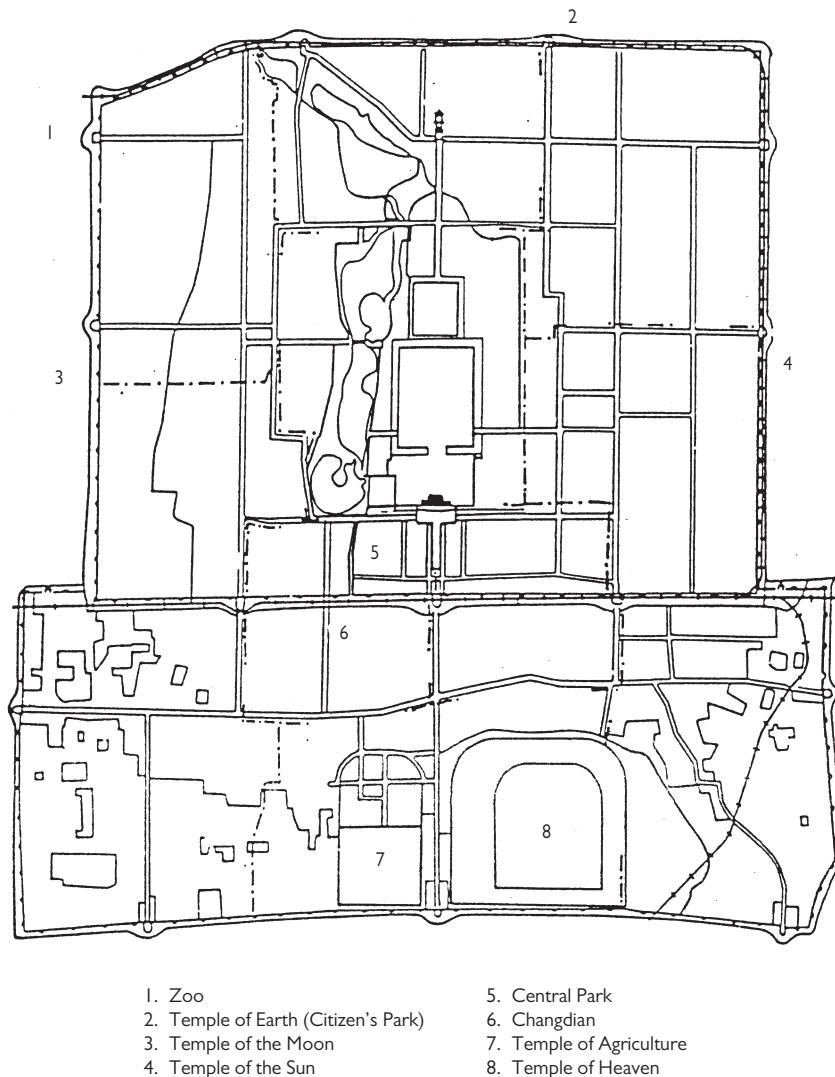


Figure 11. Public parks in Republican Beijing.

not much garden scenery to see.... There were no ponds, no hills, no pavilions," only ceremonial halls, some temples, and some ancient trees. Despite the desolate condition of the park, a large number of visitors came that day, "the men all dressed in long robes and *magua*, the women mostly in Manchu hairstyle and dress." The opening of the park

afforded people an opportunity to satisfy their curiosity about and appetite for a small taste of imperial life.<sup>13</sup>

Educational facilities, playgrounds, an exhibition on hygiene sponsored by the Department of Internal Affairs, and an exhibition of goods produced in “model prisons” run by the Department of Law were later added to the park. But these were not the real charm of the park; rather, it was the atmosphere of leisure and relaxation that attracted visitors.<sup>14</sup> Qi Rushan, the famous librettist of Beijing operas who lived in Beijing for decades during the Republican period, recalled that Central Park earned a sizable income from entrance tickets and taxes on its restaurants and tea-houses and that the money was used to improve the park, building pavilions and ponds. The places that attracted the largest number of visitors were commercial establishments. Visitors of varying status and social groups all found their own favored spots in the park. The “fashionable” liked to gather in the restaurants Bushixin and Chunming guan because they could enjoy various Western and Chinese foods there. “These places were always filled with customers, especially on Sundays. There was a time when prostitutes also came here to attract customers. These places were nicknamed ‘flypaper’ since they attracted such a large number of people.” The “bureaucrats and gentry members” usually went to Laijin Rain Pavilion (Laijin yu xuan); artists preferred the small island. People with little money would go to the riverbank in the north. Qi’s picture of Central Park suggests its great adaptability; the park had something for everyone.<sup>15</sup> In the words of the writer Shi Tuo, in Central Park “among the college students were prostitutes; in the middle of prostitutes were merchants; mixed among the merchants were concubines; and next to them were gentlemen, and professors...a kaleidoscopic mixture.”<sup>16</sup>

Unlike Central Park, which provided a cosmopolitan style of leisure for the city’s relatively well-off residents, Jingzhao Park (Capital Park) was dedicated to the education of ordinary people. In 1925, the Shuntian prefect Xue Dubi instigated the transformation of the Temple of the Earth (Di tan) into a public park and personally oversaw its reconstruction. Upon its completion, he wrote a lengthy essay to commemorate the occasion. Explaining his motivation for opening the park, which was known after 1928 as Shimin Gongyuan (Citizens’ Park),<sup>17</sup> Xue expressed concern for citizens’ well-being and education. The spatial transformation of Beijing was to serve both ends:

All cities in the civilized countries of the world have complete infrastructures for public transportation, hygiene, and other urban facilities. Much attention is paid to citizens’ morality (*deyu*), intelligence (*zhiyu*), and health

(*tiyu*) [the Chinese equivalent of spirit, mind, and body]. Public parks are facilities dedicated to these concerns. Beijing is the premier region of the country, but facilities and institutions of civilization have not been developed. I feel deeply sorry when I think of it. The Temple of the Earth outside Anding Gate...can serve naturally as a park. The fundamental principles for equipping this park are two: first, to promote public health; second, to develop culture. Also embodied in the opening of the park is the wish to preserve historical sites and develop tourism....[W]e shall try to integrate education and public entertainment.<sup>18</sup>

However, the new Capital Park did not end up focusing primarily on entertainment or the preservation of historical sites. Rather, it expressed above all the government's hopes to train citizens through a new ordering of space. The north part of the park, "World Garden" (*Shijie yuan*), was a map of the world constructed with rocks for mountains, grass for water, and flowers for national boundaries. Each country's capital city, important commercial centers, railways, and trade routes were clearly labeled. "Once one enters this garden, the general picture of the world becomes very clear," Xue proudly claimed. In "China" the provincial capitals, famous mountains, and the Yangzi, Yellow, and Pearl Rivers were highlighted, as were all the treaty ports and land that China had lost through treaties. A wooden board, accompanied by couplets about "remembering national humiliations," was posted on the edge of the garden, detailing China's territory, population, products, and history.

Three pavilions—Jiaojia (Instructing Agriculture), Youqiu (Enjoyment of Autumn Harvest), and Gonghe (Republic)—provided space for visitors to rest, to enjoy themselves, and, even more important, to be educated. The Republic Pavilion was a pentagon whose sides were each painted with a different color to represent the five official nationalities of the Republic: the Han, Manchu, Hui, Mongol, and Tibetan. The portraits of the Yellow Emperor, Nurhaci, Genghis Khan, Muhammad, and Zongkaba, who were chosen to represent each nationality, adorned the walls, implying "five races, one family." Pictures adapted from Chinese and foreign patriotic stories were painted on wooden boards. Mottoes preaching moral principles such as diligence, concentration, perseverance, self-reflection, critical thinking, healthy living, and public-mindedness were posted throughout the park. People were encouraged to buy national products, support education, oppose foot binding, advocate filial piety, abide by the laws, and help each other. They were expected to be modest, tolerant, honest, progressive, and patriotic. Illustrated biographies of "great men," including the Emperor Wudi of the

Han, Confucius, Peter the Great, the Meiji emperor, George Washington, Horatio Nelson, Napoleon Bonaparte, Abraham Lincoln, and Christopher Columbus, bedecked the walkways.

The south section of the park contained a playground with sports facilities for visitors to “improve their health.” Xue Dubi argued that “people living in the north suburb of Beijing have a low level of education and never pay attention to their health. This park can help them improve their character and broaden their knowledge. Children living here can have a place for sports so that they will not engage in unhealthy activities.” Courts for tennis, basketball, and soccer were provided, as were running tracks, a swimming pool, and swings. The national flag fluttered on a pole. A slogan at the entrance proclaimed: “Promote militancy; encourage national spirit; advocate popular education; reshape national souls.” The south wall was inscribed with the Darwinian motto “Victory goes to the strong, defeat to the weak” to encourage the “spirit of competition and bravery.” Xue explained his choice of mottoes:

We should know that the survival of the nation relies on people’s strength, and people’s strength depends on the spirit of bravery and competition. Our country developed the earliest [in the world], but we have not progressed in the past thousand years due to stagnation and low morale. It is painful to witness the weakening of the people, the invasion of powerful countries, and the decline of our nation. It should be our fundamental principle to promote sports activities and encourage people’s morale.

Also in this area, a lecture platform for educational speeches and two public libraries were built on a former Qing ceremonial ground to “promote education through public entertainment.”

Yet despite these efforts, and despite the glowing optimism of Xue’s essay, Capital Park never succeeded in attracting a large number of visitors. Located outside Anding Gate in Beijing’s northeast corner, it was too far from most of the city’s residents. Warlord troops and soldiers of the Republic were often stationed there, and they damaged and looted the facility.<sup>19</sup> Probably just as important was that the atmosphere in Capital Park, in contrast to the atmosphere of leisure in Central Park, was made depressingly heavy by the inscribed didactic messages found throughout.

#### REVOLUTIONARY MONUMENTS

In addition to the lessons presented by the Municipal Council’s experiences with urban development in the early Republican years, the Beijing municipal government had lessons to learn from the national gov-

ernment's first attempts to replace the city's image of imperial monumentality with an image that was "revolutionary." When the army of the Northern Expedition reached Beijing in 1928, it was utterly dissatisfied with the city. This disdain was reflected in the Nationalists' treatment of the city. As one observer noted:

When the soldiers of the Northern Expedition arrived in Beiping, they treated those in the old government as captives. They wanted to wipe out everything. Not only were Manchu women's hairstyles banned and temple fairs no longer allowed to follow the Chinese calendar, but even [Manchu-style] jackets (*magua*) were prohibited. Slogans written in blue and white covered the sky and earth. Some people even suggested painting a layer of blue on the yellow tiles of the palace roof.<sup>20</sup>

To the revolutionaries, even Xue's Capital Park did not go far enough in indoctrinating the people. "Beiping was the capital of past dynasties, people's knowledge is very limited. There is hardly any revolutionary architecture."<sup>21</sup> Although the meaning of "revolutionary architecture" was never clearly defined, one solution to the city's problems proposed by the Nationalists was to build monuments to the martyrs of the revolution, to create role models for the northern people, and "to glorify the feats of the revolution in order to eliminate feudal relics."<sup>22</sup>

The Nationalist government was in part riding a wave of national monument construction surging in many nations in the years after World War I. George Mosse remarks in his study of Germany that "national monuments and public festivals together provided the myths and symbols that comprised a national liturgy appropriate for national self-representation."<sup>23</sup> China was no exception. Political events and figures were memorialized in metal and stone, new names and meanings were given to old structures, and history was erased from and rewritten into space.

Beijing had its revolutionary emblems before the army of the Northern Expedition arrived. The northern warlord Feng Yuxiang had ordered two statues to be erected in Central Park in 1922 to commemorate his comrades Wang Jinming and Shi Congyun, who had died in the 1911 Revolution. When Feng was forced out of Beijing in 1925, Wang Huaiqing, who had led the army that fought and killed Wang and Shi, became the chief commander of the Beijing garrison. In November 1926, Feng suffered further defeats, and Wang Huaiqing ordered the two statues pulled down and sold to a shop as scrap metal.<sup>24</sup>

During the period immediately following the Nationalists' arrival in 1928, the government tried to inscribe its own history permanently in

public spaces through the construction of several monuments. This effort seldom met with local support. Only after lengthy and difficult negotiations with the railroad company was a monument commemorating the martyrs of the 1911 Revolution built at the Nankou train station in 1929. In the same year, a branch of the National Revolutionary Army asked permission from the Beiping municipal government to build a monument to the revolution and a cemetery for its unknown soldiers who had died in the Northern Expedition. The army wished to erect these outside the north gate of the Summer Palace, and the city government agreed. The representatives of the Summer Palace, however, strongly opposed the proposal before eventually giving in.

These monuments were rarely built with the kind of enthusiasm that was supposed to accompany the construction of “revolutionary architecture.” At Dai Jitao’s behest in 1928, the Beiping municipal government decided to build a monument and statue in memory of Peng Jiazen, a Sichuan native who had died in Beijing while trying to assassinate Yuan Shikai. Sun Yat-sen had bestowed on Peng the title of “General” and had promised to build a tomb for and monument to him. The design of the monument imitated a Buddhist pagoda with eight corners and eight round pillars. The white stone used for imperial palaces was to top off the monument, with Peng’s picture and biography inscribed. His coffin would be made of Sichuan cedar, priced at two thousand *yuan*. The government would print and distribute two thousand copies of Peng’s writings and an official biography of him. His monument was to be located at the zoo, and a memorial hall for him was also planned for Beihai Park. Most of these plans existed only on paper because the Beiping municipal government and the Hebei provincial government, which jointly ran the project, were unwilling to take financial responsibility.

While the monument was being designed, Peng’s father and wife traveled to Beiping to ask for financial assistance from the Nationalist government. Peng’s brother lobbied the government to complete the monument. But neither the monument nor the memorial hall was built until 1930, when Peng’s relatives, having carried out a vigil in Beiping all this time, could wait no longer. They pooled their money, purchased some private houses at Laoqianggen in an ordinary neighborhood, repaired them, and built a private temple for Peng. When they were charged fifty-eight yuan in real estate taxes, they petitioned the Department of Public Works for an exemption.<sup>25</sup> In 1931, Peng’s coffin was finally moved into a government-constructed tomb.<sup>26</sup>

Although purposely erected to challenge the order of Beijing's imperial past, the revolutionary monuments drew little attention in China's foremost city of imperial monumentality. Donald J. Olsen precisely sets out the key elements for a successful national monument:

A monument is intended to call forth fear or wonder in the observer: to remind him of the antiquity of the dynasty, the power of the regime, the wealth of the community, the truth of its ideology, or of some event—a military victory or successful revolution—that demonstrated such wealth, power or truth. To succeed in its aims, a monument needs to jolt the individual out of his mundane concerns—catching the 5:37, remembering to renew a driver's license, buying postage stamps—to remind him that life involves more than such concerns, and that he is fortunate to be a citizen of such a splendid metropolis, a subject of such a benevolent ruler, and adherent of the one true faith. Any evidence of restraint, understatement, or, worst of all, parsimony, will subvert its intention. It should aspire to the sublime and evoke sensations of awe, not of affectionate familiarity, and certainly not of amused condescension.<sup>27</sup>

Almost all these elements were missing in the Nationalists' enterprise of monument construction. In fact, the construction of revolutionary monuments in Beiping was characterized by a lack of enthusiasm, delays in construction, and neglect upon completion. The revolutionary monuments were ignored by Beiping's residents and by tourists to the city, and they were seldom mentioned in literature about Beiping.

All three projects—Central Park, Capital Park, and the revolutionary monuments—were connected in some way to Beijing's imperial past: utilizing it for new purposes, transforming its appearance, or challenging it in the name of revolution. They also embodied the aims of urban construction in pre-1928 Beijing: to catch up with other capital cities in the world and to transform the city's spatial environment in order to train citizens for the new Republic. In 1916, the issues that most concerned the city government were distributing water for the city's residents and for commercial and industrial needs; constructing a sewage system and clearing the accumulated garbage; improving streets and constructing new roads to facilitate urban transportation; building a trolley system that could connect the entire city; and establishing parks and museums.<sup>28</sup> The government's flexible and experimental way of dealing with the city's imperial past that was evidenced before 1928 would disappear in the 1930s, replaced by more standardized practices aimed at shaping Beiping into a modern showcase of Chinese tradition. This shift was clearly reflected in a 1936 article that described what had enabled Zhu Qiqian to succeed with the opening of Central Park and

pointed to the project as a model for future development in Beiping. Gone was the appreciation of the flexibility and mobility created by commercial establishments and so vividly conveyed in the accounts of Qi Rushan and Shi Tuo. Instead, the new interpretation emphasized that Zhu had avoided imposing anything out of place on the original harmonious architectural style.<sup>29</sup> Authenticity of tradition had become the ideal of the new era.

#### A NEW ORIENTATION: TOURIST BEIPING

Despite pervasive crises, the 1930s were an important decade in the city's construction. In June 1933, Yuan Liang, a graduate of Waseda University in Japan who had served as the police chief of Shanghai,<sup>30</sup> was appointed the city's mayor. He held this position for about two years before resigning in 1935 because of unwillingness to collaborate with the Japanese under the He-Umezu Agreement. The years under Yuan Liang's leadership were considered the best for the city's reconstruction since the early years of the Republic, when Zhu Qiqian had led the projects of restoring Beijing. A contemporary writer commented in 1936, "Viewed from a high spot, Beiping shines gloriously in gold, appearing more orderly than in the imperial period. Even though the national crises are severe, we cannot afford to slow down the efforts to preserve the old capital."<sup>31</sup>

How could Beiping be sustained when it was no longer the capital city? What could Beiping be if not the capital city? This was the first problem confronting the new Beiping municipal government, and its plan for the city's development provided some answers. Yuan Liang was determined to transform the city into a "modernized metropolis of the world" through his "Plan for the Beiping Tourist District."<sup>32</sup> This plan was one of the most aggressive programs for city development adopted by the municipal government since 1911. Highly acclaimed, it distinguished itself from previous governmental efforts to reconstruct the city: instead of erasing imperial sites or modifying them for new purposes, it aimed to preserve them as emblems of Beiping and Chinese culture.

Released from the pressure to figure among the world capitals, the rethinking about the city under Yuan Liang's leadership was characterized by a clear and conscious effort to define Beiping as a city of Chinese traditional culture. The new municipal government criticized its predecessor for "mindlessly tearing down the walls of the Forbidden City and

the walls surrounding the Temple of Agriculture” and made it clear that Beiping was to be a modern city of tradition.<sup>33</sup> Contemporary discussions of Beiping’s condition concluded that its strongest attraction was its historical sites. Its position as a “cultural center” was also evinced by its heritage of architecture, historical documents, and libraries against which no other city could compete. A contributor to *Review of City Administration* argued that these cultural institutions imparted “a feeling of history” and “the spirit of an ancient country” and were merits of the city that could bring glory and pride to the nation. Many believed that foreigners had very positive impressions of Beiping and hoped that the income from tourism and education could combine to produce a fair sum.<sup>34</sup> These discussions revealed a new attitude toward the past and the imperial spatial order that departed sharply from the radicalism of the May Fourth Movement.

This new confidence in and demand for “tradition” was put into practice under the leadership of Yuan Liang. In 1934, the municipal government prepared an official master plan for modern Beiping—a plan to transform the city into a “tourist district.” The plan was based on the belief that Beiping represented “the quintessence of the whole country.” It proudly claimed that Beiping’s palaces, gardens, and ancient temples were “not only the ultimate display of East Asian civilization, but also great achievements of the world.” In a letter the city government sent to the *Review of City Administration*, the goal of the project was explained:

Beiping was a capital city for hundreds of years. The palaces are grand, the streets wide, the gardens large. People from Europe and America are all amazed by the beauty of Oriental culture and praise it as unprecedented. Since the capital moved to the south, there has been crisis after crisis. Many buildings are falling down, not to mention the necessary facilities to host tourists. Considering this situation, the municipal government proposes this project to renovate palaces, gardens, temples and other famous sites, naming it “The Plan for Beiping Tourist District.” We expect to develop this old capital into a great city. We will preserve the famous sites to develop international tourism. On the one hand we can make the city prosperous, on the other hand we can change Chinese and foreigners’ impressions [of China], inspire morale, and evoke new life [in the city].<sup>35</sup>

The planners claimed that “to attract foreign tourists to visit our country is the only strategy to propagate Chinese national culture and to increase international understanding.” They expected that the development of tourism, by drawing more attention to Beiping, would en-

courage the government to make the effort to defend the city against the invading Japanese. Given the absence of other feasible strategies to focus international attention on the Japanese invasion and given the Chinese people's concerns about national defense, this argument, seemingly farfetched, could very well have been convincing to the Nanjing regime. The planners believed that promoting industry was the ultimate goal that the government and people should all strive to attain but that it was not as rapid a solution as drawing foreign money and sympathy by attracting foreign tourists. Beiping envied France, which profited enormously from tourism, and fixed its sights on the pocketbooks of Americans, who were quoted as spending over sixty million dollars a year on travel abroad. It was calculated that if one-tenth of that money could be spent in China, sizable revenues would be obtained.<sup>36</sup>

The official master plan diagnosed problems in the lackluster tourist business and proposed solutions. The project also provided a perfect opportunity for the Beiping municipal government to claim control over a larger area of the city. All the historical sites in Beiping's vicinity, including the Great Wall, were encompassed in the plan, and the municipal government demanded rights to them. The plan argued that the central government's control over these sites hindered the development of tourism because there was scant collaboration among the different government branches; neither was there a unified standard for the preservation of the sites. The Beiping municipal government's plan involved repairing historic buildings and laying roads to make sites accessible; asphalt roads were to replace dirt and macadam. The list for repair included the arrow and corner towers of the city walls and all the imperial structures. Former imperial gardens were to be better tended; the city walls and gates that had been damaged were to be repaired.

Advertising constituted another crucial part of the plan. The plan stated that a network of advertising bureaus and travel agents was necessary not only to make "the magnificence of Chinese civilization" known to foreign tourists but also to defeat "false propaganda" that represented China "as a disorderly country where people dare not come." In emulation of Japan, a tourist bureau would be in charge of travel arrangements, translation, and the shopping needs of tourists. Starting capital was pegged at two hundred million yuan—seventy million to be paid by the municipal government, seventy million by local merchants, and sixty million by the railways connected to Beiping.<sup>37</sup> The city would print guidebooks in English, French, and Japanese and would distribute them to all foreign embassies.<sup>38</sup>

The real attraction would be “Chinese tradition,” although modern infrastructure was deemed mandatory for tourism. The planners argued that although Beiping boasted some Western-style hotels, “there were no Chinese-style hotels with good facilities to satisfy foreigners’ curiosity.” Yuan Liang was perturbed that most tourists, both foreign and Chinese, stayed at Western-style hotels, and his ambition was to change Zhongnanhai (the present site of the government and party leadership of the People’s Republic of China) into an ideal tourist hotel, “modern” and “Chinese” at the same time. An imperial site converted initially into the residence of the president of the Republic and then into a park in 1928, Zhongnanhai contained over eight hundred rooms, pavilions, lakes, and hills, “the arrangement and structure of which all have great Oriental charm.” In the summer, tourists could swim and row boats in the lake; in winter they could skate. Dancing and dining halls were to be built and sanitary facilities and telephones installed. Four names were proposed: “The Old Capital,” “Oriental Garden,” “Zhongnanhai” (to remind people of past emperors), and “Imperial Palace Hotel.” The expectation was that the facility would “deserve the name of an ideal Oriental garden hotel.”

Chinese tradition would also be the main attraction in tourist entertainment. A large Beijing Opera theater catering to foreign tourists would be built. “When there are foreign tour groups in Beiping, famous actors should perform in the theater so that the beauty of Oriental music and drama can be propagated, and the foreigners can understand the real essence of Chinese drama.” The theater could also serve as a site for adult education of city residents. It had to suit foreign and Chinese audiences, with a stage for drama, old and new, as well as movies.

A year after this proposal was drawn up, the Nanjing government set up a Committee for Preserving Historical Sites in the Old Capital (Gudu wenwu zhengli weiyuanhui) and officially promoted Beiping as a tourist destination for foreign visitors. Yuan Liang was in charge of implementing the projects, and the committee included several architects who had studied abroad. Also involved in the program was the Society for Chinese Architecture (Zhongguo yingzao xueshe), an academic association for the study of traditional Chinese architecture organized by Zhu Qiqian and Liang Sicheng, the eminent historian of Chinese architecture. Under the organization of the committee and with the counsel of these experts, the imperial court buildings were repaired, as were altars and temples, with an eye to preserving architectural “authenticity.” The rule of preservation was to extend the life of the structures rather than



Figure 12. The imperial ceremonial spaces were no longer sacred in the Republic. Here, two Americans are dancing in front of the Temple of Heaven. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

make them look totally new. Thus repair and reuse of original materials were emphasized. Replacement materials were left recognizably new if they were absolutely needed. Concrete and steel were used to reinforce and widen the bases of decorative arches (*pailou*) so that they would not block traffic, while the tops of the arches were left untouched.

During the preservation process, imperial building methods were represented as mysterious and not entirely ascertainable, both to assert that the 1930s were very distant from the imperial past and to employ a rhetoric of authenticity. The Temple of Heaven was the most representative preservation project. Rebuilt in 1890 after being struck by lightning, it had been only partially repaired since. A leaking roof and peeling paint left the wooden structure unprotected. The city govern-

ment realized that these problems required expert handling, so it hunted down a man known as “Zhao of the glazed tile kiln” (Liuliya Zhao), who was eager to work on the project. Zhao noted, however, that some key minerals were now unavailable, making the luster of the past tiles unattainable and perhaps affecting their colors. He insisted that red glazes from Germany and green glazes produced in China were the most durable and could last for hundreds of years without fading, but both were difficult to obtain. Given the difficulty in acquiring “ancient” (*gu dai*) tiles, the government decided to use tiles from the Old Summer Palace (the Yuanming Yuan), which had been stored at Qinghua University. These tiles had been taken from structures a few decades old, but they were nonetheless referred to as “ancient architecture” (*gudai jianzhu*).<sup>39</sup> The rebuilding process and the architectural techniques of the Qing were further mythologized by the report that none of the workers who had participated in the rebuilding of the temple at the end of the dynasty were still living. Qing records noted how many rooms were built and how much material was used but were silent on the process of construction and detailing techniques. The government sent people to visit old carpenter workshops and found an “old man with white hair” who said that his grandfather had supervised the construction in the Qing, but he never produced the mysterious blueprint. Hence the original plan to repair only parts of the Temple of Heaven to protect the original “noble quality” proved to be too difficult in practice. The committee decided to have the entire structure repainted.<sup>40</sup>

For Beijing, as for many other cities in the world, spatial transformation and search for an aesthetic style created cultural capital for the construction of a nation-state. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger have incisively described such practices in the Western context as “inventions of tradition.” This concept, however, does not entirely fit the experiences of Beijing. In the Qing, the Temple of Heaven had been a living part of the state organism, representing both a cosmological and a political order. The emperor represented divine power, which was conveyed spatially and visually through the Temple of Heaven’s architecture and planning. It was thought that imperial power would diminish without the temple. In the Republic, the state’s power was expressed not by worshipping at the temple but by officiating at the funeral of the system that the temple represented. As Hobsbawm and Ranger remark, “Tradition shows weakness when it is justified pragmatically....Conversely, objects or practices are liberated for full symbolic and ritual use when no longer fettered by practical use.”<sup>41</sup> Traditions can be invented only when prac-

tical use value disappears. To preserve the temple for its “matchless beauty and solemnity” rather than as a place for official ceremonies was in this sense an invention of tradition. In the Republican period, however, these historic sites, unlike Hobsbawm and Ranger’s examples, were not used as places of active ritual to indoctrinate the city’s residents. Instead, the ideological tutelage was directed primarily at tourists and foreigners. The temple no longer represented a living system, and its value was embedded solely in its representation of the past. Even pieces of new tile would totally destroy its former power, although, ironically, German glazes were acceptable simply because they had been used in imperial times. In contrast to “invention of tradition,” which meant to create the illusion of ancient origin and timeless continuity of a national identity, the cement and steel of the “scientific method of preservation” applied in the renovation project in fact clearly marked a sharp disjunction in history, creating an architectural image of the rupture between then and now. At the same time that the decision was made to retain the imperial structures as a permanent part of Republican Beijing’s landscape, these structures were purposely relegated to the past and were determined to be devoid of practical relevance to the present. What appeared to be “invention of tradition” on the surface in fact embodied a deep dilemma in the Chinese version of nationalism—the need to claim a national cultural identity and the necessity to distance from it.

A unified version of Beiping’s history was necessary for creating an “authentically” traditional image of the city for tourists. The plan criticized tour guides for being mostly unqualified “translator-tour guides” retained by foreign-owned hotels who had no knowledge of Chinese history. “Not only is the goal of propagating our country’s civilization not achieved, but [they convey] many things humiliating to our country... damaging our country’s position in the world.”<sup>42</sup> A contemporary commentator confirmed this criticism: “I have seen Western tourists at the Temple of Heaven and the Great Ancestral Temple who needed to ask their tour guide everything. But the tour guide had no knowledge of ancient rituals and institutions and just tossed out whatever he could come up with to tell them. No insult to the nation is worse than this.”<sup>43</sup> To rectify the situation, a standard history of Beiping, *A Record of Cultural Treasures of the Old Capital (Jiudu wenwu lue)*, was compiled and published by the municipal government. Yuan Liang wrote in the preface,

A nation must be built upon a foundation, which is national in its character. If water is not deep, it will not have enough power to carry a large ship; if wind is not strong, it does not have enough power to keep big wings

aloft.... The Chinese nation is the oldest [in the world]. Our ancestors left a long, glorious history. Beijing is where the Yellow Emperor set up [the first] nation.... Beijing is the representation of our nation's great spirit.<sup>44</sup>

The new book differed from ordinary guides in that it contained nothing but historical sites with relatively detailed narratives accompanied by pictures. Nonetheless, some still believed that the city's history was being popularized or vulgarized. One critic complained that the descriptions were too "superficial."<sup>45</sup>

The "tourist district" project was halted as the Japanese approached the city in 1937. Yuan, however, did succeed in fostering Beiping's image as the urban representation of traditional Chinese culture. The city's age became an asset, not merely a sign of decrepitude. Not only was Yuan Liang highly praised in China for "adopting scientific methods to preserve historical architecture" and for his "courage in taking responsibility,"<sup>46</sup> but he also received a medal from King Leopold III of Belgium for his achievements in preserving Chinese civilization.<sup>47</sup>

#### BEIPING AND 1930S CULTURAL DEBATE

With Beiping's new orientation toward foreign tourism, the city construction programs of the early 1930s stressed preservation of historical sites. Beiping was not alone in adopting this course, and Yuan Liang's attempt was much more than an effort to gain foreign tourist dollars. When placed within the context of the 1930s debate on the future of Chinese culture, the Beiping projects were part of a national concern about how to envision modern China. City planning and construction served as an important base on which the new image of China could be projected, and historical architecture provided a material anchor for the new search for cultural confidence.

The 1930s debate started with Hu Shi's and Chen Xujing's insistence that China take the road of westernization. In 1929, Hu Shi, one of the most eminent leaders in the New Culture Movement, published an article in *The China Christian Year Book* elaborating his opinions on "cultural conflicts."<sup>48</sup> He argued that China's problem was how to adjust to the conflict between cultures. He observed that total rejection of westernization had proved futile. Consequently, most people favored "selective modernization," which meant accepting some aspects of modern civilization as necessary evils but preserving Chinese civilization at all costs. Hu Shi argued that such an attitude amounted to saying "China

must change but definitely should not change.”<sup>49</sup> He identified half-hearted reformers not only among the Chinese but among Westerners as well. To Hu’s dismay, there was opposition whenever any changes occurred. For instance, American tourists complained that the streetcar system in Beijing spoiled the city’s atmosphere of an ancient capital. Foreigners affirmed that China should “maintain her traditional values and [adopt] only those things that satisfy the urgent needs of reality.”<sup>50</sup> As a result, Hu argued, traditional values remained intact, and protecting the “national essence” became a top priority. In Hu’s opinion, China’s old civilization belonged to the past; it could not help China solve the problems of poverty, disease, ignorance, and political corruption. He suggested that China follow the example of Japan and establish at least minimum subsistence with the help of modern technology and industry. Things with “authentic Chinese characteristics,” if they were meant to survive, would grow in the soil of health, wealth, and leisure produced by scientific and industrial progress.<sup>51</sup>

Chen Xujing, an American-trained professor in Guangzhou, followed Hu Shi in advocating “wholesale westernization” in 1933 and 1934. He refuted the argument that even Westerners wished to protect Eastern culture, arguing that

it is the Westerners’ business if they want to advocate Eastern culture; but it is the responsibility of people of the East to westernize. In fact, Westerners’ attitudes toward the study of Eastern culture is the same as their attitude toward African aboriginal culture. Are they trying to advocate African culture when they study it?<sup>52</sup>

Chen Xujing’s insights into the orientalist nature of Western study of Chinese culture, however, did not convince people of his goal of total westernization. Hu’s and Chen’s ideas met with more opposition than support.

A national debate intensified with the appearance of a manifesto, “The Construction of a China-Based Culture,” written by ten professors in 1935. They argued that China and real Chinese were disappearing from the world. To maintain Chinese characteristics, it was necessary to begin China-based cultural construction. The authors rejected both the idea of going back to the past and the route of wholesale westernization. Demanding that people pay attention to China’s particular temporal and spatial conditions, they proposed the slogan that China should “have a self-understanding but also learn about the world; have the courage to open its door but also the determination not to blindly

follow anyone.”<sup>53</sup> Despite the lack of an explicit proposal, they claimed that “the construction of China-based culture is a reflection of national confidence.”<sup>54</sup>

When the associate director of the Nationalist Party’s Propaganda Department, Ye Qing, joined the debate, he labeled total westernization the “cultural colonialization of China” and Hu Shi “an international scholar produced by the material and spiritual pillars of European and American imperialism.” Ye argued that China should strive for cultural independence, which would be a symbol of the awakening of the Chinese nation. Reflecting a significant politicization of this academic debate, Ye took the position that westernization was “the culture of traitors.”<sup>55</sup>

That Yuan Liang’s projects echoed and materialized “China-based cultural construction” was best illustrated by Qinghua University professor Zhang Xiruo’s discussion of Beijing’s architecture. In his comments on the issue of national culture, Zhang Xiruo gave an example of what definitely should not be westernized: Chinese palace-style architecture. He argued that the best palace and imperial ceremonial architecture could “make anyone who had a sense of beauty fall to his knees” (*bai dao*) because it perfectly integrated the principles of beauty and solemnity. In his view, the Temple of Heaven and the Hall of Great Harmony in the Forbidden City were two indisputable examples of such architecture. He related an anecdote to prove his point. A friend of his felt that China had nothing that could compete with other cultures and thus always felt inferior when talking to foreigners. But this sense of inferiority disappeared when he took a Western guest to the Hall of Great Harmony. As soon as he entered the outer gate of the hall, he felt great pride and equality with, even superiority to, his guest. Zhang fully agreed with his friend and further argued that among all the palace architecture he had seen in the world, nothing was worth “one percent, or one thousandth, of the artistic value of that in Beiping. The vulgarity of London, clumsiness of Berlin, repetition of Paris and Versailles, tediousness of Rome, what can be a match for Beiping?” Whether the palaces were practically useful did not concern him. He believed that Chinese architecture manifested beauty much more effectively than did Western architecture.<sup>56</sup>

Zhang was not alone in his confidence in Beijing’s imperial architecture. A researcher on urban land use, Wei Shudong, expressed a similar opinion:

Chinese architecture, Chinese culture, Chinese society—Beijing stands in the world as a representative of them all. We do not need to discuss Chi-

nese people's admiration and feeling toward Beijing. Even for foreigners who come to China, visiting Beijing is always the most pleasant experience. There is no other city to match its grandeur and greatness.<sup>57</sup>

Except for Chinese architecture, the advocates of "China-based cultural construction" failed to present other concrete examples of what should be preserved and serve as the foundation of a new Chinese cultural identity. Yuan Liang's plan, aimed at overwhelming the hearts of foreign tourists through Chinese imperial architecture, realized their ideas. In this sense, the 1930s redefinition of Beiping was a material example of the efforts to institute a new understanding of Chinese history different from the May Fourth iconoclasm.

The period after 1928 in Beijing distinguished itself from the previous seventeen years in important ways. In the early years of the Republic, most construction projects in Beijing involved toppling walls and opening sealed-off spaces, as if the city's space itself were imprisoned and the walls were shackles. As modern China's Republican capital, Beijing needed to break down the cumbersome structures of its past and to adopt that network of metal rails and asphalt streets distinguishing a thriving, industrialized city. An important motivation behind the transformation was the creation of a new spatial order that would train imperial subjects to become Republican citizens. Yet despite these modernization efforts, the city still wore its disheveled imperial robes. The past could not simply be discarded; it would not die in a single moment of rebellion as the May Fourth ideologues might have hoped. It lived on and occupied space and simply needed to be cleaned up. The modernization projects and the resilience of the city's past were dynamically interrelated.

The pre-1928 years were a time of experiments and struggles; the construction projects during these years did not culminate in a standard aesthetic style for the city. Among all the modernization efforts, Zhu Qiqian's project at Central Park was the most successful. Zhu succeeded by skillfully utilizing the imperial spaces. Central Park thrived on a fusion of several factors: the beauty of the place, the appeal of wandering in an imperial space, the new attraction of a cosmopolitan style of leisure for the city's better-off residents, and the sense of inclusiveness in the park created by commercial activities. After the unification of the nation and the establishment of a stronger national government, the post-1928 years witnessed an obvious desire to shape the city with a set of fixed criteria and practices. Defining and representing an "authentic

past” became both possible and desirable. The spatial transformation of Beiping shifted from a dialogue between the government and the intended new citizens to one between the Chinese national state and foreign tourists. The Beiping municipal government led the way in historical preservation, clearly defining Beiping as a city of tradition, a center of Chinese culture. Interestingly, however, Chinese tradition was asserted when Beiping was no longer the capital city. The city, no longer able to rely solely on political status to sustain itself, had to transform itself into a modern, self-sustaining metropolitan unit.

The pre- and post-1928 histories of Beijing/Beiping, although oriented in different directions, represented two sides of the same coin. The Chinese nation-state needed to establish itself as modern and at the same time to secure the “distinct Chineseness” of the new nation. To live on in continuity with the imperial past would imply “stagnation” and thus humiliation; yet inability to claim a past would indicate a lack of “civilization.” For the new state to thrive in the present, it had to assure itself that the past was dead, and its “Chineseness” had to be distanced from the imperial past. The solution was to preserve the past as history irrelevant to the present while asserting the new state’s sole right over that history’s interpretation. Instead of replacing the past through full-scale modernization of the entire city, the focus of the 1930s was to frame the past, repair it, and preserve it.

Remains of imperial Beijing survived throughout the Republican period, not as systematic expressions of imperial power, but as fragments; not as a consistent narrative, but as material forms scattered in daily life. Yuan Liang’s plan for Beijing represented an attempt to create a new unified, consistent narrative of the city’s history told from the perspective of an ambitious nation-state. In this attempt to create a hegemonic version of the city’s history, the political message was inscribed through a spatial order, a material reality that had its own resiliency and allowed different interpretations. While Yuan Liang’s plan to develop tourism did not empower ordinary Beiping residents at the time, it played an important role in preventing the erasure of the city’s history in the spatial domain. The monuments on which the cultural preservation projects of the 1930s focused are the same ones that many people in today’s Beijing make reference to when protesting against development projects that brutally erase the city’s history; and the Temple of Heaven remains a favorite public park for ordinary Beijing residents—people who continue to use these spaces in their own creative ways.



PART II

# The City of Experience



# Production

## *Beijing in a New Economic System*

In his 1919 social survey of Beijing, Sidney Gamble observed, “Other cities in China point with pride to the modern factories which they have established, but Peking has little industry that is efficient and on a modern basis....The principal examples of modern industry are the telephone company, the electric light company, water company, match factory, glass factory and government uniform factory.”<sup>1</sup> Beijing’s modern industry grew little during the whole Republican period. A 1930 survey of workers’ unions listed an electric company, match factory, and water company, with the only recent addition being the printing industry, which employed about five thousand workers. Modern communications and transportation, including telephone, telegraph, railway, and streetcar, accounted for fewer than four thousand workers.<sup>2</sup> In a city of more than one million people, employment in these modern and industrial sectors was insignificant.<sup>3</sup>

According to Gamble, the glass factory mentioned as an example of modern industry in Beijing closed down due to “insufficient training of workers,” which led to the constant breakdown of machines.<sup>4</sup> Some contemporaries also identified lack of government support as another cause for underdevelopment of modern industry in the city.<sup>5</sup> While these factors must have played a role, they give the impression that the lack of modern industry was a result of local policy and that Beijing could easily have developed a modern economy if the government had only taken the initiative or if there had only been better training programs for work-

ers in the city. In other words, such reasoning would argue that what impeded Beijing's opportunity to develop was a lack of sufficient enthusiasm for and connection to modernizing economic trends. However, an overall review of Beijing's economic condition and position will demonstrate that the opposite was true: Republican Beijing was integrally connected to the modern economy, but the specifics of its integration in fact often negatively affected its economic development.

For heuristic purposes we might say that two economic systems overlapped in Republican Beijing: a global industrial economic network that treated the city primarily as a market for commodities and did not contribute to its productive development and a preindustrial economic network that served as the main source of sustenance for the majority of the city's population. Republican Beijing did not become a center of industrial production; nor did it function as a key node in expanding routes of inter-regional and international trade. Instead, it continued to be located at the receiving end of particular trade and production chains that increasingly carried imported industrial and other products into Beijing but did not facilitate dynamic production or merchant activity. This does not mean that Republican Beijing's economy was unchanging. In fact, during the Republic, nonindustrial production proliferated as never before, as evidenced by the expansion of handicraft production in the city. In addition, an economy of recycling fully developed during this time, playing crucial roles in shaping Republican Beijing's economic life as well as the city's cultural identity.

While the few documents available do not allow us to compare Beijing's economy before and after the move of the capital to Nanjing in great detail, it is clear that the year 1928 was an important dividing line in the city's economic life. Before 1928, the city's economy relied heavily on government funding and spending by local and visiting bureaucrats. Some Manchu families still held enough savings on which to live. But when the central government left Beijing in 1928, the city witnessed an exodus of bureaucrats and their families, who had formed the wealthier part of the Beijing population. Modern banks moved their headquarters to the south, indicating their gloomy assessment of economic opportunities in this abandoned capital city. Beijing experienced an economic decline. Interestingly, production in the city may have increased after these changes. Some small producers of luxury goods that had served the imperial and elite families in the Qing now slightly increased production and began to export their goods. The city also began to produce some low-end daily necessities, especially handicrafts.

This increase in production, however, did not mean a rise in Beijing's position in the national economy or a rise in the standard of living of city residents. One should not conclude that the increase in production led the city toward prosperity; the development was meaningful in comparison to what had existed before but was not significant enough for a city with a population of more than a million people.

#### BEIJING IN A NEW GEOPOLITICS

Beijing in the twentieth century faced two fundamental geopolitical changes. First of all, port cities gained obvious advantages over inland cities as a result of the arrival and dominance of Western powers and the trade that came with them. Closely related to this change, a city's administrative rank was no longer a factor as important as before in determining its position in the new system of urban hierarchy. These changes had serious implications for Beijing that were most clearly reflected in its relationship to Tianjin. Tianjin, which previously had been the transit point for goods destined for Beijing, now reoriented itself outward toward the ocean. In the new urban system, Beijing could no longer depend on other cities to subordinate themselves to its needs, especially the treaty ports, such as Tianjin, that were economically powerful but no longer fully under the control of the Chinese government. Tianjin gained new superiority over Beijing. In his "Cities and the Hierarchy of Local System," G. William Skinner points out that as of 1893, Beijing was still the major metropolis of north China.<sup>6</sup> In the following few decades, however, Tianjin overtook Beijing.

The foundation for Tianjin's development was first laid in the Jin and Yuan dynasties, when Beijing was chosen to be the capital city for strategic reasons. Since the economic center of China was in the south, Tianjin, due to its location on the Grand Canal and between ocean and land transportation, developed into a key point in the shipment of grain and other goods from south China to Beijing. During the Ming, Tianjin became a major city, supplying and guarding Beijing. In the Qing, its rank rose to a prefecture with six counties under its administration, and many of the central government's institutions were located in Tianjin. During these centuries, every development in Tianjin was related to Beijing. One historian concludes that "the city of Tianjin would not have existed if Beijing had not been the capital city."<sup>7</sup>

The Second Opium War stopped for a while with the signing of the Treaty of Tianjin in June 1858. In 1860, after a second round of hostil-

ities, British and French armies entered Tianjin and Beijing, and the Qing signed the Treaty of Beijing with Britain, France, and Russia. As a result of these treaties, Tianjin became a treaty port, divided into concessions by foreign powers. Tianjin changed from Beijing's supplier and guard into a gate through which to enter Beijing from the ocean. But Beijing's dominant relationship with Tianjin persisted into the late nineteenth century. In the 1870s, Qing government investment laid the foundation for modern industry in Tianjin. Until the end of the 1920s, a large amount of the capital required by Tianjin's modern industry came from officials and warlords in Beijing. For example, Yuan Shikai invested in the Qixin Cement Company, and the family of Cao Kun (who became president of the Republic of China in 1923), one of the wealthiest families in Tianjin, provided one-fifth of the investment capital for the Hengyuan Textile Factory in addition to their investment in other major sectors of the city's economy. From 1914 to 1925, twenty-six large-scale factories were opened, eleven of them with major investment from officials and warlords in Beijing. Their investment constituted over half of the total capital of these new factories.<sup>8</sup>

In the 1930s, foreign powers partly controlled the finance and customs sectors in Tianjin and heavily invested in light industry, which constituted more than 80 percent of the city's total industrial production. During this time, Japanese began to buy Chinese companies and came to own two-thirds of the city's textile factories. The British company Yizhong and the Japanese company Dongya (East Asia) dominated the tobacco industry. Public utilities were also controlled primarily by foreign companies; electric light, trolleybus, and water supply were controlled by British, French, and Belgian merchants.<sup>9</sup> In this latest transformation, Beijing exerted no influence and only served as the market for Tianjin's industrial products, with its own chance of developing industry further curtailed.

Holding industrial and technological superiority over Beijing, Tianjin profited from some of Beijing's major construction projects as well as the development of public utilities. The investment capital for Beijing's water and electric light companies came from Tianjin. Materials for large construction projects in Beijing were typically purchased through Tianjin. Most of the equipment for the Beijing-Suiyuan Railway came in the form of foreign imports that passed through Tianjin.<sup>10</sup> When the Beijing Library was built in 1934, the Tianjin Fujian Company took the construction job, and the Meifeng Machinery Factory manufactured the equipment for the library.<sup>11</sup> These very profitable large projects

funded by the government all went to companies in Tianjin at the expense of Beijing's local companies. Many of them were one-time projects that did not provide Beijing's local residents future opportunities for employment.

Tianjin also became a center for trade, rendering Beijing a peripheral player in the new world economic system into which China was being integrated. Beijing had always been a large market. As the imperial capital, the city gorged on supplies from all over the country, ranging from grain to luxury goods. An elaborate system of transportation ensured this supply. As a place where a large amount of goods gathered, Beijing had also served as a key transit point in the trade between Mongolia, the northwest, and the northeast and the south, or China proper. The northern regions had supplied hides, fur, and jade and were a market for the south's salt, tea, textiles, tobacco, brass and tin wares, and, later, matches. During the Qing, Beijing carried on a fair-sized trade in metal wares with Inner and Outer Mongolia. Outside Anding Gate were many workshops making brassware, Buddhist statues, and other items for the northern regions.<sup>12</sup>

The volume of goods transported out of the north and northwest increased in the twentieth century. The beneficiary of this new development was, however, not Beijing but Tianjin. Western traders began to participate in the caravan trade, leading to a geographical shift of economic centers and trade routes. The core of the caravan trade was no longer luxury items but raw materials. Owen Lattimore observed that "the markets for wool and hides, goatskins and furs, grew so rapidly that they could not be supplied by the parts of Manchuria and Mongolia nearest to the Chinese border. The demand was felt farther and farther away in the hinterland, and caravan owners grew rich in bringing down produce from the most distant pastures of Outer Mongolia, Chinese Turkestan, and the Tibetan border plateaux."<sup>13</sup> This development was facilitated by modern transportation. The construction of the Beijing-Mukden, Trans-Siberian, and Chinese Eastern Railways in the late nineteenth century and especially the Beiping-Suiyuan Railway in the second decade of the twentieth century created channels "through which Mongol raw materials, still in limited demand in the Chinese consuming market, could pass right through China and enter the world market."<sup>14</sup> Lattimore noted:

China was being made a part of the world market, but neither the national market nor China's participation in the world market was under the control of the Manchu government or the Chinese Republic that succeeded it.

The railway network was not designed to integrate a national economy but to tie a powerless China into the world market; factories to take advantage of the cheapness of Chinese labor were not placed at the points that might have been indicated by the location in China of raw materials, transport facilities, and consuming markets, but where they served the needs of foreign investors, foreign naval and military protection of the investment, and the convenience of foreigners both in importing commodities into China and in exporting commodities from China.<sup>15</sup>

As a treaty port with its shipping and customs dominated by Western powers, Tianjin controlled resources from northwest, northeast, and north China and Inner and Outer Mongolia.<sup>16</sup> “The caravans come to the railway, the railway comes to Tientsin and the river, and the river goes to the sea.”<sup>17</sup> By 1937, there were 483 foreign companies stationed in Tianjin. The British-owned Yihe Company conducted a trade of four million taels of silver a year. The Renji Company often purchased several tons of wool in one deal, outcompeting any Chinese company.<sup>18</sup> Since Beijing was gradually ceding its central position to Tianjin, it did not benefit from this new surge in international trade in central Asian goods. The raw materials no longer stopped in Beijing. Instead, they were further transported to Tianjin and then, via ocean transport, to a world market.

The effect of the world market on Beijing, and Tianjin’s role as an active intermediary in it, was reflected not only in long-distance but also in local trade. Several foreign companies in Tianjin purchased and processed eggs in factories before shipping them overseas. Shunyi County was one of the largest egg production centers to supply the Beijing market, but to get to Beijing from Shunyi the eggs had to pass through Tong County. The British-owned Heji and Japanese-owned Sanjing Companies both set up stations in Tong County to collect eggs year round and ship them directly to Tianjin. Beijing was simply cut out of the system. Kangzhuang on the Ping-Sui Railway was another center of egg production. Eggs were directly shipped to Tianjin from Kangzhuang and “did not go through the trouble of passing Beijing.” Foreign-owned factories also located facilities on the Liuli River and in Baoding on the Ping-Han Railway to benefit from the lower tariffs and prices. By 1929, Beijing was importing twenty-four million eggs yearly for local consumption, but the city was entirely upstaged as a trans-shipment and processing zone.<sup>19</sup>

Other factors also affected Beijing’s business opportunities. Battles among warlord armies created damaging instability in the country, and Beijing’s trade deteriorated further due to changes along China’s north-

ern and northwestern borders. Beijing's fabric trade had been relatively profitable from 1900 to 1920 because merchants in Outer Mongolia had relied on Beijing wholesalers. Outer Mongolia's claim to autonomy in 1913 and the eventual establishment of the Mongolian Republic in 1921 were serious blows to Beijing's trade with the region, including the fabric and paint businesses.<sup>20</sup> As Lattimore summarized, "Outer Mongolian independence and the refusal to recognize Mongol debts to Chinese traders had closed the routes through Mongolia." Developments in the Soviet Union further rerouted trade patterns. Lattimore observed that the completion of the Turksib Railway "altered the whole question of transport into and out of Sinkiang." The richest parts of the region lay in the northwest and west, which was much closer to the Soviet than to the Chinese railhead. As a result, "Sinkiang, like Outer Mongolia, has inevitably become economically a province of the Soviet Union."<sup>21</sup>

An examination of Beijing's rug industry can further illuminate the city's position in the new geopolitics.<sup>22</sup> Rugs originally entered Beijing from nomad regions as tribute gifts and gradually became popular among the elite families in the city. Rug manufacture in Beijing started in the early nineteenth century, but large-scale production began only after 1900, when foreigners became enamored of Beijing rugs. In 1901, a German company began purchasing them for sale in Germany. In 1904, Beijing rugs won a prize at the World Exposition in St. Louis, leading to increased American demand for them as well. By 1919, a guild of rug workshops was established. Most of the rugs produced in Beijing were sold to the United States, Europe, Japan, and Southeast Asia. Inside China, rugs were used as covers for beds or horse saddles or were used in temples for display or on the floor for worshipers to kneel upon. Only wealthy families used them on their floors.<sup>23</sup> Made for export, their sizes were measured in feet instead of Chinese *chi*, and their colors and patterns catered to the taste of Westerners.<sup>24</sup> Around 1930, Beijing's rug industry employed about three thousand workers in 250 factory-workshops, 160 of which had joined the guild. The two largest factories, Renli and Kaiyuan, both owned by returned students who had studied in the United States, sold their rugs directly overseas. There were also foreign companies stationed in Beijing to purchase rugs.<sup>25</sup>

But rug production in Beijing was not an easy business to manage. On the contrary, it was a constant battle with a world market that, in good times or bad, was always beyond the control and understanding of local workers. The city's rug industry started in 1904 with small-scale production. In 1912, total rug export from Beijing reached a

value as high as fifty-seven thousand customs taels. In 1914, the rug industry in Turkey and Persia was adversely affected by World War I, and production in Beijing increased. By 1916, more than one hundred factory workshops were producing rugs for export. In 1917, changes in the international market and an increase in the price of silver forced foreign merchants to scale down their orders. Beijing merchants lowered their prices by 70 to 80 percent, and many workshops closed as a consequence. In 1918, with the end of World War I, shipping reopened and the industry revived. The following year, Gamble estimated that the rug industry employed about five thousand workers. By 1920, forty more rug workshops and factories had opened, swelling Beijing's total number to 354. From 1921 to 1924, the number of factories decreased to 206, but the number of employees increased to over six thousand, many of them concentrated in a few large factories. In 1926, overseas sales of Chinese rugs reached their peak. In 1929, when the depression struck, import taxes on rugs rapidly increased in the United States and Europe. In the United States, the tax increased from 20 to 35 percent and then to 55 percent, and it eventually hit 55 cents on every square foot in 1933. In the face of these elevated tariffs on Chinese imports, sales of American and European machine-made rugs rose, displacing Chinese products. Meanwhile, production recovered in Turkey and Persia. In 1935, the Chinese government devalued its currency to encourage exports; it was expected that the rug industry would revive. But Western merchants had begun to purchase raw wool in large quantities and ship it directly overseas, bypassing Chinese manufacturers and creating steep increases in Chinese wool prices. Prices for fine wool increased by 50 percent and those for rough wool by 80 percent. Increased prices in imported chemical dyes further added to the costs of rug production. Surveys in 1936 all showed a sharp decline in the rug industry in Beijing.<sup>26</sup>

In addition to dealing with an unpredictable world market, the Beijing rug industry also had to face competition from Tianjin. The rug industry in Beijing had to pay the inland tax (*nei di shui*), *lijin*, and customs tax; in 1925 these together totaled 9.6 cents per square foot, and after 1928 they rose to 24.4 cents per square foot. In contrast, these taxes were abrogated in Tianjin due to that city's treaty port status. In addition, shipping rugs from Beijing to the port of Tianjin for export added 10 cents to the price of every square foot. One contemporary study by D.K. Lieu states,

The center of the rug industry...has shifted from Peiping to Tientsin partly because of the facilities for foreign trade and partly because the manufacturers in the latter city avoid three taxes which the Peiping manufacturers must bear. Also, raw material, wool, has to pay seven taxes and assessments when transported from Tatung, Shansi, to Peiping, a distance of only 672 li [about 220 miles]. Hankow brick tea, when transported to Kalgan, had to pay 13 levies of likin and native customs, and the tax burden on a box of tea valued at taels 7.5 [about \$10.75] amounted to \$3.19, or about 30 per cent. This was two years ago [1925 or 1926], and now the militarists are collecting more and heavier taxes on the way.<sup>27</sup>

Beijing rugs thus became much more expensive than those produced in Tianjin, and consequently the rug industry in Tianjin quickly surpassed that of Beijing, as shown in Table 1. In the early 1920s, the rug industries in the two cities were rather equally matched. By 1929, however, Tianjin had almost twice the number of factories and workers in Beijing.<sup>28</sup>

#### EXPORTS AND IMPORTS

Beijing's exports were concentrated in luxury goods that once had been used by the imperial court and came to attract interest in overseas markets after 1900. Not only rugs but also cloisonné, carved lacquer ware, painted lanterns, and the like were important items for export. These were created by small-scale labor-intensive production processes that had originally served only the court and a niche domestic market for luxury goods. The situation changed in the twentieth century when the scale of production underwent a limited expansion targeted at new markets overseas. Global markets, however, were restricted and subject to the vagaries of international developments. In contrast to the modest amount of goods that Beijing exported, the city relied heavily on imported goods for everyday consumption. Clearly dependence on imported goods had become a regular part of the city's daily life. Beijing's economy was marked by a serious imbalance between what entered and what left the city.

Cloisonné was typical of the luxury goods Beijing exported. Its production in Beijing started in the Ming dynasty in palace workshops that kept their methods of manufacture secret. In the 1850s (the Xianfeng reign in the Qing), cloisonné wares became fashionable among the capital's elites, and private workshops proliferated. Admiring foreigners began placing orders by the late nineteenth century, and overseas trade

TABLE I. COMPARISON OF RUG  
INDUSTRY IN BEIJING AND TIANJIN

Location	Year	Number of Factories	Number of Workers
Beijing	1921	N/A	5,200
	1923	206	6,834
	1929	150	6,000
Tianjin	1921	162	7,080
	1927	250	7,900
	1929	303	11,586

SOURCE: Qiao Yingtang, "Tan ye gaikuang" (Conditions of the rug industry), *Shehui diaocha huikan* (Social survey) 1 (September 1930): 1-2.

was further spurred in 1904 when cloisonné wares from Beijing were displayed at the World Exposition in St. Louis. The momentum continued into the Republic era as several foreign companies in Beijing began purchasing cloisonné for export. In 1930, a cloisonné guild was established in Beijing,<sup>29</sup> with fifty-eight member shops that employed nearly one thousand workers.<sup>30</sup> Production was painstaking and labor-intensive, with each piece taking seven steps to finish. Lou Xuexi, the director of the Department of Social Works in the early 1930s, suggested that in addition to crafting intricate display pieces, cloisonné should be adapted to industrial production with the goal of replacing imported enamelware for daily use.<sup>31</sup> But this suggestion remained no more than wishful thinking. Although the business prospered into the early 1920s, it was in decline by the 1930s due to a glutted and competitive market. Cloisonné was, after all, a decorative item and as such could command only a limited international market, and one that would suffer first in times of depression.

Carved lacquer ware followed a similar cycle. The production technology had been invented in the Ming exclusively for the court, and new methods of production were developed in the Qing. In general, however, technological development was limited. Ming manufactures used lead for the base, with designs favoring flower patterns and purple hues; Qing production used a brass base and featured more scenic views and red-hued figures. Qianlong period wares imitated the aesthetic style of the Song. In the absence of design innovation, lacquer production declined, nearly disappeared around the turn of the century, and only began reviving after 1900 due to foreign interest. Again, the wares were show-

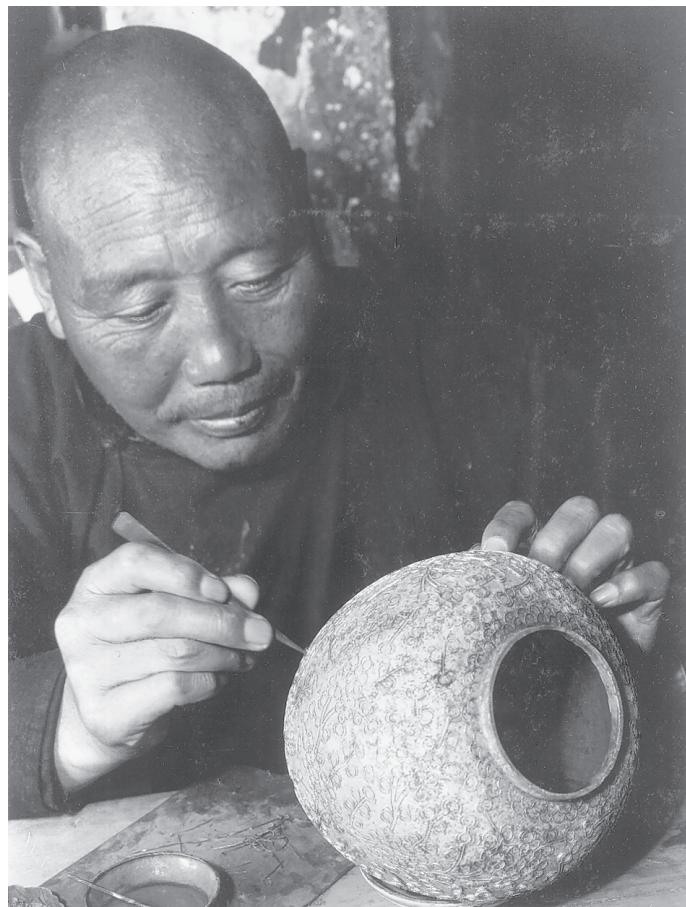


Figure 13. Man making a cloisonné bowl. Photo by Hedda Morrison; courtesy of the Harvard-Yenching Library.

cased at the 1895 Amsterdam and 1915 Panama-Pacific World Expositions, and, as a result, exports increased. Europeans and Americans reportedly favored red, while the Japanese had a penchant for purple. But again, according to Lou Xuexi, the demand for carved lacquer wares soon subsided, leaving many shops burdened by unsold inventories.<sup>32</sup>

The production of painted lanterns, known as *gongdeng* or “palace lanterns,” also began in the Ming as part of the lantern display at the Shangyuan Festival. Use of painted lanterns spread slowly to office buildings and officials’ residences. By the mid- to late Qing there were over thirty lantern shops located outside Qian Gate. After 1900, Westerners

began buying them, and styles integrating Western and Chinese tastes were developed. New models lit with electric bulbs were introduced. Lanterns were also sent to the 1895 Amsterdam and 1915 Panama-Pacific World Expositions and to domestic expositions in Hangzhou, Shanghai, and Beijing.<sup>33</sup> When the domestic market for lanterns dwindled, export production continued. Customs fees on lanterns were high; the internal postal tax was 11 percent, and sixty cents per pound was charged for export in the 1920s. By the early 1930s, Lou Xuexi saw lantern production as a declining business with little future.

Some export items originated in the Republican period; the toy industry was an example. Before the Republic, toy factories or shops were nonexistent. Toys were sold only by peddlers who carried their products in baskets. These toys were mostly produced at home by individuals or families. Still, the production processes were fairly complicated, and most products followed established patterns. At the turn of the century, these toys began attracting the attention of foreign visitors, and some shops were established. Several toys chosen for display at the Panama-Pacific Exposition won prizes. These included an imitation of the stone boat at the Summer Palace made of sorghum stems; models of Qian Gate and its arrow tower, the White Tower Temple, and a prince's residence, all made of bricks; clay figurines of classically dressed beauties and beggars; cars and horse-drawn carts made of iron; and black-colored wooden furniture. After the Exposition, professional toy shops sprang up, and some toy factories were opened. Merchants from Europe, the United States, Japan, Southeast Asia, and Hong Kong all dealt in Beijing toys, and Beijing could indeed boast a genuine toy industry. Beijing toys were made with clay, porcelain, wood, paper, cloth, silk, bamboo, leather, feathers, thread, iron, and flour, but the majority of them were clay figurines. Subject matter was broad and included scenes from dramas and stories, local customs, masks, ornaments, architecture, classically dressed and modern women, animals, and even plants. Some toys were made to fly or run, make sounds, or jump. In this developed market, most toy makers still worked at home and then sold their products to toy shops. Farmers in the suburbs also made toys during slack seasons. Women made stuffed toys at home, their most famous creations being stuffed tigers.<sup>34</sup> The only organized toy workshop and store was Songzhumei, located in Dongan Market. It used its own specially improved materials to make its toys more durable. In addition to traditional Beijing toys, some new items were also produced in the city, particularly rubber toys emulating Japanese products. Beijing toys sold



Figure 14. Man pasting characters onto a lantern in a lantern-making shop. Photo by Hedda Morrison; courtesy of the Harvard-Yenching Library.

to Shanghai and the United States consisted mainly of clay figurines of classically dressed women and fur dogs. There was a cluster of toy shops in Dongan Market, and there were another dozen throughout the city. In addition, there were some outdoor booths and several workshops. About one hundred families made toys at home, and about five hundred people made their livings in the business, earning money by piecework.<sup>35</sup>

The production of sausage casings out of pig or sheep intestines was also a new industry. Intestines had originally been a lower-class food or a cheap raw material with such specialized uses as making strings for bows used to soften cotton padding. In 1899, Beijing began to export intestines as sausage casings. At that time, there were less than ten shops

in the business, but the trade continued to develop under the Republic. Beijing shops purchased their raw materials in the northwest, where sheep were raised by herders who normally threw the intestines away, so the business was very profitable for Beijing merchants. Foreign merchants, mostly American and German, often put down a deposit before they received the goods. By the 1930s, Beijing had over sixty sausage casing shops, employing about four hundred workers.<sup>36</sup>

With Beijing's exports mainly limited to the above lines of production, the city was obviously far from riding a wave of industrialization. In terms of exports, then, Beijing was sequestered from the international industrial economy. Although it exported only luxury goods and a few specialty products to a limited overseas market, and although it was rapidly losing its dominant position as a transit point for trade in the shadow of Tianjin's growth, an increasingly large flow of products for daily consumption streamed into the city from industrial centers inside and outside China. Over one-third of the grain consumed in Beijing was imported,<sup>37</sup> as were all the kerosene and oil for lamps, the automobiles, and the machinery. Consumption of luxury foreign goods, such as cigarette smoking among women, became fashionable as well.<sup>38</sup>

Textiles topped the list of imported goods sold in Beijing, followed by food (flour from the United States and Japan, rice from Southeast Asia, sugar and candy from Japan, alcohol and wine, cooking oil, baking soda, and seafood from Japan), tobacco and cigarettes, most metal products (tools and machinery), chemicals (dyes, Western medicine, cosmetics, acids, glue), items for daily use (kerosene, paper, pens, hats, gloves, glass, clocks, umbrellas, tooth powder, tools for barbers, eyeglasses, new-style buttons), equipment for hospitals and schools, vehicles and parts, and photographic and musical equipment.<sup>39</sup> Since imports were mostly items of daily necessity, a high percentage of Beijing residents' income was spent on imported goods.<sup>40</sup> According to a 1930 study of handicraft workers and elementary school teachers by sociologist Tao Menghe, the average Beijing household spent more than 97 percent of its income on daily necessities such as clothing, housing, food, fuel, lighting, and water and 70 percent of its income on food, mainly rice and flour.<sup>41</sup> At the end of the 1920s and in the early 1930s, the Japanese company Mitsubishi sold about five million bags of American flour every year in Beijing. Chinese machine-milled flour competed against Japanese and American brands and most of the time lost badly because foreign companies could afford to wage price wars while Chinese companies could not.<sup>42</sup>

Beijing developed a textile industry, but the majority of its products were limited to home-woven cloth, towels, socks, blankets, and gloves, low in both quality and price. In the early 1930s, the city produced over five hundred types of fabric. In 1932, there were 168 factory-workshops, the largest employing over five hundred workers. The Qinghe Textile Factory had fifty-eight weaving machines and 4,800 shuttles. It produced twenty thousand yards of woolen fabric and two thousand blankets in 1916. In the early 1930s, the Deli, Yuhua, and Jingwei factories added electric machines; the Cihua, Minghua and Husheng factories grew to over one hundred machines, and some sock factories began to use electricity. Local production included cotton cloth, wool blankets, towels, socks, sewing thread, bedding, and handkerchiefs.<sup>43</sup> The textile sector was perhaps the only one with the potential to develop into a major industry in Beijing, but this potential remained unrealized. Due to technological limitations, textile shops in Beijing mainly used thick yarn, which was expensive and produced lower-quality fabric. The majority of the yarn was purchased from Chinese-owned factories in Shanghai and Tianjin. Some Beijing factories bought yarn from foreign-owned factories in China that used Chinese raw materials and hired Chinese workers.<sup>44</sup> Many of them used wooden-frame machines that were not electric powered, and most high-quality dyes were imported from Germany.<sup>45</sup> These factors made the production process more costly and the profit margin small.

In comparison to Beijing's local textile industry, fabric imports were overwhelming. Among all the categories of fabric sold in the Beijing market, only an insignificant amount of woolen, linen, and cotton fabric was produced in the city itself. A few kinds of cotton fabric were produced in Gaoyang in Hebei Province and Changyi County in Shandong Province, and flannels were made in Shanghai and Tianjin. Beijing's textile production was also very limited in variety. Lou concluded that the clothing (*yi*) of Beijing residents had already become westernized but that Beijing was not capitalizing on this change. He identified the shortage of domestic yarns as one problem. Beijing could not supply yarns to its textile factories; neither could Tianjin. Lou believed that north China must establish self-sufficiency in its supply of yarns for its textile industry to take off.<sup>46</sup>

Foreign goods and domestic industrial products were sold in Beijing by over 640 companies and shops called *yanghang* and *yanghuo zhuang*. About seven thousand people made their livings in this business. The most powerful of them were the eighty-eight *yanghang*, which

were imported-goods companies owned by foreigners. They purchased local products, mainly antiques and agricultural products, and sold items ranging from cosmetics and fabric to equipment for railways and munitions. The powerful *yanghang* monopolized certain businesses: Yihe concentrated on machinery, ships, and trains; Shenchang dealt exclusively in machinery and electric equipment; Gongmao and Meifeng sold cars; Chanchen sold steel and chemicals; Sanjing and Sanling provided railway and mining equipment; and Dacang supplied munitions. At the high end of consumption, British companies were famous for their clothing; the French made a name for their cosmetics and other goods used by women. Steel, machinery and dyes came mostly from Germany and cars and oil from the United States. The Japanese sold paper, glass, sugar, and flour (many of the Japanese companies bought American flour and sold it in Beijing).<sup>47</sup>

Most of the *yanghuo zhuang* in Beijing were run by Hebei natives selling imported and domestic industrial products. They were divided into Shanghai, Tianjin, and Japanese *yanghuo zhuang* on the basis of the geographic source of their goods. The Tianjin shops had less capital and a relatively small profit margin; their merchandise was mostly manufactured in Shanghai and purchased through Chinese dealers. The Shanghai shops enjoyed more capital and profits. They sold some Chinese manufactures, but most of their goods were produced by foreign-owned companies located in China; they almost never directly purchased goods from overseas. The Japanese *yanghuo zhuang* had limited capital but high profits. They shipped their commodities directly from Japan.<sup>48</sup>

The tax system in Beijing favored imported goods, at least before tariff autonomy. In 1901, Chinese merchants had to pay 5 percent tax on Chinese goods sold in Beijing, while the tax on foreign goods was only 3 percent. In 1906, the tax for Chinese products was lowered to 3.74 percent, but it was still higher than that on foreign goods.<sup>49</sup> Although it might not make much difference whether most of Beijing's imports came from overseas or the domestic economy, such a tax system obviously would not help develop Beijing's local economy. Republican Beijing became a market dominated by competition among foreign goods, especially between American and Japanese flour, Russian and American kerosene, and Russian and Japanese fabric. The competition often led to price wars that frequently drove Chinese companies, whose technology was usually less efficient, out of the market.<sup>50</sup> Lou Xuexi observed that "from the large industrial and commercial companies to the ordi-

nary producer and consumer, almost no one could avoid using foreign goods as daily necessities.”<sup>51</sup> Lou thus concluded that although Beijing’s “production and commerce appear conservative on the surface,” a careful examination revealed that they in fact had been fundamentally transformed.<sup>52</sup>

#### CREDIT SYSTEM

The transformation of Beijing’s credit institutions reflected as well as played important roles in creating the particular way in which Beijing integrated into a larger economic system. In Republican Beijing, the old-style credit institutions, including pawnshops, money shops (*yinhao*; also called *qianzhuang*), Shanxi banks (*piaohao* or draft banks), and minting shops (*yinlu*), underwent important changes when they encountered competition from the modern banks that had emerged at the end of the nineteenth century. With their larger capital and state support, the modern banks gradually replaced many of the functions of the old institutions. Local small businesses suffered during this process. While the old-style credit system was no longer strong enough to support small local businesses, the modern banks did not focus their attention on them. One important function of the modern banks in Beijing was to finance the government. The banks also tended to absorb capital in Beijing and invest it in industrial centers like Shanghai and Tianjin. With modern banks preferring to invest in industrial centers and the traditional credit system failing, not only did Beijing fail to develop any significant modern industry, but the local small businesses were not strengthened because of a lack of necessary support.

The credit institution with the longest history was the pawnshop. Having served important economic functions in Beijing in the Ming dynasty, the pawnshop reached its peak of operation in the Qing, especially during the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth century. In the mid-eighteenth century, there were about three hundred pawnshops in Beijing.<sup>53</sup> According to Lien-sheng Yang, in the middle of the eighteenth century pawnshops almost functioned as commercial banks, making loans on some of the most important commodities, such as grain, silk, and cotton.<sup>54</sup> The prosperity of pawnshops in Qing Beijing was due in large part to imperial government policies. To earn interest, the Qing state deposited government funds in both privately owned and state-operated pawnshops. The imperial court itself was the city’s biggest pawnshop owner, with the Imperial Household Department

(*neiwu fu*) running several pawnshops in which it deposited its funds. The interest earned was an important source of funds to cover operating costs for the court and imperial offices. Qing officials also participated in the pawn business despite the ban on their involvement in commercial activities, depositing their money in them or even registering their own pawnshops under other people's names. At the turn of the century, there were about two hundred pawnshops in Beijing, and most of the large ones in fact drew their capital from officials. The government regulated the interest rate, fixing monthly interest at 3 percent.<sup>55</sup> The pawnshops were almost all looted in 1900, but over a hundred of them returned to business soon afterwards. About one hundred were still in operation in the early 1930s.<sup>56</sup>

Pawnshops entered a period of decline in the second half of the nineteenth century and especially after the Taiping rebellion due to political instability and competition in loan making from traditional and modern banks. Lien-sheng Yang explains that "since these banks relied largely on the personal credit of their customers and rarely required collateral, people of social standing naturally turned to banks instead of pawnshops for loans. Consequently large pawnshops suffered even more than the small ones. Another factor was that pawnshops found it very difficult to weather periods of inflation because the pledges would soon be redeemed with depreciated currency."<sup>57</sup>

In the early Republic, Beijing natives controlled the pawn business in the city and developed ways to exclude shops started by people from other regions. In 1929, the Nationalist government required pawnshops to lower their interest rates from 3 percent to 2.5 percent per month, and the redemption periods were reduced from twenty-four to eighteen months.<sup>58</sup> Most pawnshops in Beijing dealt in clothes. People pawned their winter clothes in spring and redeemed them in late fall, with the shops profiting from the interest accumulated during the interval.<sup>59</sup> Pawnshops, in a limited way, were helpful to peddlers, small handicraft producers, and poor families but were not a major force in supporting modern industry or many local businesses.

The most powerful credit institutions during the imperial period were the *piaohao* or draft banks, commonly called Shanxi banks because most were operated by businessmen from Shanxi province. They witnessed their most prosperous moment in the late Qing when "they developed into a national network; and it is surmised that they did more than half of the banking business in China."<sup>60</sup> Lien-sheng Yang noticed that "the government relied heavily on their services in transmitting

revenues and expenditures.” Since a considerable portion of government funds was deposited with them, the Shanxi banks in a sense were fiscal agents for the national and provincial treasuries.<sup>61</sup> After 1900, Chinese revenues pledged against foreign loans or indemnities began to be deposited in foreign banks; thus the Shanxi banks lost their monopoly on government business. Other old-style banks and modern Chinese banks absorbed much of the remaining business that originally had gone to the Shanxi banks. When the Imperial Household Bank was organized in 1905, Shanxi banks were invited to join but rejected the invitation. Movements by some Shanxi natives to reorganize the Shanxi banks into modern banks also failed, and the 1911 Revolution finally dealt the death blow to many Shanxi banks. Only a few survived during the early years of the Republic, and they ceased to exert any significant influence.<sup>62</sup> Some transformed themselves to conduct business in deposits and loans, becoming similar to *qianzhuang*. Few survived into the later years of the Republic.<sup>63</sup>

During the Republican period, old-style local banks, or money shops, continued to exist.<sup>64</sup> Lien-sheng Yang explains,

The local banks had their own field of business, complementary to that of the Shansi banks but distinct from it. In the nineteenth century the Shansi banks were stronger in north China and the local banks were more fully developed in the south. The business with provincial and national treasuries was a monopoly of the Shansi banks, whereas services to district or circuit (*tao*) treasuries tended to be rendered by the local banks. The Shansi banks specialized in the remittance of funds by draft between branches of the same bank. The local banks generally did not have branches, and they conducted local money exchange and issued cash notes.<sup>65</sup>

In making loans, many local banks acted as intermediaries between the Shansi banks and smaller merchants.<sup>66</sup> Until the 1740s, the main service provided by local banks or money shops was to facilitate exchanges between silver and copper monies, but in the later half of the nineteenth century they increasingly handled deposits and loans and also began to issue their own paper notes (*qian piao*). Around 1840, most abandoned the exchange business and focused on deposits, loans, transfers, and issuance of drafts. They also began to make loans to more categories of production than the limited types of shops or businesses specializing in cotton, silk, home-spun fabric, or tea. Due to their limited capitalization, their ability to weather crises was weak. Every time the market stumbled, a large number of them collapsed.<sup>67</sup> Their number gradually shrank, but the capital of those surviving grew.<sup>68</sup> After the adoption of

silver dollars with more standardized weight, these shops were no longer needed to determine the real value of the dollar. There were 357 money shops in Beijing in 1912;<sup>69</sup> their number had dwindled to 73 by 1935,<sup>70</sup> and there were fewer than 50 of them left by 1949.<sup>71</sup>

In the early Republic, a money shop's capital ranged from one thousand to ten thousand *yuan* but rarely exceeded ten thousand *yuan*.<sup>72</sup> With this limited amount of capital, money shops were incapable of supporting modern industry. But they had their advantages, such as an ability to subsist with little capital and a simple organization. They made loans to farmers to buy seeds in the spring and collected payment in the fall. Small and medium-sized city stores often preferred to borrow from money shops because they were willing to make loans on credit; many found this far more convenient than the complicated procedure of contracting a mortgage loan from a modern-style bank. Bigger businesses also relied on money shops for loans on credit when they lacked working capital.<sup>73</sup> The interest rates for deposits at money shops, which were higher than at modern-style banks, also attracted some customers.<sup>74</sup> But when modern banks came into existence, money shops were at a competitive disadvantage in issuing paper currency because of their low capitalization.

The *yinlu*, or minting shops, provided the service of "making ingots for their customers at a small charge and were fully responsible for their product." The *yinlu* in north China "also performed a number of banking functions. They received deposits, made loans, and remitted money. Sometimes they issued promissory notes which circulated like bank notes in the locality."<sup>75</sup> When the standard silver dollar was adopted, some *yinlu* went out of business, and some changed into money shops.<sup>76</sup>

Challenges to this established credit system started in the late nineteenth century. "Modern banks had arrived with foreign imperialism on China's shores in the 1840's after the Opium War. As foreign traders moved into the newly opened treaty ports, foreign banks came as well to finance international trade and to serve foreigners and foreign companies."<sup>77</sup> Modern banks began to appear in Beijing in 1886. The first ones were foreign owned, primarily branch offices of British banks. A period of expansion lasted nearly three decades, until about 1926.<sup>78</sup> According to Lien-sheng Yang, foreign banks enjoyed many privileges in China:

The foreign banks operated free from Chinese laws, and in China they were largely free from their own national regulations. The largest part of their credit business was the financing of foreign trade. In addition, they made profits by floating Chinese government loans and by transmitting remit-

tances to and from China. The foreign banks enjoyed a practical monopoly of the foreign exchange business and thus dominated the exchange rates between China and the outside world until about 1930. They held on deposit large amounts of funds, private and official, notably the Chinese customs and salt revenues which had become pledges against foreign loans. In the earlier periods the foreign banks issued bank notes which circulated freely, but this practice later declined along with the improvement in the Chinese national currency.<sup>79</sup>

In the first decade of the twentieth century, Chinese banks, both government and private, began opening in Beijing, but their business was mostly in savings. As for loans, the government banks tended to serve the state while private banks ostensibly focused on industry, but of course this was far from Beijing's forte. In both cases small businesses, the main source of subsistence for many of Beijing's residents, hardly benefited. Of these banks, the ones run by the government tended to locate their headquarters in Beijing, not because the city itself was the focus of their business but because the central government was their main customer. The Hubu Bank (Bank of the Board of Revenue), established by the Qing government in 1905, set up its main office in Beijing and branches in Tianjin and Shanghai. In 1908, the institution was reorganized into the Da Qing (Great Qing) Bank, and it became the Bank of China (Zhongguo yinhang) after the 1911 Revolution. Another early government bank was the Bank of Communications, organized in 1907. "In the first decades of the Republic these two official banks competed vigorously with each other but both maintained their relatively important positions. They proved to be a stabilizing influence during several financial crises which occurred in this period."<sup>80</sup> In addition, Beiyang Baoshang Bank was established in 1910, with its headquarters located in Beijing.<sup>81</sup>

The Bank of Communications was established by the Qing Board of Communications in order to take charge of funds in shipping, railway, telegraph, and postal services. Under Yuan Shikai, the bank became the government's most important financial supplier, but in 1927 part of the bank's headquarters was moved to Tianjin, on the rationale that "in recent years, this bank has shifted its business to industry and commerce and has gradually overcome the constraints of politics. We also feel that Beijing is not a place of industry or commerce."<sup>82</sup> In 1927, the bank fell under the control of the Nationalist government, and its headquarters moved to Shanghai in November 1928.<sup>83</sup> The Bank of Communications primarily collected deposits in Beijing but was "extremely cautious"

about making loans in the city.<sup>84</sup> A 1930 report makes it evident that the bank's primary business was with the government: "Since the provincial capital was moved to Tianjin and the Chongwen Gate Customs were abolished, the market has become bleak. Beiping is not a port, and the warehouses have almost no business.... There is minimal business in the exchange and wiring of money, the quantities are small, and all the banks are in fierce competition for customers; as a result, it is difficult for business to prosper."<sup>85</sup> A 1933 report adds, "Beiping has never had its own important products and is especially lacking in large industry. It is impossible to make large loans. Although there are a few coal mines, they are all heavily in debt, and there is no hope to collect the money if we make loans to them. So we can only provide some small mortgage loans." The Beijing branch was advised simply to continue attracting deposits and to make mortgage loans only to grain stores.<sup>86</sup>

The aforementioned Great Qing Bank was re-established as the Bank of China in 1912 to manage the coffers of the fledgling Republic,<sup>87</sup> and though a separate Beijing branch was established in 1914 to serve urban residents, the majority of the bank's business before 1928 was connected to the Beiyang government. Its loans to Beiyang military and governmental institutions composed over 90 percent of its total loans, followed by loans to other banks and to railways, with only a negligible sum lent to industries and commercial businesses. In 1919, 74.26 percent of the bank's total loans went to government and military institutions, 23.78 percent to other banks, 0.96 percent to the Jing-Han and Jing-Sui Railways, and only 0.27 percent to commercial businesses and 0.31 percent to individuals. In 1926, 96 percent of the bank's loans were made to the military and government and 2.3 percent to other banks.<sup>88</sup> By 1925 the Beijing branch was run by the Tianjin branch, and its size shrank progressively until, in 1927, the bank's headquarters was transferred to Shanghai.<sup>89</sup>

The New China Bank (Xinhua yinhang), started as a savings (*chuxu*) bank to absorb small capital, was another bank headquartered in Beijing. It was established in October 1914 by the order of the Beiyang government, with original capital loaned from the Banks of China and Communications. As a result of battles among warlords, the provinces were not turning enough revenue over to the Beiyang government, leaving it to survive on foreign loans to the tune of approximately 376 million *yuan*. Most of these loans were processed by foreign banks at very high interest rates and fees so that Yuan Shikai in fact received less than half that figure. Chinese industry as well as banks gained an opportu-

nity to develop during World War I, and Yuan used the New China Bank to absorb money domestically rather than borrow money from foreign countries. He had the Finance Ministry charge the Banks of China and Communications with establishing the New China Bank and instructed them to provide funds of one million *yuan*, though only 150,000 *yuan* were forthcoming. In the very year of its establishment, the New China Bank issued ten million *yuan* in lottery deposit tickets, which was guaranteed by the government. In 1930, the New China Bank moved its headquarters to Shanghai.

Two provincial banks were established to serve the region of north China but not specifically Beijing. They were primarily a fiscal tool in the service of whichever warlord ruled Zhili. In September 1910, the official *yinbao* of Zhili province became the Zhili Province Bank, but it was headquartered in Tianjin and closely linked to the provincial government, not the city of Beijing. In the winter of 1927, as the Revolutionary Army approached north China, local warlords forced the bank to issue massive amounts of paper currency. The victorious Nationalist armies banned the use of provincial bank currencies in December.<sup>90</sup> The bank was closed as result. In 1929, the Hebei provincial government organized the Hebei Bank. The bank's headquarters moved with the location of the provincial government; it was first located in Beijing but soon moved to Tianjin in 1930. The bank's services were limited to the province itself. Although it provided a special program to small businesses, the program was too small to play a significant role in the local economy.<sup>91</sup>

The Dawan Agricultural Bank (Dawan nonggong yinhang; the name Dawan was a combination of the names of two counties, Daxing and Wanping) also had its headquarters in Beijing. Dawan was established in 1916 when the Ministry of Finance of the Beiyang government decided to set up banks at the county level to encourage the development of agriculture. Starting capital came from the government and was transformed into commercial capital in 1920. In 1927, it became the Chinese Agricultural Bank (Zhongguo nonggong yinhang), its capital having increased from fifty thousand *yuan* in 1918 to one million *yuan* in 1926. The bank focused on agriculture. In the beginning, it also helped banner men obtain loans using banner land as mortgages.<sup>92</sup> The headquarters of the bank moved to Shanghai in 1930.<sup>93</sup>

The only state-sponsored bank located in Beijing that had any significant relationship with businesses in the city was the Beiping City Bank (Beiping shi yinhang). The idea for the bank was first proposed in

1928, but due to lack of capital it was not established until November 1935. Its main objective was to assist local industry and commerce and to make loans to businesses. It served the city but closed after only two years of operation when the war broke out in 1937.<sup>94</sup>

In addition to these state banks, after 1912 Chinese private banks also began to develop throughout the country. These banks played a negligible role in the Beijing economy even though some of them had branches there.<sup>95</sup> The more powerful banks shared some characteristics. Most notably, all had close connections to warlords and politicians: the main shareholders of the Jincheng Bank were Anhui clique warlords;<sup>96</sup> the Dalu Bank, the main shareholders of which were mostly Beiyang warlords, was backed up by Feng Guozhang and heavily invested in by Zhang Xun.<sup>97</sup> The Yanye (Salt Industry) Bank was also established and backed by Beiyang warlords. It was established in Beijing by Zhang Zhenfang, cousin of Yuan Shikai and a Beiyang warlord himself.<sup>98</sup> Its shareholders were mostly Beiyang warlords and officials.<sup>99</sup> Like other major banks, its headquarters moved to Tianjin in 1928 and then to Shanghai in 1935. The bank tried to attract deposits from warlords and officials, focusing on Beijing and Tianjin. Most loans were made to industry and commerce and some to the Beiyang government.<sup>100</sup> The bank made loans to the government to build the Beiping-Hankou, Beiping-Suiyuan, Longhai, and Beining Railways and also invested in Beijing's electric lights, streetcar, water supply, and coal mine industries.<sup>101</sup> The Qing imperial family used antiques and mortgages to borrow money from the bank in 1924. The antiques were eventually sold to foreigners in Tianjin, which resulted in a national scandal and seriously damaged the bank's reputation.<sup>102</sup>

Of all the banks in Beijing, the Jincheng Bank appears to have contributed the most to the local economy. Although its headquarters were established in 1917 in Tianjin, the chief manager located his office in Beijing until both offices moved to Shanghai in 1935.<sup>103</sup> Jincheng invested in saltpeter, refined salt, sulfuric acid, flour, cotton textiles, coal mines, and railways.<sup>104</sup> Unlike most other banks, Jincheng made loans first to commercial businesses and second to the government and railways, with mines and factories ranking third. Investment in commercial businesses mostly went to establishments owned by Jincheng and its major shareholders, to trade companies and foreign companies, and to grain, salt, sugar, local product, and textile businesses.<sup>105</sup> In the mid-1930s, the bank focused on investing in industry, specifically textiles, chemicals, and coal mining in the Tianjin area. In 1934 it established a

program of making small loans in collaboration with local governments. It loaned a total of 128,327 *yuan* to 9,790 small businesses in Beijing, an average of 13 *yuan* per business. This was the lowest average rate for any city in which a small loan program was implemented (other locations included Nanjing, Qingdao, Zhenjiang, and Wu County).<sup>106</sup> While these loans might have been helpful to the small businesses that received them, they could have had only a negligible impact on Beijing's economy as a whole.<sup>107</sup>

The location of modern banks' headquarters is a good indicator of their roles in Beijing's economy. The government banks had their headquarters in Beijing before 1928, but the majority of them, except the regional ones, moved their headquarters to Shanghai as the Nationalist government consolidated its power base in the south. Most private banks had their headquarters in Shanghai and Tianjin, China's industrial and foreign trade centers. In terms of business orientation, a comment in the Dalu Bank's annual report summarizes well these banks' practices in Beijing: "Beijing has always been a site of deposit where granting of commercial loans has been extremely rare. Some of the [Beijing branches of these] banks sometimes invest extra capital in other cities."<sup>108</sup>

When the banks did make loans in Beijing, they mostly made them to the government. When the China Maoye Bank decided in 1922 to shift its emphasis from government to commerce, it moved its most important managing departments to Shanghai.<sup>109</sup> The focus of the Beijing branch of the Shanghai Commercial Savings Bank (Shanghai shangye chuxu yinhang)<sup>110</sup> was savings rather than loans.<sup>111</sup> Its agricultural loans mostly targeted cotton in Shanxi and Zhejiang, silk and tobacco in Shandong, sugarcane in Guangdong, and tea, wheat, and tobacco in Anhui.<sup>112</sup> The bank established a small loan program for urban residents, but it was available only in Shanghai, not in Beijing.<sup>113</sup> The same observation can be made about the Dalu Bank.<sup>114</sup> The bank stated that it supported national industry and commerce. It built Dalu Department Store on Shanghai's Nanjing Road and invested in industry and mines.<sup>115</sup> In Beijing, it supported the small coal mines in the western suburbs when it was first established.<sup>116</sup> But as the bank's archives show, it established a branch in Beijing to target the wealth of potential deposits from local warlords and from the city's scholars, rich families, and Manchu aristocrats.<sup>117</sup> Its strategy of setting up offices at the universities was an expression of this focus.<sup>118</sup> Zhongnan Bank's Beijing branch was under the control of its Tianjin branch. It absorbed individ-

ual deposits in Beijing and transferred the funds to Tianjin. The Tianjin branch then used part of the capital to purchase government bonds and invested the rest in the textile industry.<sup>119</sup>

In the post-1928 years, only branch offices of banks were left in Beijing. These attempted to shift their business orientation to local commerce. The Beijing branch of the Bank of China decided that “to support industry and commerce is also to find a way for our bank to survive.”<sup>120</sup> Beginning in 1930, it started to build grain warehouses adjacent to the railroad stations in the Beijing region and made loans to grain merchants. It also conducted surveys among small businesses in preparation for making loans to them.<sup>121</sup> But this new commercial orientation was unsuccessful. Many of the small businesses that received loans from the bank slid into bankruptcy, and others were unable to pay their interest. In 1932, the bank reported that the situation for deposits in Beijing was very good but that “Beiping is a cultural but not a commercial and industrial center. There is no place to invest the capital except the one million we have loaned to the local small businesses. So we decided to transfer all the capital to the Tianjin branch.”<sup>122</sup> The bank ran a deficit every year after 1929. Losses on loan interest increased from 159,000 *yuan* in 1928 to 1.05 million *yuan* in 1936.<sup>123</sup>

While modern banks did not make significant contributions to Beijing’s local economy—except that loans to government probably paid for salaries—they effectively limited the capacity of old-style credit institutions. Pawnshops had been able to borrow money from *yinlu*, but they had to look for other sources of support when the *yinlu* were replaced by modern banks, which would make loans to them only when secured by a mortgage.<sup>124</sup> Beijing’s old-style credit institutions were not integrated into the new system. The money shops in Beijing relied heavily on the Shanxi banks, whose strongest base of business was the imperial state. When the Shanxi banks collapsed along with the imperial order, the old credit system in Beijing declined as well. The link between the old and the new sectors was missing, and the economic system dominating Republican Beijing was not integrated but split. The upper echelon joined in a nationwide circulation of capital, but this circulation did not involve local small businesses in a productive way. In this sense, the modern banks epitomized Beijing’s position in the modern economic system. The modern banks were deeply involved in Republican Beijing’s economy, but not in ways that benefited Beijing residents or businesses. These banks weakened the roles of old-style financial institutions without integrating them into the new financial system; they provided little

support to small local businesses and almost no support to help these businesses develop into larger industries or enterprises. While circulating little money in the form of loans for businesses within the city, these banks absorbed significant sums from Beijing residents, especially those who worked for government institutions and in education, in the form of deposits, which they then funneled to businesses elsewhere. In sum, the modern banks did not bring Beijing's local small businesses into the new system of circulation. Most of Republican Beijing's population was living, in fact, in a different economic world, a world of handicraft production and recycling.

#### HANDICRAFT PRODUCTION

At the same time that Sidney Gamble reported the closing of the glass factory, he noted: "While the big glass factory with its complicated machinery has been a failure, one of the Buddhist Temples in the South City is running a small factory, turning out lamp chimneys and window glass, which require but little machinery. Two furnaces are kept in constant operation, and the work is done by some thirty workers and seventy apprentices."<sup>125</sup> This was not an exceptional case but the general picture in Republican Beijing: handicraft industry developed dramatically during this time, especially as compared to the imperial period. Imports of industrial products stimulated consumption; people began to use many things that had not been part of their daily lives before. Unable to compete with large modern industry due to its weak foundation, the city's handicraft sector responded with increased small-scale production. Whereas in the imperial period almost everything consumed in the capital city had come from somewhere else, in the Republican period Beijing began to produce some of its own daily necessities, including textiles, books, fur, leather, clothes, shoes, hats, food, alcoholic beverages, soap, matches, brushes, glass, enamel, chemicals, educational supplies, rubber, and paper. Very few of these goods, however, were produced by modern industrial means; rather, old means of handicraft production and labor organization were adapted for new products targeting a changing market. In other words, small-scale handicraft workshops began producing items that had initially been introduced as imports from the industrial world overseas. Goods that could be produced on a small scale locally, such as towels, leather goods, and socks, sometimes even overtook the imports and thus achieved for the city a certain amount of local self-sufficiency.

Beijing residents had originally used home-woven cotton cloth for towels until the beginning of the twentieth century, when Western-style knitted towels were first brought to the city from Britain and Japan. Soon the home-woven towels were crowded out by imports, especially Japanese products, that filled the markets. During the Republic, businessmen in Beijing started producing knitted towels, setting up production at various levels ranging from households to a dedicated section in a textile factory. Within a decade, imported towels basically disappeared from the Beijing market. Yarn for the towels was domestically spun in Shanghai and Tianjin, and bleach, a Japanese product, was shipped in via Tianjin. Red and blue dyes, used in very small quantities, were imported from Germany. The treadle machines for towel production, made of iron and wood, cost about twenty *yuan* each and often were produced locally. There were about forty formal workshops that paid taxes. These workshops might have as many as twenty machines but typically had only two or three. An additional twenty to thirty production sites were not workshops but homes: the families purchased their own materials, worked out of their homes, and sold their products to shops, at temple fairs, at booths along the streets, or in market towns in the countryside. A third type of production involved a sort of piece-work system in which towel weavers received materials from factories and were paid according to the number of pieces produced. There were about thirty to forty such enterprises in the city. Beijing's bathhouses, parks, theaters, hotels, and restaurants were the main markets for the towel industry. Towels were also sold to Zhangjiakou, Datong, Baoding, and other cities along the Ping-Han and Ping-Sui rail lines. The towels also supplied the surrounding rural regions, including Tong County, Liangxiang, Fangshan, Miyun, and Gubeikou. In the early 1930s, annual production of towels in Beijing reached about seventy to eighty thousand pieces.<sup>126</sup>

Similarly, machine-knitted socks began to replace hand-sewn cotton fabric ones in Beijing at the turn of the century, with the local production of knitted socks beginning in 1917. By the early 1930s, the city had about fifty to sixty sock-knitting workshops, and forty to fifty more sock retail shops produced their own merchandise. Numerous families made socks with one or two simple machines at home, usually without the tax man's knowledge. Their yarns came from Tianjin, Shanghai, and Shijiazhuang, though some finer and woolen yarns came from overseas. The sock knitters sold their homemade products at temple fairs, outdoor markets, and street stalls. The locally produced socks were much



Figure 15. Woman spinning cotton outdoors. Photo by Hedda Morrison; courtesy of the Harvard-Yenching Library.

cheaper than imported ones and sold well. Although 1.7 million pairs of socks were imported into Beijing in 1929, a little over one pair per person on the average, the locally produced socks were still very visible and occupied a large share of the market.<sup>127</sup>

Leather processing had not been a dynamic business in the Qing, when only about fifty shops produced mostly horse saddles, ropes, trunks, and shoe soles. By the time of the early Republic, mainly because of changes in fashion, consumption of leather goods increased and imported leather goods dominated the market, but Chinese merchants soon became successful at imitating these items, often manufacturing products of equal or even superior quality at lower prices. Local leather production prospered, and after 1925, Beijing producers began selling to the northeast, Inner Mongolia, and towns along the Ping-Han rail line. With the exception of women's handbags and shoes, which

were imported from abroad, by 1930 most leather products sold in Beijing were produced locally.<sup>128</sup>

While the above handicrafts flourished, many others declined or disappeared because they were no longer useful or had a smaller market. Carved bone items were hardly useful now that the Manchus no longer needed to practice their archery.<sup>129</sup> When short hair became fashionable among women, silk flowers were no longer desirable hair accessories.<sup>130</sup> With the leisurely Manchu aristocracy gone, the demand for bird cages declined.<sup>131</sup> When the national government moved to Nanjing, sales of brushes and ink dropped. While the civil service exam still existed there were over fifty brush and ink shops, but fewer than one-third of them survived in the 1930s, and some of their biggest customers were Korean and Japanese merchants.<sup>132</sup> Some businesses declined due to outside competition. Beijing screen cloth (*leng bu*, a kind of fabric for screen windows in the summer) had been sold to Xuanhua, Yanqing, Gengzhen, Baotou, and Shanxi along the Ping-Sui Railway and to Zhengzhou, Kaifeng, and Zhumadian along the Ping-Han line. But the business declined due to competition from both rural areas and imported metal screens that were cheaper and of better quality.<sup>133</sup> Knife and scissors production also declined due to competition from imported industrial products.

As in the sphere of industrial production, Tianjin became a major competitor with Beijing in certain kinds of handicraft production. For example, during the Qing, Beijing had been the center of production for decorative boxes, which were widely used in gift giving. In the Republic, gift giving between officials was not as widely (or at least as overtly) practiced, and the demand for refined gift boxes declined. At the same time, however, the demand for boxes for other merchandise, such as shoes, hats, medicines, cigarettes, and stationery, increased, and big shops often ordered several thousands at a time. The workshops were still called gift box shops (*jinxia dian*), but in fact they were no longer making such delicate products. There was growing competition from Tianjin because the new types of boxes did not require much skill, and many were machine made. In the past, the high-quality Beijing boxes had been sold to Tianjin, but in the Republican period, increasing demand for boxes for commodities of mass consumption from Tianjin reversed the situation.<sup>134</sup>

The Republican period was not a time when handicraft production simply gave way to mechanized industry; indeed, handicrafts developed at an unprecedented pace in Beijing. The large volume of industrial consumer goods sold in Beijing should not blind us to the fact that the pre-

dominant mode of production in the city was handicraft production. But this handicraft production was not simply a holdover from the imperial period; rather, it was a new phenomenon under a new economic system. Jane Jacobs argues in her *Cities and the Wealth of Nations* that healthy city economies always import goods from other cities at first. Then, if a city is healthy and adaptable, import substitution takes place. Her principal East Asian example is Tokyo importing bicycles at the turn of the century and then developing an indigenous bicycle industry. The final step came when Tokyo-made bicycles were exported to other cities, creating new wealth and new jobs.<sup>135</sup> In a few cases, Beijing handicrafts actually achieved import substitution in items such as towels, leather goods, and socks. But the city by and large failed to practice import substitution, partly because import substitution was already taking place in treaty ports like Tianjin, where taxes rates were lower, investments were safer, and capital was more plentiful (including, significantly, capital from Beijing as one of the city's few "exports"). Tianjin not only eclipsed Beijing as regional economic center but also performed the import substitution role that the old capital might have played.<sup>136</sup>

#### THE MECHANISM OF RECYCLING

In addition to industrial and handicraft products, there was a third major category of commodities in Beijing's markets: secondhand items, ranging from expensive antiques to strips of rag. A vast network of sophisticated systems was developed in Beijing to carry out various processes of recycling. All the households in Beijing, from foreigners in the Legation Quarter to old Manchu aristocrats to the poorest beggars of the city, entered the recycling network at different points and in different ways.

Used objects underwent a complex journey through a chain of commercial netherworlds before they reappeared on the open market. The journey usually began with an object being expelled from its former residence, perhaps callously, perhaps with mournful reluctance, and then falling into the hands of a collector, or "drum beater" (*dagu de*), who plied the alleys along set routes rattling his or her small drums to attract the attention of people behind their courtyard walls. "Hard-drum beaters," or "small-drum beaters," whose small drums made a sharp staccato ping, collected fine furniture, as well as porcelains, antiques, and ornaments that they carried in bamboo baskets covered with blue cloth. Collectors of a slightly higher rank toted bags instead of baskets and

bought only gold and silver jewelry, jade, and stoneware. The noise made by the “soft-drum beaters,” or “big-drum beaters,” was thicker and lower. These collectors carried rough baskets and bought dilapidated furniture, clothes, and pottery. Some took metal articles, old newspapers, glass bottles—basically anything a Beijing family could possibly have.

A fair number of women worked in the secondhand goods business and, rather than purchasing goods for cash, traded soap and matches for them. Typically gathering paper, box cartons, and rags, they occupied the lowest rank in the recycling business and had no opportunity to enter the higher ranks of “drum beaters.” The paper and cartons were sent to workshops for recycling. Rags in swaths were sent to shoe shops to make soles; rags in strips resurfaced at the Rag Market as floor mops; the smallest scraps of rag would end up as shoe sole fillings.

The drum beaters and soap women sold the goods they collected at “dawn markets” (*xiao shi*). Every district in Beijing had dawn markets, where trade was conducted in the dark. Theories for why these markets were open so early abounded. Perhaps if the collectors could sell their goods early enough, they would have time to make another round on their route, while the buyers could still run the items back to their shops or stalls for sale that morning. Some suspected that stolen or fake goods were sold at the market and that darkness provided cover for illegal trades. Proprietors of used-goods shops, antique dealers, and small stall owners purchased goods at the morning markets because prices were lower than at other venues.<sup>137</sup>

Petty pawnshops (*xiao ya*), the limbo of the commercial netherworld, were another important conduit through which secondhand goods found a new life on the market. Distinguishable from regular pawnshops, petty pawnshops catered to the needs of those who felt embarrassed to go to the former. Regular pawnshops did not accept miscellaneous items like small hats, old shoes, teapots, and cups, all of which ended up at the *xiao ya*. Although petty pawnshops were illegal businesses, they catered to the needs of many families in the city and were well supported.<sup>138</sup> Between the regular and petty pawnshops, almost any object would be accepted. In February and August of every year, pawnshops sold goods whose redemption date had expired. The paintings, calligraphy, jade ware, chops, porcelains, and old musical instruments went to antique shops, most of which were located in Liulichang. Old books went to Liulichang and Longfusi. Jade and stoneware garnered a high price at “red (jewelry) and green (jade)

goods shops” in the Qian Gate and Huashi districts. Old clothes and quilts were often bought by secondhand goods stores at Qian Gate. Embroideries were most often recycled through Qian Gate and Wangfujing and ended up in Westerners’ luggage.<sup>139</sup>

“Hanging-goods stalls” (*guahuo pu*), which purchased and sold secondhand goods, emerged during the Qing. In the 1870s, it had been stylish to travel in customized carriages drawn by well-decorated horses. When these decorations for the carts and horses became too soiled, they were collected for sale at shops that hung them at the door, hence the name. Later these stalls grew into secondhand goods stores dealing in every conceivable item: books, paintings, jades and pearls, antiques, metal wares, furs, porcelains, wooden wares, even small pieces of fabric and other knickknacks of daily use. These shops had close ties to the drum beaters and antique shops. If the hard-drum beaters had items beyond the marketing ability of the hanging-goods stalls, they contacted antique shops, who often paid a commission. Alternatively, hanging-goods stall owners might pool their capital to purchase pieces to sell to antique shops.<sup>140</sup> The best items went to antique shops; utterly bedraggled items went to the used-goods booths at Tianqiao, which proffered an entire spectrum of the lowest-quality secondhand goods and items most closely related to the daily lives of Beijing’s residents.<sup>141</sup> While there were still about three hundred *guahuo pu* in Beijing in the early 1930s, the heyday of these establishments was between 1900 and the 1920s. The spate of robbery and looting in 1900 and the abolition of the stipend for the Manchus in the years following spawned a boom in inventory for these shops, but by the 1930s their sources of supply were gradually declining.<sup>142</sup>

Another channel through which used goods changed hands was the auction. Auctions in China had developed after Western models and first started in Shanghai and Tianjin. In 1924, an Indian merchant opened Beijing’s first auction shop, and many more flourished briefly after 1928 in the economic crisis following the capital’s relocation. In 1932, Beijing claimed four auction shops owned by Chinese and two by foreigners. The goods in these shops were put on sale by their owners. The shops asked for a 5 percent initial commission and another 3 to 4 percent upon sale of the item. Most of the goods for sale—phonographs, sewing machines, bathtubs, antiques, furs, and jewelry—were expensive and considered luxurious. Because much of the public believed that former princes owned only the highest-quality goods, some unscrupulous antique shops and secondhand furniture stores would

conspire with them, move items into their homes, and then announce an auction there to increase profits.<sup>143</sup>

Precisely why old objects were still deemed valuable—whether as antiques embodying craftsmanship or symbolic/historical value or, more simply, as old goods still harboring some remaining daily use value—cannot be definitively determined. Still, it is obvious that distinctions were continually being made between antiques and items for daily use and that the enforcement of these distinctions through pricing had a tremendous bearing on the route that old objects took through the market. Objects deemed more strictly utilitarian tended, upon their next incarnations as sales items, to descend the social and class hierarchy. Items perceived to have symbolic/historic value were eventually classified as antiques; these ascended the hierarchy and often were traded away overseas.

Over the decades, the antique business became more and more popular with and oriented toward foreign consumers. In the Qing, antique collecting had been most popular among officials as a means of displaying cultivation and status. Antiques were also treated as investments or used for the occasional bribe to buy a government post or privilege.<sup>144</sup> But the destruction of Yuanming Garden (the Old Summer Palace) in 1860 and the looting of Beijing by foreign soldiers in 1900 stimulated Westerners' interest in Chinese antiques. Many soldiers shipped their booty home, while others sold theirs in Beijing. The fall of the Qing and the robbery of Qing tombs in the 1920s further fed the fever of the antique business. During the Republican period, Beijing's antique business was quite significant to the city's commerce and was primarily directed at foreigners. In 1932, there were 240 antique shops in Beijing employing about 1,400 clerks. The government, eager to promote sales, declared it permissible to sell any items of a "superstitious" nature, including religious idols, to foreigners. Only a select group of items of "genuine cultural value" were excluded. Antique shops sent employees to other regions of the country to collect antique pieces and were also involved in producing knockoffs. The municipal government made plans to reward those artisans most skillful at imitating ancient antiques, especially those who made items appealing to foreigners.<sup>145</sup>

Another type of secondhand item popular with foreigners was embroidery. Foreign embroidery collectors in Beijing began frequenting secondhand cloth shops, and as these shop owners found the trade increasingly profitable several more merchants joined in. By 1920, more than twenty embroidery shops were selling not only old embroidered goods but also famous embroidery from all over the country.<sup>146</sup> Another major



Figure 16. An antique shop. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

used-goods trade, centered in the Liulichang district, was in ancient and rare books. Shops in Liulichang sent their clerks on nationwide forays for rare books, and book collecting became a passion for many Beijing residents.<sup>147</sup> Books were collected from the provinces and sold in Beijing, often to foreigners and occasionally to Chinese collectors.<sup>148</sup>

The secondhand goods business had its own ladder of success. A successful soft-drum beater who began as a collector of paper and broken metal pieces could eventually become a hard-drum beater who carried baskets and collected clothes. Such a hard-drum beater could then rise to become a bag-carrying hard-drum beater who collected jewelry and

antiques. A successful drum beater could aspire to open a hanging-goods stall, which might eventually even grow into an antique shop.<sup>149</sup>

Beijing's secondhand goods businesses, besides being of great scope and offering many kinds of gainful employment, played a crucial role in providing affordable commodities to Beijing's ordinary, especially poor, residents and in providing luxury items for wealthy Chinese and foreigners. But perhaps even more telling is how indispensable these recycling businesses were in forming the city's identity. The musty inventory of the pawnshop, the wheedling of the used-clothing vendor, and the soft-drum beater's echoing passage through the alleys are images deeply evocative of everyday life in Beijing. Like the well-worn image of the rickshaw puller, these were scenes that Beijing's self-appointed diarists, like Qi Rushan, saw as representative of Beijing's essence. By the same token, Beijing was also renowned for its antiques and rare books, quintessential pleasures of China's scholarly elite that doubled as quaint popular attractions for foreigners.

The economy of Republican Beijing was not simply a declining remnant of the imperial period. Beijing was not lagging behind other coastal areas in terms of its integration into the new global economy; rather, it was being integrated into that system in complex and at times detrimental ways. The introduction of railroads and networks of modern transportation affected trade flows, while shifts in the political-strategic formations in Mongolia, Manchuria, and China's northwest all served to bypass Beijing as a center of trade. As Tianjin developed into a new hub of international and regional trade and Beijing lost its status as China's paramount administrative center, Beijing's central position in the northern Chinese economy was usurped by Tianjin. Imported goods for daily sustenance for even the poor poured into Beijing, while the modern credit system absorbed and drained capital from the wealthy population of the city. Still, Beijing's handicraft production that was not entirely eclipsed by modern mechanized industries actually increased. Novelty items and luxury products like toys and rugs were exported overseas, and some simpler items such as socks and towels were widely sold in the general vicinity of Beijing and along nearby rail lines. During the Qing, Beijing, as the capital, had tended to consume imported goods from throughout the empire rather than manufacturing or exporting products itself. Hence, somewhat ironically, Beijing's integration and exposure to the global industrial economic system resulted in the development of handicraft production. Thus the city featured flourishing

production that was in many respects preindustrial at the same time that it was experiencing the intrusion of modern industrial production. The scale of the handicraft production, however, was impressive only in comparison to that of the imperial period, and such handicraft production hardly represented a bright future for the city since export of handicrafts was insignificant when compared to the importation of industrial products from abroad and from treaty port cities.

It might appear that in Republican Beijing only a small upper echelon participated in the modern economy and the overwhelming majority of urban residents were excluded, but analysis actually reveals that almost everyone in the city was directly influenced by the new system. Almost every sector of handicraft production and every small shop either produced goods for global markets, sold foreign goods to local consumers, or produced new industrial goods like towels and socks using machines on a small scale. Markets for such daily needs as flour and rice were directly affected by integration into the global industrial system. Visitors to Beijing at the time may have had the impression that the city's residents lived in different worlds or eras, with the fashionable bank manager seemingly more integrated into the modern world than the hanging-goods stall owner or the mother knitting socks for sale at a temple fair. This impression, however, was based not so much on a division between traditional and modern conditions of daily life as on the city's spatial patterns of consumption and production and the uneven distribution of wealth created by a newly emerging socioeconomic structure. Indeed, Beijing's recycling economy reveals in specific material terms how, despite these new spatial and socioeconomic divisions, a complex web of practices bound the most disparate parts of Beijing society together in quite intimate ways. Hence it was not wholly accidental that the cultural practices associated with recycling would come to symbolize to many people the very essence of Beijing's unique character in the Republican era.

# Consumption

## *Spatial and Temporal Hierarchies*

The variety and number of businesses increased in Beijing during the Republican period, leading to a proliferation of commercial establishments in both old and new styles. There were forty professional organizations and 4,541 shops in the whole city in the years between 1909 and 1911.<sup>1</sup> By 1935, a Japanese survey listed ninety-two professions and 12,000 shops.<sup>2</sup> Commercial districts, rather than political institutions, became the central factor determining the city's spatial organization. The pace of consumption accelerated. All goods, not just vegetables and sewing thread, were expected to be available, not on a seasonal or weekly basis, but with daily regularity. Permanent markets developed throughout the city, and indoor shops, less vulnerable to weather, became increasingly common.

Three types of goods, excluding food, circulated through Beijing's markets: industrial products, handicraft items from Chinese cities and the countryside, and recycled articles. In spite of some overlaps, markets and shops tended to specialize in only one of these three types of goods, and their customers tended to be limited to fairly distinct social groups. This new hierarchy of consumption reflected as well as contributed to the transformation in social structure of Republican Beijing. The goods consumed by people of different statuses during the Qing varied in quality but had a common origin: all were handicrafts. During the Republic, the origin, style, and nature of what was bought and where it was purchased steadily rose in significance as markers of so-

cioeconomic status. These distinctions were concretized in the city's spatial order through the specific architectural styles and geography of commercial establishments. In particular, Wangfujing and Xidan hosted new-style specialty shops, department stores, and indoor markets. They surpassed the Qian Gate and Dashilar district and became the emblem of new consumerism in Beijing.

As department stores, specialty shops, and permanent markets became established in the wealthy sectors of the city, temple fairs and markets of secondhand goods descended in status but continued to serve a large portion of the population, and their number even increased. This development was clearly reflected in the goods sold at temple markets, which were mostly handicraft products, and in the customers who shopped there—people of the lower classes and women. Yet the decline in status of the temple markets did not mean that industrial goods dominated all the markets of Beijing. Although the dominance of rural goods and traditional forms of market organization diminished, the new consumption system was not simply one in which industrial products totally replaced handicraft items. Industrial products pushed handicraft goods into a lower position in the market hierarchy, but because of the poverty of the city's general population (discussed in detail in Chapter 7), handicraft goods remained a necessary component of commerce.

Growing as vigorously as the permanent shops and markets, a vast network for recycled goods extended into every nook and cranny of the city, satisfying the needs of Beijing's legions of poor people. Everything in the city entered the recycling process at some point, even food in the form of nightsoil, and became a valuable commodity fought over by different groups. Old goods were resurrected as they traveled along a chain that began with the old-goods-collectors' alley routes and then led to temporary stalls, big pawnshops, and even auction stores. Old articles gained either a new use value, in the case of daily household items, or a new exchange value, in the case of antiques. In a practical sense, recycled goods played a critical role in sustaining the lives of the city's poor. The system of recycling penetrated most deeply into the intimate, private spaces of the city and recurred in nostalgic writings on Beijing, shaping a local identity and memories of the city in the face of more threatening forms of consumption allied with the approaching industrial age. Tianqiao, Republican Beijing's principal recycling center, will be discussed in detail in the next chapter. This chapter focuses on the city's new market system and patterns of consumption.

### A NEW MARKET SYSTEM

The spatial layout of markets in Qing Beijing was not a natural out-growth of consumer demands but a result of political influences. Ideals in classical Chinese urban planning, historical inheritance from previous times, and ethnic segregation due to imperial policies all played crucial roles. Similarly, the spatial pattern of commercial districts in the Republican era was the outcome of various factors, including, in addition to consumer needs, historical legacies, the impacts of foreign forces, state policies that encouraged commerce, and the adoption of theories and practices of Western urban planning.

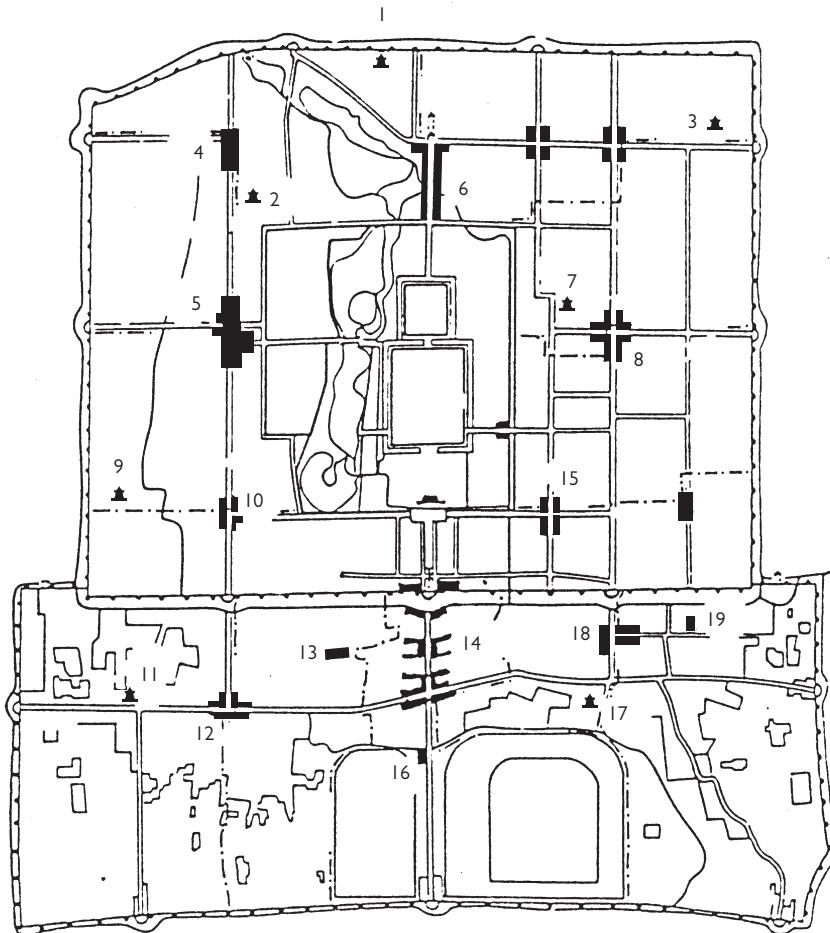
The prototype of Beijing's market system was established in the Yuan dynasty. Yuan Beijing was a square city, with its political center—the palace—located to the south and the Drum and Bell Towers and Lake Jishuitan roughly in the city's geographical center. The Grand Canal, the primary conduit for goods entering the capital, led directly to Jishuitan, so the city's biggest central market developed in the nearby Drum and Bell Towers area. The three markets surrounding the palace, Yangjiao Market in the southwest, Shumiyuanjiao Market in the southeast, and Shengdong Market in front of the palace, were second to the Drum and Bell Tower Market.<sup>3</sup> This layout followed the planning ideal for a Chinese capital city with “palace in the south and market in the north,” as presented in the classic *Book of Rites*, and the biggest market was located close to the center of the city. Markets of the Yuan survived into the Ming, a period during which the city walls edged southward and the palace came to occupy a more central location in Beijing and became a major barrier to the mobility of the city's residents. During this same era, the Grand Canal no longer reached Jishuitan, a change that led to the decline of the Drum and Bell Towers Market, and the city's commercial center shifted to Chaoqian Market south of the palace. Yangjiao Market and Shumiyuanjiao Market developed into Xisi and Dongsi Markets respectively. Smaller Yuan markets at Di'an Gate, Dongdan, Xidan, and Chongwen Gate grew in size. Commercial activities on a smaller scale also developed in the newly added South (Outer) City.<sup>4</sup>

During the Qing, commercial activity further increased in Beijing, and a more obvious hierarchy in markets emerged. The Qian Gate and Dashilar area now occupied the top rank, with its large number of permanent shops catering to the demands of the city's officials and aristocrats for luxury goods such as silk, furs, hats, boots, jewelry, and antiques. Restaurants and theaters made the area even more attractive.

Liulichang, west of the Qian Gate district, developed partly as result of the imperial court's *Siku quanshu* (Four Treasures) project.<sup>5</sup> It became nationally famous for its books and stationery, items in demand among Qing officials and candidates for the imperial examinations. Neighborhood markets supplied residents' everyday needs. Small merchants bought goods from the specialty wholesale markets in the Outer City, then sold these at smaller markets in the Inner City. Peddlers who sold vegetables, food, toys, thread, and other miscellaneous items at the gates of households in small alleyways further supplemented the local markets. Temple markets were yet another form of commercial activity. They were organized by temples or sometimes by officials who corralled merchants around temples to facilitate tax collecting.<sup>6</sup> In Ming Beijing, more than twenty temples hosted fairs.<sup>7</sup> Their distribution changed slightly in the Qing, and the newly built lama temples added more fairs to the city, some of them very popular, such as the Yonghe Palace's fair during the "ghost beating" (*da gui*) festivals.<sup>8</sup> There were temple markets inside and outside the city, attracting urban as well as suburban crowds, including both men and women.<sup>9</sup>

Imperial Beijing's market system was characterized by an imbalance in the amount and level of business between the Inner and Outer Cities; by the barrier to commercial activities raised by the centrality of the palace; and by the influence of the elaborate economic system serving the imperial households. In Ming and Qing Beijing, the emphasis on the palace, ceremonial sites, and imperial gardens made the city's center off limits to commercial and entertainment activities. In the Qing dynasty, although the wealthiest Manchu families all resided in the Inner City, commerce there declined due to imperial policies constraining trade in the district. As a result of the ethnic segregation policy of the Qing state, the highest-level market, the Qian Gate district, was located in the Outer City, separated by city walls and gates from a major portion of its targeted customers. Although business in the Inner City began to revive during the Kangxi and Yongzheng reigns, and temple markets at the Longfu and Huguosi Temples prospered, permanent business was still more a feature of the Outer City than of the Inner City. The location of the palace and its residents at the center of the city in both the geographical and the economic sense skewed the locations of Beijing's markets.

The Qing market system was also strongly influenced by the elaborate economic system that served the court. Di'an was the city gate through which the princes and their families passed when entering the palace; it was also the most convenient place where eunuchs could con-



- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. Bei yaowangmiao (North Temple of Medicine King) | 11. Tudimiao (Temple of Earth)            |
| 2. Huguozi (Temple of Guarding the Country)        | 12. Caishikou (Vegetable Market)          |
| 3. Dong yaowangmiao (East Temple of Medicine King) | 13. Liulichang                            |
| 4. Xinjiekou                                       | 14. Qian Gate                             |
| 5. Xisi  | 15. Dongdan                               |
| 6. Di'an Gate                                      | 16. Tianqiao                              |
| 7. Longfusi (Temple of Great Happiness)            | 17. Yaowangmiao (Temple of Medicine King) |
| 8. Dongsi  | 18. Chongwai (Out of Chongwen Gate)       |
| 9. Chenghuangmiao (Temple of City God)             | 19. Huashi (Flower Market)                |
| 10. Xidan  |   |

Figure 17. Market system of Qing Beijing.

tact people outside the palace. Hence, these groups tended to shop at Di'an Gate Market during festivals and special palace occasions. The district prospered as a result; merchants, peddlers, and folk performers flocked there. Dongsi developed because Beijing's grain barns and the cargo off-loaded from the Grand Canal collected there. Its dense population, relatively high living standard, and nearness to the "pig market" were all factors fueling its activity. Xidan was not only an area in which many princes and high officials resided but also a link between the eastern and western parts of the city and thus a convenient place for people to meet. Huashi, by Chongwen Gate, prospered because it was a key point for long-distance transportation to Beijing. Before the railway connected Tianjin and Beijing, hundreds of vehicles going to Tianjin gathered outside Chongwen Gate. Passengers from Tianjin got off there and stayed in neighborhood hotels, and the bureau in charge of commercial taxation was conveniently located there. Clearly, while markets developed to satisfy residents' needs, they were also strongly influenced by the existence of the imperial court (Di'an Gate), the locations of bureaucratic institutions (Chongwen Gate), the imperial economic system (Dongzhi Gate), and the residential pattern of officials (Xidan). Ethnic segregation of the residential areas made the two markets in the Outer City (Huashi and Chongwen Gate) necessary to serve the needs of the Han population.<sup>10</sup> The distribution of these major commercial centers demonstrates that political factors played crucial roles in determining the market system in Qing Beijing.

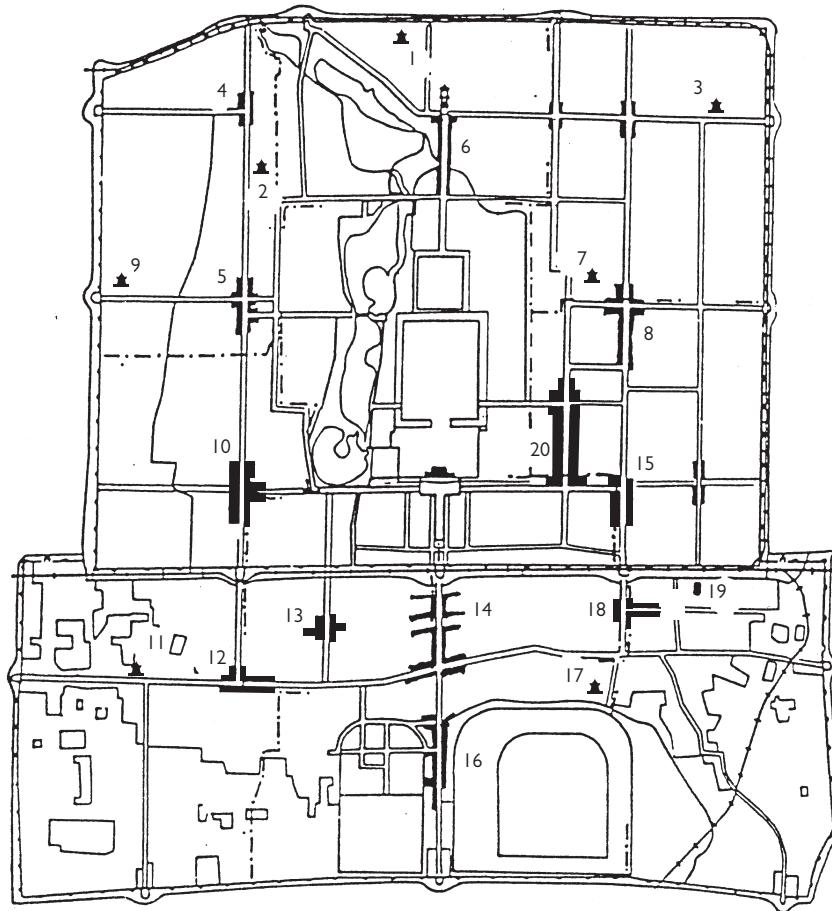
Generally speaking, except for the Qian Gate and Dashalar and Liulichang districts, most of the commercial centers in Qing Beijing were marked by their impermanence and were directly exposed to the elements. Their level of specialization was relatively low, with the exception of the most luxurious shops in the Qian Gate district. The markets met residents' needs for subsistence items and articles for seasonal festivities, selling urban and rural handicrafts to a broad range of customers. These markets combined trading and entertainment and functioned as sites not only for business deals but also for community interaction.

The Republican period witnessed important changes in Beijing's market system. The Inner City gained an upper hand over the Outer City, including the Qian Gate district, as a source for "high-class" goods, and the level of permanency and specialization of commercial centers increased. The old leading commercial area, the Qian Gate and Dashalar district, maintained its status only due to inertia. Thanks to its

proximity to the Legation Quarter, Wangfujing first surpassed Dongsi and then became the leading Beijing market and the Qian Gate district's strongest competitor. When the fortifications between the Inner and Outer Cities were toppled, Xidan and Dongdan gained more customers as they began to serve both the Inner and Outer Cities. Xidan followed Wangfujing's example, gradually developing into a new-style shopping center. Chongwen Gate and Caishikou maintained their previous status, as did Dongsi and Xisi, since they served residents' daily needs. Temple markets, which continued to serve a large number of people, declined in status in terms of both the social prestige of the goods sold and the range of customers served. At the same time, the Tianqiao district developed into a temple fair-like permanent market. A new hierarchy among the markets and a new pattern of consumption took shape in Beijing.

The three largest commercial centers in the Republican period, Wangfujing, Xidan, and the Qian Gate district, formed a triangle within and around which lived the wealthiest residents of Beijing. The emergence of Wangfujing and Xidan epitomized commercial development in Republican Beijing. Wangfujing was an upstart, riding the wave of Legation Quarter prosperity and assisted by the Chinese government's infrastructural work, such as asphalt paving of the streets. Xidan followed Wangfujing, although on a smaller scale. These two centers challenged the third point of the triangle, the Qian Gate district, previously the most renowned of Beijing's markets. As befitting its long history, the area remained one of the most important commercial districts in Beijing, the site of many of the city's most famous businesses and restaurants, but it lost the preeminence it had enjoyed for five hundred years.

Changes in the relationship between the Inner and Outer Cities during the Republican era disrupted the Qian Gate district. The Inner City benefited from more municipal construction. From 1915 to 1930, the Inner City districts in which Wangfujing and Xidan were located received 5,701 meters of paved asphalt road. In contrast, the Outer City districts in which the Qian Gate area was located received only 2,318 meters in total and had fewer macadam roads. New opportunities in the Inner City multiplied. Qing restrictions on Inner City commerce had vanished, and the residences of the wealthy were still concentrated there. Changan Avenue became the city's main artery, so cross-town traffic no longer needed to pass through the Qian Gate area. Consequently, as one observer reported of the Qian Gate district, "The streets there have deteriorated, and transportation is inconvenient. Since the



- 1. Bei yaowangmiao (North Temple of Medicine King)
- 2. Hugosu (Temple of Guarding the Country)
- 3. Dong yaowangmiao (East Temple of Medicine King)
- 4. Xinjiekou
- 5. Xisi
- 6. Di'an Gate
- 7. Longfusi (Temple of Great Happiness)
- 8. Dongsi
- 9. Baitasi (Temple of White Tower)
- 10. Xidan
- 11. Tudimiao (Temple of Earth)
- 12. Caishikou (Vegetable Market)
- 13. Liulichang
- 14. Qian Gate
- 15. Dongdan
- 16. Tianqiao
- 17. Yaowangmiao (Temple of Medicine King)
- 18. Chongwai (Out of Chongwen Gate)
- 19. Huashi (Flower Market)
- 20. Wangfujing

Figure 18. Market system of Republican Beijing.

streets in the Inner City have been improved, many shops have moved to Wangfujing Avenue and Xidan Arch. The prosperous center in the Outer City has gradually become desolate.”<sup>11</sup>

The reactions of Qian Gate’s merchants to these changes also impeded the area’s recovery. Although some merchants tried to become more up-to-date by changing their shop facades to baroque or other Western styles, others did not attempt to adopt strategies that might have helped preserve the area’s commercial preeminence. At a time when the city was being reshaped into a grid of interconnected districts, the Qian Gate merchants tended to think more in terms of their individual shops than of their district as a whole. Proposals to rebuild streets in the Qian Gate area were made in 1931 and 1932, but the shops targeted for relocation refused to cooperate. The project was postponed until 1934, when Yuan Liang became mayor. Yuan, determined to carry out the project, offered the shops three times their property values to compensate for their losses. But again, the fifteen shops that had been requested to move barraged the newspapers and government with telegrams and petitions. They argued that in the years before the capital had moved to Nanjing, when the Qian Gate district had been far more active, with vehicles streaming by every day and night, no one had labeled poor roads an inconvenience and hence roads were not the issue. Finally, the Department of Administration of the central government ordered the Beiping municipal government to force the shops to move.<sup>12</sup>

Wangfujing’s development accelerated in the late Qing, but its major boom came during the Republican era. When the Empress Dowager Cixi returned to Beijing after her flight from the Eight Allied Forces to Xi’an, she decided to repair streets in the Inner City, in addition to spending a huge amount of government funds to repair the Summer Palace. In 1903, when the repair project reached Dongan Gate Avenue, merchants there were forced to move to a military training ground in Wangfujing. Booths were set up around the military practice hall, mainly selling food as well as some toys and groceries. Many Qian Gate area merchants whose establishments had been destroyed in the conflagration of 1900 also opened shops in Wangfujing.<sup>13</sup> A permanent market was thus launched in the Inner City where only individual shops and temple markets had existed before, providing not only goods for daily use but also domestic and foreign imported fabrics, toys, food, and entertainment. Dongan Market soon became one of the most famous and prosperous markets in Beijing.<sup>14</sup> Initially, conditions at the market were

rudimentary. As at temple markets, wares were strewn on the ground and under tarpaulins. The market closed early in the afternoon or in bad weather. Hawkers sold food, combs, hair accessories, face powder, toys, and secondhand clothes. Market reforms occurred gradually. To prevent the fights that often broke out over booth locations, a merchant committee was organized in 1906, and later the Police Department re-ordered the market, dividing it into three tidy aisles. In the same year, a eunuch opened the Jixiang Tea Garden, the first theater built in the Inner City since the Qing ban on them early in the dynasty. The market soon flourished.<sup>15</sup>

Geographically close to the Legation Quarter and by-products of Western and Japanese powers in Beijing, many of the commercial establishments at Wangfujing were owned by foreign merchants, and almost all of them sold imported goods. The small French-owned Hotel de Pekin, built in 1907 at the south entrance of Wangfujing Avenue, constructed a seven-story French-style addition in 1917. In 1915, John D. Rockefeller purchased the residence of Prince Yu, just up the street from the hotel, and established the Union Hospital.<sup>16</sup> Among the foreign companies that moved into Wangfujing in the 1920s and 1930s were seven British owned, three American owned, and others owned by German, French, Russian, and Japanese merchants. Many banks, department stores, insurance companies, and hotels followed. The 1934 *Directory of Members of the Beiping Chamber of Commerce* listed 136 businesses in Wangfujing as members. Foreign-owned establishments included the City Bank, the French Oriental Huili Bank, the Sino-Russian Daosheng Bank, and Hengdeli and Liwei Companies, which dealt in clocks, diamonds, and gold and silver utensils. Ligu and Xinhua Companies dealt in silk, wool, hats, and shoes. Wulusheng and Fulong Companies handled high-end fashion, fabrics, cosmetics, and decor; Shenchang and Siemens Companies specialized in engines, chemicals, electrical parts, and barbering tools; Pinde and Hengshun Companies profited from holding auctions. Offices for Texaco and Exxon, which monopolized north China's foreign oil trade, were also housed there. Some affluent Chinese-run businesses moved onto the avenue as well, such as Renli Carpet Company (owned by a Qinghua University professor who had returned from the United States), whose clientele was mainly foreign, and the Tongshenghe and Shengxifu hat and shoe stores.<sup>17</sup>

Encouraged by the changes in government policies, a market also sprouted in Xidan in the late Qing. In 1913, six shops pooled resources

to form a Xidan Shangchang (store). Some boutiques, industrial goods stores (*yanghuo zhuang*), and a vegetable market opened there later. Guixiangcun, a popular southern-style bakery, established its business there in 1916. Theaters and cinemas also sprung up, and Xidan became the commercial center for the city's west side.<sup>18</sup> Even after the capital moved to Nanjing in 1928, Xidan kept growing, acquiring customers from the declining Qian Gate district,<sup>19</sup> and the district expanded to over 150 shops, three hundred booths, and several banks.<sup>20</sup>

Although all the new indoor markets and stores shared the characteristics of permanence and a wide variety of offered goods, their styles differed in important ways. If the Western-run stores can be termed boutiques, the markets run by Chinese owners more often inherited elements from old-style outdoor trading and temple markets, which combined trading with many other functions, including entertainment. At Quanyechang, merchants could rent space in the store to set up their own booths, and gradually sales, services, and entertainment were all combined under one roof.<sup>21</sup> This same pattern also occurred at Xidan Market. Dongan Market provides an even better example. It was a sheltered, permanent shopping center, organized not by local custom but by police. But in many ways it still resembled a temple fair. Merchants rented booths, and the assortment of goods ranged from the elegant to the simple, even the shabby. Students found stationery and books, old and new. There were Western- and Chinese-style restaurants and snack shops. Forms of entertainment ranged from the game of pool to outdoor folk performances moved indoors, including martial arts exhibitions, magic shows, performing monkeys and bears, wrestling, and comedians. The market's customers were the relatively well-off, who were not only the new elite, the "modern" students, but also Qing aristocrats.<sup>22</sup> Despite its location in Wangfujing, Dongan Market maintained an atmosphere different from that of the district's department and specialty stores. Although, like them, and unlike the old markets dominated by the rhythms of the agricultural seasons, it offered most of its goods year round, its style provided a sense of continuity and thus comfort. The indoor permanent markets in Republican Beijing thus differed from the department stores with fixed prices, such as the Bon Marché.<sup>23</sup> Not surprisingly, these markets contributed greatly to the creation of a distinctive image for Beijing. Tourist literature tended to record a visit to Dongan Market as a unique local experience rather than simply a trip to purchase commodities. And in Shanghai, Dongan Market was the inspiration for establishing a similar market that was a great success.

### CONSUMPTION AS A NATIONAL PROJECT

The creation of new commercial centers, like most other modernizing projects, was initiated by the national and municipal governments in Beijing. Large-scale indoor markets and districts of permanent shops were the primary focus of this new development. In the beginning of the twentieth century, the Qing government encouraged commerce in Beijing as part of its reform policies, although it was unable to accomplish much in this brief and traumatic period. The new commercial establishments of this period in many ways were influenced by and intentionally resembled world expositions and industrial exhibitions. At the end of the Qing, the government constructed an exhibition hall for industrial promotion on Guang'an Gate Avenue, an establishment similar to a Western-style department store. The Republican government continued the efforts initiated during the New Policy Reform era, establishing more permanent indoor markets and department stores, including the Store of Industrial Promotion (Quanyechang), Wenhua Department Store, Xi'an, Guang'an, and Xidan Markets, and Dongan Market—the largest indoor market in the city.

The earliest Chinese-owned commercial site devoted to industrial goods in Republican Beijing was the Capital Exhibit for Industrial Promotion (Jingshi quangong chenlie suo), established by the Municipal Council in 1914. As the name suggests, the creation of commercial centers was not considered merely a project to satisfy individual material needs. The government sought to promote and guide a new style of consumption that it linked to domestic industrial production and national strength. This policy constituted a major change from the Qing, when imperial policies restricted commercial activities in Beijing. The Capital Exhibit's two-story Western-style structure was built on the most prosperous street in the Qian Gate district, which was later renamed Quanyechang (Store of Industrial Promotion). The purpose of this establishment was, by displaying national products, to encourage people to develop industry. Most of the goods sold there, however, were in fact handicraft products, including jewelry, metalwork, rural products, linen, silk, and embroidery.<sup>24</sup>

In 1915, the Department of Agriculture and Commerce proposed establishing an exhibition hall to promote national products (Guohuo zhanlan hui).<sup>25</sup> The best products from each province were to be chosen and exhibited to facilitate comparison and to determine which were the most competitive. More than one thousand types of products were

shipped to the Taisui Hall in the Temple of Heaven, where the emperors had prayed for better harvests every year in the past. The exhibition was held from September 1 to 15 in 1915. It drew on world expositions as models: even its shelves were borrowed from the Zhili Province Committee for the Panama-Pacific Exposition.<sup>26</sup> Bulletins were printed and distributed to help people understand the purpose of the exhibition:

European and American countries take the world as their market. For this reason, they invite all the countries in the world to send their best products when they organize expositions. The exhibitions are not limited to one place or time. Our country has a long history of production and inventions; buildings, clothing, vehicles, and weapons used by our ancestors have all been recorded in books. Since the treaty ports were opened, however, our country's production has declined. People have been concerned about this situation, paying close attention to production in the interior, which will improve if we work on it persistently. Due to the limited efforts in introducing national products to people, however, their market is very small. There is no hope of improving [national products] if we do not have a means of comparison. We must attract the attention of the world if we want to be ranked high in its commercial activities; we must start our efforts within the country if we want to benefit our people.<sup>27</sup>

Using the rhetoric of “survival of the fittest,” the organizer presented the promotion of national products as a key factor determining a nation’s power.<sup>28</sup>

The sponsors of the exhibition believed that Beijing had to be the place to carry out this task of promoting national products because it was “the center of the country” and because its “material civilization has been the highest in history.”<sup>29</sup> They argued that “all specialists and craftsmen gathered here. Its refined products are famous far and wide. In the past, it was recognized by everyone as the best place in the whole country.” The city’s economy, however, had been lagging, and the exhibition sponsors identified the cause as “lack of proper methods of promotion”: “Craftsmanship has declined, so has the supply of resources. Even the daily needs of people are not satisfied....[The purpose of the exhibition] is to preserve the intrinsic ability of a big city, to recover its lost reputation, to expand its economy, and to serve the interests of the whole city.”<sup>30</sup> The sponsors observed that during the Qing dynasty, many of the goods required in daily life by the palace and officials had been produced in Beijing. The exhibition would contribute to the revival of the city’s deteriorating craftsmanship. The envisioned participants were those who wanted to expand their business or to establish a reputation for their products. Everyone who had things to show could

take advantage of the exhibition. “If they improve their products to fit the needs of ordinary people, those things that used to be sold only in Beijing can be sold to the whole country. Beijing products...will become national products. It will not be difficult for the declining economy to revive.”<sup>31</sup> Qing Beijing, once home to thousands of master craftsmen serving the palace and once the center of an elaborate network of tribute trade, had previously boasted an astonishing array of exotic and refined treasures. The exhibit’s promoters dreamed that Beijing could now regain its preeminence and revive the nation by catering to the consumption requirements of ordinary people rather than the luxurious lifestyle of the imperial household and the elite.

State-sponsored events to promote industrial production were not only occasions to guide consumption but also opportunities to transform the masses into citizens. The exhibition hall opened with an elaborately scripted official ceremony in which every step was scrupulously planned and every symbol carefully chosen. The whole ceremony bespoke national authority. A bell was rung and the opening was announced. After the playing of the national anthem, officials and representatives of the participants made speeches.<sup>32</sup> The exhibition emphasized organization and order as opposed to the zealous agitation of the hard sell. People had to purchase entrance tickets and follow designated routes marked by wooden signs. Visitors were not allowed to cluster and crowd together or to touch the exhibits. They had to behave in a “civilized way”—smoking, spitting, and shouting were strictly prohibited.<sup>33</sup>

The same combination of consumption and discipline, in this case through spatial organization, was expressed in another major project the Municipal Council undertook to promote commerce: the development of a model market, Xiangchang Market. To bypass resistance to transforming old markets, the municipal government planned to construct one at a “new proper location” so that streets and shops would be in perfect order, merchandise could be controlled, and public health would be ensured. The government hoped that other markets would follow this model and that gradually the capital would become “orderly” and “new,” factors considered “crucial...in reviving the nation.”<sup>34</sup> In 1914, a plan for the market was drawn up and the project began. The commercial district was bordered by the Temple of Agriculture to the south, Hufangqiao Avenue to the north, Hufang Road to the west, and Liuxue Road to the east. Fourteen new streets formed a grid. The previously existing streets in the district were to be repaired. The lots along the streets were numbered for people to rent. Building styles

and construction schedules had to be approved by the council to ensure that the streets would have an ordered appearance. In 1918, 90 percent of the land had already been rented, and business in the area increased.<sup>35</sup> The new, wide, straight streets contrasted sharply with the previous layout of houses. The dilapidated dwellings that had once faced the old streets were cut off from the new ones and enclosed in the middle of street blocks, with access limited to narrow gaps between the new construction. Restricted by the regulations, the poor could not afford to build houses along the streets.

Part of the government's goal, the creation of a certain level of orderliness, was achieved in the new commercial establishments. The newly evolving hierarchy of the market system, however, did not conform to the government's expectation for the promotion of national production. Contrary to the government's plan, the most striking development in the city was the shops in Wangfujing, where imported goods were concentrated.

#### CONSUMPTION AS SOCIAL STATUS

The reshuffling of Beijing's market hierarchy was one of the by-products of the changing relationship between consumption and social status. Certain famous stores and markets, as if their fortunes were wedded to those of the past empire, sank into bankruptcy along with their formerly affluent clientele; others reoriented their services toward the "anonymous consumer," and still others helped to create and confirm the status of a new group of wealthy and famous urbanites. In a sense, social status could be expressed through the ability to participate in modern consumption and access goods now available at all seasons and times. Through a comparison of some commercial establishments at Wangfujing, Xidan, and the Qian Gate/Dashilar districts, this section will examine two types of consumption: one by elite consumers who had already established their high status and the other by anonymous consumers who aimed, in part, to acquire status.

Who were the anonymous consumers? It is easier to begin with a negative definition. Anonymous consumers were not the poor, who had very little left from their income after they paid for housing and food. The poor composed anywhere from 25 percent to 75 percent of Beijing's populace, depending on where the poverty line was drawn, and ranged from those who were destitute to those who could sustain themselves but barely had any extra income. According to Tao Menghe's 1930 survey,

low- (not including the destitute) and middle-income families, such as those of many clerks, bank tellers, policemen, elementary school teachers, craftsmen, and rickshaw pullers, constituted about 75 percent of the city's population. These families spent more than 70 percent of their income on food. On average, each person in this category had 3 pieces of summer clothing, 1.5 pieces of fall and spring clothing, and 2.4 pieces of winter clothing. Only one-fourth of these people had anything to wear when they washed their summer clothes, and less than one-fourth had anything to wear when they washed their winter clothes. Those who did not had to borrow clothes from other family members on wash days. Wearing undergarments in the winter was considered a luxury. These families tailored their clothes at home, remaking adult clothes into children's, turning winter clothes into summer ones, and patching the old into the wearable. But the fabric they used generally came from England, Japan, and Shanghai.<sup>36</sup> Utensils used in these families were mostly handicraft products, such as clay pots and washbasins, brooms, and weed mats. They were cheap and simple but short lasting. Tao observed that modern industrial products such as enamel, glass, and metal wares were rarely seen in these households and were considered luxury objects but that machine-woven cotton fabric and kerosene were consumed in every family.<sup>37</sup>

The poor could not fully enjoy the liberating anonymity of the new consumerist Beijing. The shabbily clad and the shirtless, sweating laborers were not welcome in shops or public parks. Anonymity entails the ability to detach oneself from a specific environment, neighborhood, or identity and to move freely through the total array of urban spaces. The poor might be able to muster the resources to dress up for a day in the park or to enter a shop for an important purchase, but not without great effort. Neither could they regularly afford public transport. The city was generally less accessible to them, and modern shops were less comfortable for them. It was thus Beijing's vaguely middle-class citizens, the majority of whom worked for governmental or (higher) educational institutions or were living in the city temporarily as students, who, finding the standards of dress and deportment no major impediment, could casually enter public parks and stores and immerse themselves in the transitory pleasures and fantasies of consumerism. When compared to the more rigid status culture of the Qing, this consumer culture appears egalitarian and liberating, but when it is set in the context of Beijing's massive poverty, its exclusiveness becomes apparent.

With the fall of the Qing, the indispensable trappings of dynastic loyalty and prestige, such as queues and official robes and hats, suddenly be-

came scorned fashions, and many shops in the Qian Gate area that had set the standards of Qing style now found the scale of market prestige value suddenly inverted. The shoe shop Neiliansheng and hat shop Majuyuan are cases in point. Neiliansheng, which opened in 1853 with capital invested by a Qing official, crafted special boots (*chaoxue*, or court boots) for the imperial bureaucrats. The shop's name meant "to rise three ranks wearing our boots." Each pair was custom made with the highest-quality fabric in the country, ordered from Nanjing. The shop kept a record of the measurements of every official who had ordered boots, a system very convenient for repeat customers. The records also made it easy to order a perfectly fitted pair of boots as a gift or bribe. But after 1911, court boots were strictly passé. Neiliansheng adjusted, making a kind of cotton shoe to go along with men's robes. By the 1930s, however, Western suits and uniforms, which required the complement of leather shoes, dominated fashionable dress, and Neiliansheng's clientele dwindled.<sup>38</sup> The Majuyuan hat shop, which had served Qing officials, underwent a similar experience but eventually prospered. Having lost its biggest customer, the Qing government, it turned to making "small melon caps" and winter hats, and in the 1930s and 1940s it began making Western-style wool hats. Through these adjustments it survived the vagaries of fashion.<sup>39</sup>

In contrast to Neiliansheng, Tianchengzhai, a shoe shop that had been less dependent on the imperial court, now fared better. According to a well-known saying in Beijing, officials and big bosses bought their shoes at Neiliansheng while the ordinary people bought their shoes at Tianchengzhai. Orienting its business toward ordinary consumers and following trends closely, Tianchengzhai made leather shoes, rain boots, and embroidered women's shoes.<sup>40</sup> Shengxifu, a hat store, was another rising star. It was owned by Liu Xisan, an entrepreneur who had risen from the poverty of the Shandong countryside to establish a patented, brand-name straw hat called "Three Hats." In contrast to the traditional "small melon caps" sold by Majuyuan, Liu Xisan's shops in the Qian Gate district, Wangfujing, and Xidan prospered by selling "fashion hats for different seasons" for both men and women.<sup>41</sup>

The benefits of marketing to the city's growing assortment of anonymous consumers were further demonstrated by Yizhao Department Store. Opened in 1935, it sold products from Shanghai and Japan. Shirts, towels, socks, and cosmetics were shipped from Shanghai; tooth powder, soap, and fragrances from Japan. The store had representatives stationed in Osaka, buying Japanese face cream, soap, steel cookware, and cashmere yarn. It was the appointed dealer in several brands of Jap-

anese cosmetics that other shops could buy only through Yizhao. The store also monopolized certain local products and controlled some small workshops nearby. Yizhao supplied them with yarns and design patterns, practiced quality control, and purchased goods from them at a lower price than from other places.<sup>42</sup>

As Wangfujing and Xidan flourished, the markets and their clientele underwent a qualitative change, with Xidan in every way the disciple of the trendsetting Wangfujing. Although Dongan Market at Wangfujing first thrived by attracting Beijing's new anonymous consumers, its businesses steadily narrowed their sights on the rising new social elite. Wangfujing's growth was propelled by the economic clout and tastes of foreigners from the Legation Quarter, located just to the south. Members of the foreign community were key customers at Wangfujing's fifteen antique stores and at the over one hundred antique dealers in Dongan Market.<sup>43</sup> In a 1921 *Peking Utility Book*, jointly published by several Western women's organizations (the Mothers' Club of Peking, the Peking Friday Study Club, and the Peking American College Women's Club), Wangfujing was recommended as the place to buy beads, dishes, lace, linen, and toys and to get dry cleaning done.<sup>44</sup>

Wealthy Chinese also frequented Wangfujing, which was the only district to provide services such as dry cleaning, fashionable hair salons, and Western drugstores. There were grand department stores and shops offering the latest in Western fashions and furnishings. Out of thirty-eight tailor shops making Western-style suits in Beijing, twenty-two were located on Wangfujing Avenue.<sup>45</sup> During this period, Wangfujing was constantly characterized as *yang*—“modern” and “Western,” or simply “foreign.” As one Chinese visitor to Beijing put it:

Once you step from your vehicle, you will likely be shocked, thinking that you have just left East Jiaomin Alley and entered a concession. Otherwise why are there so many foreign masters (*yang daren*)? Stores and buildings rise in the north and south; some of the billboards are full of ABCs [Western alphabet]. The crowds here are all modern-minded people, big and small, male and female (*da modeng, xiao modeng, nan modeng, nu modeng*)—in the summer they all expose their bosoms and arms, crowding in the streets. It is really a little bit indecorous (*nage*)....At night, electric lights try to outshine each other, visitors throng. Who would not feel dizzy and confused when visiting this place for the first time?<sup>46</sup>

Indeed, such dazzling spectacles of rampant consumerism had more often been described for treaty port cities like Shanghai and Tianjin than for Beijing.

Wangfujing was Beijing's fount of fashion. Shop owners subscribed to Western fashion magazines and studied the costumes in foreign movies.<sup>47</sup> Window shoppers were expected to dress as fashionably as the merchandise in the windows. A newspaper article noted:

This place seems seasonless. The modern misses are already wearing thin summer clothes while old ladies are still in cotton-padded pants with the ends tied up.... The Avenue is crowded. One [person] after another, running like a weaving shuttle. One shop after another...all the items sold here are the most fashionable clothes, fabrics, and expensive cosmetics. Even the goods for daily use are extremely refined.<sup>48</sup>

The description of Wangfujing as "seasonless" captures the essence of modern consumption. Wangfujing projected the aura, so much more astonishing in modernity's earlier stages, of transcending nature. With its asphalt streets, dirt free and smooth regardless of weather, its array of select merchandise encompassing the latest fashions from China and abroad, regardless of the season, and its shop fronts lighted inside and out by an electric radiance that dispelled the night, Wangfujing shone as the epitome of capitalist modernity—the market of eternally recurring newness that defied the cycles of natural time.

The changing business practices in Beijing's shops reflected a fundamental transformation in the social and cultural meaning of consumption. The clash of attitudes between shops that had served Qing eminences and shops targeting the new anonymous consumer is neatly portrayed in "An Old Shop" ("Lao zihao"), a short story by Lao She, Beijing's literary spokesman. Xin, the narrator of the story, has been a shop clerk for almost twenty years at Sanhexiang, a long-established fabric store. Xin cherishes the shop's old ways. But when old manager Qian is replaced by Zhou, the shop is utterly changed. In the old times, the shop had no glamorous decorations, no discounts or sales, and no advertising. Instead, it relied on its "old reputation." Manager Qian sat in the shop quietly, as did the clerks, who would only respond honestly to what customers needed, never attempting to convince them to buy what they did not request. The shop, like its customers, had "dignity." To Xin, the new manager Zhou has turned the shop into a "street-walker" (*ye ji*), his shameless selling tactics spilling out into the street. A signboard is set up with large characters announcing sales. Musicians play in front of the shop while the clerks, outfitted in matching red hats, pelt the passersby with fliers. No matter how meager the purchase, the clerks now must hand the customer a cigarette; even the lowly soldiers, janitors, and waitresses are treated this way. Clerks also have to give

gifts to and chat with customers. If the shop does not have what a customer wants, clerks are to extemporize and convince him or her to buy something else. The shop becomes blatantly dishonest. When Japanese goods are banned, the shop sells Japanese fabric, claiming to both customers and investigators that it is German, English, or Chinese. This deceit is very profitable. Due to his great success, the new manager Zhou is soon lured away by a better job at a bigger shop, and the old manager Qian returns. Sanhexiang regains its former composure and dignity. All its customers, however, follow Zhou to his new shop, and Sanhexiang goes bankrupt within a year.<sup>49</sup>

As the story suggests, the major difference between shops like the two Sanhexiangs under old-style and new-style management concerned advertising and promotion. Old-style shops that had served Qing officials offered no discounts or sales. Such practices would imply that its customers cared about saving a small amount of money or, in other words, about gaining a petty advantage—an attitude that did not befit an official. Both merchants and customers emphasized the authenticity of the merchandise and honest prices. The consumers' social status was already established, not determined by what they purchased. Overt concern with the monetary aspects of the transaction was avoided and in fact was seen as a threat to the status quo. This translated into business practices that downplayed business: there were no promotions, no sales, no tricks. In the words of the literary critic Zhao Yuan, it was the nonprofessionalism in commerce that was appreciated. An ideal merchant was one who did not behave like a businessman.<sup>50</sup> The Qian Gate area shops that had epitomized luxury in the Qing essentially borrowed their prestige from their official patrons, much as the moon radiates the brilliance of the sun.

Shops catering to the well-off anonymous consumers of the Republic, like those of Xidan, were different. A Beijing resident noted that when a lady took her children shopping for ten *yuan* worth of goods, the clerk would give them two to three *yuan* of toys and that if an order was placed by phone, the shop would deliver ten possible choices, even if they knew that they might not be able to sell anything.<sup>51</sup> Shops pandered to customers' illusions that their worth was determined by the commodities they owned. Sales aimed at convincing people that they were getting something they otherwise could not afford, a sort of status boost. Prices were the new social filter, the new walls and gates of Beijing. The shop clerks' eager fawning was aimed at inflating customer egos and ensuring that purchases would be made.

At the highest level, the most famous shops at Wangfujing confirmed their customers' social status in a manner reminiscent of the Qian Gate shops of the Qing. The prices in these establishments, like the ceremonial gates of the palace, were conspicuously high and exclusive—consumers able to pay them were never merely anonymous. And in certain cases money was not enough. A rich prostitute wearing furs might still be refused service at one of these stores. The most famous stores in Wangfujing served foreign diplomats, missionaries, professors, doctors at the Union and German Hospitals, wealthy merchants, and the children of wealthy families. The famous Peking Opera performers Li Wanchun, Li Shaochun, Ye Shenglan, and Ye Shengzhang had suits made there, as did Nationalist air force officers. Yanjing University President J. Leighton Stuart was a customer that shops were proud of having.<sup>52</sup>

The increasing ease with which money could be directly converted into social status disturbed a great many residents of Beijing, since power there had long been politically, not economically, based. It could therefore be concluded that Lao She's morality tale of managerial techniques is nostalgic. But his critique of mercenary salesmanship touches upon an essential element of consumer capitalism. His comparison of the new-style shop to a "streetwalker" brings to mind Walter Benjamin's description of the prostitute as "commodity and seller in one" and his statement that, in prostitution, "the commodity tries to look itself in the face."<sup>53</sup> The danger of rampant consumerism was that the integrity of the once respectable salesman, and his customer too perhaps, would also be for sale. By shamelessly encouraging people's desire for commodities, consumerism threatened to degrade people to the level of living commodities.

The shops of Wangfujing, as pacesetters for the new consumption, were backed up by the economic, political, and cultural/symbolic powers of strong foreign states. They showed perfect confidence in their independence from temporal pressures in conducting business: they did not have to rush to sell and could instead afford to wait for the famous to come to their doors. The shops in the Qian Gate district, in contrast, had to try hard to catch up; they were very often breathless and had to resort to "streetwalker"-style sales. Meanwhile, the majority of Beijing's residents, who did not qualify to be counted among the new anonymous consumers, continued to shop at temple markets and secondhand goods markets. But even they were in some ways affected by the new temporal order, as the following section will show.

### LESSER MARKETS FOR THE LESSER PEOPLE: TEMPLE MARKETS

Prior to 1911, temple markets (*miao shi*) in Beijing not only had commercial functions but, as Susan Naquin points out in her *Peking: Temples and City Life, 1400–1900*, “helped define an undifferentiated urban community” and “helped distinguish Peking and its culture in the minds of outsiders.” “For vendors, the inhabitants of the Inner and Outer Cities may have been different constituencies, but all were customers. The openness of these markets likewise created times and places when and where people of all kinds could meet and mix, even if their purchasing power varied greatly. Knowledge of the market schedule, familiarity with the goods supplied, expertise about the best bargains, memories of the best snacks—these defined insiders.”<sup>54</sup> This was no longer the situation during the Republican years. After the 1911 Revolution, temples gradually lost their religious functions and relied on commercial fairs to survive, experiencing what Naquin calls “parallel processes of secularization and commercialization.”<sup>55</sup> Applications by many temples to the government for permission to hold more fair days reveal a trend toward commercialization.<sup>56</sup> But this effort could not alter a larger trend: the temple markets would have their fate determined by whether they could adapt to the new rhythms of consumption. Temple markets originally followed the Chinese lunar calendar, and most declined when this established way of measuring time according to natural and agricultural cycles and seasonal festivals was replaced by the “national calendar” (*guo li*), which was the Western calendar. The new calendar marked time by seven-day weeks, in accordance with work schedules for governmental and educational institutions. The discrepancy between the two temporal orders created a social division: temple markets came to be used primarily by relatively lower-class families and especially the women in these families. But even as most of the temple markets serving people’s everyday needs declined, those serving the foreign community and tourists prospered, for they were able to adapt to the new temporal order.

There were four types of gatherings at temples in Beijing before the Republican era: incense fairs (*xianghuo*) for religious purposes; spring ground fairs (*chunchang*) for outings; temple markets (*miaoshi*) as periodic religious, commercial, and entertainment events, and markets (*shiji*). Incense fairs disappeared as popular religion declined in the face of the Republican government’s opposition. Some temple markets became permanent markets. The remaining temple fairs tended to lose

many of their previous social and cultural functions, and their commercial function was increasingly seen as separate from religion.<sup>57</sup> During the Republican years, horse races at Nanding and martial arts contests at Zhongding, which mostly involved young Manchu men, died out. The ceremonies held by the state at the Wenchang Temple were discontinued, and the temple fair there ended. Gone too was the fair at Caolaogongguan inside Xizhi Gate, where children's toys were sold and martial arts were performed. The city god's parade stopped in 1900. The fair at the Temple of Earth (*Tudi miao*), formerly held on two days in each month, was reduced to being held on only one day. The Huguosi fair survived, but on a smaller scale. In the past, the west city had been occupied by Manchu families who purchased household necessities at the Huguosi fair, but in the Republican period, the decline of these families, and the fact that those who were still wealthy went to shop at the stores instead, led to the fair's decline. The only new fair in the Republican era opened in 1918 at Haiwang Village.<sup>58</sup>

Whereas in earlier times temple markets had attracted people from all levels of society, in the Republican era they no longer served the general population but rather met the needs of groups excluded from the emerging world of new-style consumption. This tendency was evidenced in the types of goods sold at temple markets, as well as in the types of consumers who patronized them and even the location of the fairs.

The merchandise available at temple markets was mostly rural handicrafts for "old-style (*lao shi*) households' daily needs."<sup>59</sup> Woodwork such as chests, buckets, and furniture and household tools such as dusters, frames, kettles, pots, and scissors were generally produced by peasants living near Beijing. "National" (industrial) products included building materials, pottery, leather goods, food, paper products, books, and parts for vehicles and carts, such as metal chains. Foreign items, predominantly cosmetics, enamel wares, and fabrics, were mostly smuggled in. Pets and plants, many of them bred by people living in Beijing, were also available at the temple markets.<sup>60</sup> This merchandise targeted a certain type of consumer, basically "lower-middle class people, many of them housewives."<sup>61</sup> As noted by the 1937 survey conducted by the Beiping National College, although Dongan Market and Xidan Department Stores also sold many kinds of goods for daily use, they were mostly new-style articles; and the buyers were "upper-class gentlemen, ladies, young masters and young ladies."<sup>62</sup> Prices at temple markets were determined by haggling and were not necessarily lower than in stores like Xidan Depart-

ment Store. But the lower-middle-class women “lived in the corners of the city, and it was hard for them to go to stores. Besides, they could pick and choose goods at temple markets and bargain freely. In the stores the prices were fixed, and they could not bargain.”<sup>63</sup> Department stores and indoor markets could appear intimidating and forbidding and were often so in reality if the shopper was not dressed properly. The 1937 survey pointed out that women were the ones who did shopping for the house because they were “better at choosing household items.” “Another reason that women in Beiping’s lower-middle class families” frequented temple markets was that they “rarely go out to have fun, and shopping at temple markets is a time for them to enjoy some entertainment.” For this reason, some of the residents in the Baitasi area called temple markets “fairs for the ones-in-the-house” (wives) to go to.<sup>64</sup>

Entertainments at temple markets were tailored to fit the tastes of the lower-middle-class audience. They were commercial activities, in contrast to the entertainment that people found for themselves at incense fairs and spring outings, and in contrast to ceremonies entertaining the gods. The theaters at temple markets featured Beijing opera, singing, *pingxi*, *dagu* (singing to the accompaniment of drum), and motion pictures shown by sunlight. In the areas reserved for entertainment were comic shows, panoramas, monographs, magic shows, martial arts performances, wrestling, and fortune telling. Missionaries also made use of the occasion to proselytize.<sup>65</sup>

There were three different levels of entertainment at temple markets. At the highest level, an area was encircled by a piece of cloth, and an opening was left for the entrance. The troupe set up a platform and provided seats for men on one side and women on the other. This arrangement was “particularly suited to Beiping women’s customs,” according to which proper women should not mix with men in public.<sup>66</sup> At the next level, a table was set in an empty area, with the space in front serving as the stage. Three rows of benches provided mixed seating for men and women. At the lowest level, there was no table. Wherever the actors performed was the stage, and the audience was left standing. All of these performances were very cheap. Attendance at the highest level cost only three coppers, and the second and third levels left payment up to the audience’s discretion.<sup>67</sup>

Like the population they served, sixteen of the twenty temple markets in Beijing proper were located in poor neighborhoods, far from the major commercial centers and close to the city gates. The central area of the city hosted no temple markets. Out of thirty-six temples that hosted



Figure 19. Shopkeeper with household goods for sale at an outdoor market. Photo by Hedda Morrison; courtesy of the Harvard-Yenching Library.

fairs, nine were in the Inner City, eleven were in the Outer City, and sixteen were in the suburbs.<sup>68</sup> Fairs in the North City were mostly held in good weather so that people could take suburban outings (*jiao you*). Fairs near the city's center were usually held in the middle of the year and served more religious than commercial functions.

Four out of the five most popular fairs, the Tudi miao, Huashi ji, Baitasi, and Huguosi, were held in the corners of the city, close to the city gates and far from commercial centers; the exception was Longfusi. There were no temple markets within the triangle formed by Wangfujing, Xidan, and the Qian Gate district.<sup>69</sup> In contrast, in the outlying

areas of the city, shops were fewer and there was more open ground. Most of Beijing's lower-class families lived in these areas, and their daily needs were supplied mostly by temple markets. The 1937 survey noted that "due to their lack of education," these people also participated in religious activities more than the "middle class" did.<sup>70</sup> More important, this distribution of temple markets was determined by the general pattern of consumption in the city. The 1937 survey explained that commerce in the central triangle area was of a "large-scale capitalist nature."<sup>71</sup> The sources of this area's goods were big factories and large handicraft workshops. In stores linked to big factories, the products of small handicrafts workshops and peasants were not allowed.

In the Republic, the big capitalist businesses planted their power in Dongan Market, Xidan Department Store, and the Qian Gate district. Though the five big temple markets also sold goods made by big handicraft workshops and factories, it was the huge amount of goods produced by small handicraft workshops and suburban peasants that really kept the temple markets in existence.<sup>72</sup>

To judge by the kinds of goods sold and the economic status of their customers, temple markets served their functions better when located closer to the city gates. These locations facilitated the introduction of goods from the countryside into the city and vice versa.<sup>73</sup>

The vendors at temple markets were not organized. There were no guilds or associations of any form, not even for publicly organized worship of gods. Most of the merchants had family businesses and preserved the spot where they set up their booths through connections with the temple.<sup>74</sup> They had no permanent shops and often spread their products directly on the dirt or on a layer of paper or cloth without stall signs.<sup>75</sup>

The exception among Beijing's temple markets was Longfusi. It was the only one located closer to a commercial center than to a city gate, and it was the only temple fair that prospered during the Republican period. Its merchandise also set it apart from other temple markets, since it featured ornaments and antiques that targeted the foreign population living in the East City and tourists.<sup>76</sup> Chen Zongfan, the author of one of the most important books detailing spatial changes in Republican Beijing, observed that "the East Temple (Longfusi) has everything, from antiques, paintings, birds and flowers to eagles and dogs, there is nothing missing there. Many Western men and women go to visit the market."<sup>77</sup> Although the temple of Longfusi was burned down in 1901 and all religious activities there ceased, this "temple" fair went on to be-



Figure 20. Woman selling paper flowers at New Year's. Photo by Hedda Morrison; courtesy of the Harvard-Yenching Library.

come the biggest of all the temple markets by catering primarily to the exotic tastes of expatriates.<sup>78</sup>

Compared to Longfusi, the West Temple, Huguosi, was a sorry collection of booths. According to Chen Zongfan, “only some flower booths are worth seeing, and all the rest is miscellaneous goods for daily use, folk entertainment (*za shua*), and food stalls: there is nothing special to be seen.”<sup>79</sup> A 1935 version of a Beijing tourist guide stated that “most of the booths look extremely desolate.”<sup>80</sup> In the words of the 1937 survey, visiting Huguosi was an ordeal:

The thing people find most unbearable is the lack of order and hygiene. Among the five temple markets, Huguosi is the oldest. When there is no temple fair there, it is very bleak,... worse than a village in the countryside. When there is a fair, all the grounds are covered by booths. Men and women crowd the streets, and dust flies; it is suffocating. If it is like this in the winter, it is especially unhealthy in the summer: the hot sun toasts people, the smell of sweat abounds. There are too many visitors, and traffic is extremely inconvenient. But because of the location of the temple and the cheap rent, merchants still gather there. It will not be easy to improve the situation.<sup>81</sup>

All temple markets might well have been similarly chaotic and filthy once, but when the ideal and focus became order and hygiene, places like Huguosi naturally appeared intolerable.

The 1937 survey predicted a grim future for temple markets and attributed their decline to the dwindling of religious activities in the city, the development of a capitalist economy, and the modernization process. By order of the government, the five biggest temple markets, Tudi miao, Huashi ji, Baitasi, Huguosi, and Longfusi, switched to the “national” or Western calendar, losing their original religious roots and gradually becoming pure commercial events.<sup>82</sup> The survey perceived the Republican period as a time when “Chinese capitalism is developing and Beiping gradually modernizes” and predicted that temple markets would either evolve into capitalist markets or disappear.<sup>83</sup> It pointed out that at the five temple markets more and more shops were becoming permanent, among them flower shops, teahouses, photo studios, and towel factories. Temple fair sites were gradually becoming commercial centers, Longfusi being the best example. The survey claimed that “incense fairs and spring ground fairs will gradually disappear, and be replaced by parks and museums. These changes are natural, there is nothing one can do about them.”<sup>84</sup>

Temple markets were not so much excluded from the new rhythms of consumption as negatively influenced by them. The pressure of the new temporal order visibly affected temple markets, throwing a pall over them. The only temple markets that could survive were those catering to consumers who in every sense belonged to the new temporal order but looked into the past for relics. These surviving temple markets lost both their religious meaning and their previous commercial function of serving ordinary people. The new rhythms of consumption determined the fate of the temple markets.

Social and political factors played crucial roles in shaping Beijing’s market system. In the Republican era, state promotion and regulation of markets, the development of a new transportation system, and the substantial power of the foreign population in Beijing all contributed to drastic changes in the market system.

In Qing Beijing, almost everyone depended on temple markets. The Qian Gate district, the most prestigious permanent market, though extremely important, nowhere near supplanted temple markets, which were attended even by people from the palace. But in Republican Beijing, the gap between commercial centers like Wangfujing and temple markets

like Huguosi grew very wide. Different types of consumption occurred in these two places, associated with distinct and specific histories, serving the needs of more and more clearly separated communities, involving goods that circulated through almost completely disconnected channels. A new, more rigidly stratified hierarchy of markets developed, one fundamentally different from the nested hierarchy posited in central-place theory. In that theory, the highest-level, most prestigious markets sell a huge array of products, including all the goods available at the smallest of periodic markets. This was clearly not so in Republican Beijing. Wangfujing did not sell the sort of homespun daily necessities and peasant handicrafts found at temple markets. The stratification of markets in the Republic indicated the rise of a segregated market pattern.

What qualities determined the new hierarchy of markets? Wangfujing, the most prestigious, was permanent, enclosed in a shell of Western architecture with a fully modern infrastructure that banished the inconveniences of diurnal and seasonal cycles and announced the reign of eternal, uniform commercial time. This new time, severed from nature, still had a pulse, a cycle known as fashion. Fashion animated Wangfujing and was reflected in its wide range of specialized, refined, and foreign goods that distinguished it as the top market in Beijing. Xidan, ranked second, in all matters emulated Wangfujing. The craving for consumption encouraged by blatant commercialism was seen by Lao She and others as a social acid, rapidly eating away at people's integrity, including their patriotism.

Analysis of Republican Beijing's markets must acknowledge the crucial influence of this new commercial temporal order, which accompanied the new spatial order discussed in Chapter 1. People and items circulated further and faster, and those that moved fastest and furthest were generally deemed the most valuable and important. The pace of the urban economy became steady and daily, not seasonal. While the livelihood of a peasant was determined for the year by the harvest in the fall, a rickshaw puller's livelihood was decided day by day. A merchant's prosperity was governed no longer primarily by the seasons and harvests but by international markets, local warlord skirmishes, and where the streetcar company laid its track. The new pace and uncertainties of city life forced urbanites to move in different patterns, ones less compatible with the cyclical nature of temple markets, which consequently declined.

A new pace of modern production and consumption began to dominate Beijing. The masses of Beijing's poor, however, were precluded by

poverty from keeping up with the pace of consumption. The poor could not keep up the pace in production either, for few industrial jobs and only a dwindling number of service economy jobs were available. Yet through intense daily labor and the plethora of tiny market transactions of recycling, Beijing's poor could attempt to keep up with the new pace. A description of a market system moving in a linear way toward modernization does not do justice to the complexity of the market system in Republican Beijing. Just as Beijing's market system did not fit in one single framework, so consumption by the city's residents was not a homogeneous practice. The modernizing market system created for the city an anonymous consumer class in which the emergence of "consumer democracy" is vaguely discernible, but it also contributed to the formation of a new distinctive social hierarchy, typified in Wangfujing, whose nature resembled that of the Qing in some aspects. Consumption both broke down and confirmed social status. The city did not become a unified consumption system until the mid-1950s.

If all the previously discussed forms of trading tended to divide the consuming population along class, status, or gender lines, the aspect of Beijing's business world that most tended to unite them was recycling, which involved items ranging from extremely expensive antiques to strips of rag. As Beijing's markets became stratified, separate circulatory systems, the activities of recycling, extended into every alley and brought every type of object into circulation. Recycling permeated all areas of Beijing and merged the seasonal, more nature-bound rhythms of agrarian production and consumption with the pulse of modernity. In the course of recycling, an object often moved in and out of different temporal cycles. In secondhand goods stores, multiple temporalities converged, mixing the present, the future, and the past. Recycling brought different temporal orders together and created a common one that encompassed the whole city. The next chapter will explore the economy of recycling through an examination of the Tianqiao district.

# Recycling

*The Tianqiao District*

During the 1920s and 1930s, “*guang Tianqiao*” (wandering around Tianqiao) was one of the most exciting activities for many of Beijing’s residents. Some travel guides published in those years listed Tianqiao under the category of “tourist attractions” along with ancient pagodas, imperial palaces, and newly opened parks. One of the guidebooks even pronounced that “it will be one’s greatest regret if one comes to Beijing from afar but does not have a glance at Tianqiao.”<sup>1</sup> But Tianqiao was distinguishable from the imperial relics that attracted tourists, for it was seen as the best example of “modern society.”<sup>2</sup> In the words of Zhong Ruoxia, a writer of the Republican period, “Tianqiao is the epitome of Beiping; it is a microcosm of life there.”<sup>3</sup>

A piece of imperial forbidden land in the Qing, Tianqiao (Bridge of Heaven) acquired its name from the nearby Temple of Heaven. During the early Republican years, it became the largest market serving the city’s poor residents, with the lowest prices and most varied forms of entertainment.<sup>4</sup> It was squalid, noisy, chaotic, yet lively and exciting—offering mostly face-lifted junk but occasionally an undetected jewel. It was the police’s first stop when hunting for thieves and criminals. It was also the preferred setting for literary works by the elite that expressed their sympathy toward the common people. In the 1930s, at least three books and several major articles recounted activities at Tianqiao.<sup>5</sup> When Xiangzi, the hero in Lao She’s novel *Rickshaw*, fell into the trap of Hu Niu, his wife-to-be, and felt threatened by the city, he ran to Tianqiao:

After the New Year holiday all the shop apprentices would have eaten their breakfast by nine o'clock and come here. Every kind of street stall, every sort of acrobat's platform, had been set up and arranged early in the day. These places were already surrounded by groups of people by the time Hsiang Tzu (Xiangzi) got there and the drums and gongs were sounding.... Ordinarily, the sights here, the mimics, the trained bears, the magicians and fortune-tellers, the folksingers, the storytellers, and the martial dancers, could give him a little real pleasure and make him open his mouth to laugh. T'ien Ch'iao (Tianqiao) accounts for half the reasons why he couldn't bear to leave Peking. He would recall many comical and delightful incidents every time he saw the booths and awnings of T'ien Ch'iao and the groups of people there.... No, he couldn't leave this delightful, exciting place. He couldn't leave T'ien Ch'iao. He couldn't leave Peking.<sup>6</sup>

Tianqiao's aura lured people like Xiangzi back and made life in Beijing survivable, and even enjoyable. It was one of the very few places in the city whose level of activity remained undiminished amid the declining economy of Beijing in the 1930s when the Nationalist government moved the central administration to Nanjing.<sup>7</sup>

What was Tianqiao, and where did it acquire its power? To answer these questions, this chapter will first examine some of the contemporary perspectives on Tianqiao and will study the formation of this district; then it will venture into the noise and dust at the market to investigate the businesses and entertainment there. As in previous chapters, the aim here is not to view social changes as abrupt breaks, or to identify what was new, but instead to understand the dynamic relationship between the old and the new. Tianqiao as a market was created by new forces, yet it was at the same time enlivened and held together by elements from the past. What was abandoned in the creation of a new order bounced back to life, illustrating the process of history here termed "recycling." A new space released the energy of old forces, creating new apparatuses and communities. This examination of the dynamics that formed Tianqiao also provides insight into an understanding of the feeling and meaning of the market and its cultural dimensions.

#### VISIBLE DETAILS, IMPERCEPTIBLE WHOLE

If there was an easy and ready answer to the question "What was Tianqiao?" it was not provided by contemporaneous observers. Most of the time, Tianqiao appeared to be a place of puzzling confusion and disorder to those who tried to study it with eyes, pens, and cameras. As the writer Zhong Ruoxia described it,

Tianqiao is a complex, multidimensional, collective but also chaotic scene. As we explore its every nook and cranny, a clear understanding of it seems almost within our grasp but ultimately eludes us. It is like reading the history of life, or of society—rich, but hard to digest. We do not even know where to begin to read it. Given a pen, we do not know where to begin to write about it; with a camera, we do not know how to bring it into focus.<sup>8</sup>

Zhong felt that this multidimensional, collective, and chaotic place was readily comprehensible when viewed on the spot, from a particular vantage point, but confusing when viewed as a whole. People were attracted to it but found it hard to totally accept. It had the richness of real life but became incomprehensible when the observer was removed from the details. In short, Tianqiao insisted on existing in details. Distances, panoramic views, and every form of representation somehow missed it all.

But taking a turn through the innumerable corners of Tianqiao would not necessarily promote understanding, for one could easily drown in its sea of people and activity, its labyrinth of commodities. It was a one-square-mile space of bustling chaos. According to a survey published in the *Beiping ribao* (Beiping daily) in 1930, during the first nineteen years of the Republic there were more than three hundred registered shops at Tianqiao. For those in search of clothing, there were eighty-two secondhand clothing shops and seventy-nine silk and fabric stores. For those who craved Beijing-style food, there were thirty-seven restaurants, thirty tea houses, six wine shops, and one tea shop. At least one hundred and seventeen types of snacks enticed.<sup>9</sup> Manufactured goods were available at seven foreign goods shops, four cigarette shops, three clock shops, and one Western suit shop. For daily needs, there were twenty-four grocery stores, twenty-one wooden goods stores, sixteen brush shops, nine coal shops, five drugstores, four birdcage shops, three straw mat shops, and two shoe sole shops. For special occasions, pictures could be taken at one of three photo studios. For “Mr. Addicted” (*yin junzi*), there were seventeen “white powder” (drug) houses at Tianqiao. There were also pawnshops, warehouses, luggage shops, army uniform shops, dental repair places, and a large number of brothels.<sup>10</sup> In addition, there were more than two hundred and ninety booths. Over two thousand people labored and made a living at Tianqiao every day.<sup>11</sup> Crammed among the shops and booths were more than twenty kinds of indoor and outdoor entertainment, ranging from regional folk art performances to “moving pictures” and slide shows. Folksinging, storytelling, comedy shows, martial art performances, wrestling, magic shows, and even pornographic pictures were all available. New-style

entertainment also existed in the South City Amusement Park, or the New World Entertainment Center (*Xin shijie*), which was modeled after the Big World (*Da shijie*) in Shanghai and was described by the American sociologist Sidney Gamble as “the Coney Island of Beijing.”<sup>12</sup>

Tianqiao inspired radically different reactions from visitors. While the imperial landmarks attracted tourists with their deserted, placid solemnity, Tianqiao’s allure was its pandemonium—exciting to some, disturbing to others. On the question of what was attractive about Tianqiao, contemporaries provided different answers. Tian Yunjin’s tourist guidebook dwelled mostly on the singsong girls. Although it warned that innocent young men should not indulge in entertainment there, it nonetheless took pains to create an alluring picture of the singsong girls’ flirtations, arousing interest and curiosity in the “indecent” diversions at Tianqiao.<sup>13</sup> For European and American women living in Beijing, the fun of Tianqiao was material. It was a place to buy cheap secondhand “furs, silks, occasionally embroideries and clothes.”<sup>14</sup> Yi Shunding, a Qing and Republican official from Hanyang, enjoyed the entertainment at Tianqiao so much that he wrote a lengthy poem, “Song of Tianqiao,” praising a drumsong singer, Feng Fengxi, after his visit in 1913–14.<sup>15</sup> Unlike Yi, who merged himself in Tianqiao, the self-styled sociologists Zhang Cixi and Zhao Xianyu acted as observers and recorded “the ordinary people’s” reactions to Tianqiao:

One rarely sees gentlemanly people here. Most people who come here for fun are those who have to use their physical strength and sweat to acquire food.... People come here excited and lose themselves in the flying dust. The filthy smell of sweat and dirty water from the ditches is blown into people’s noses by the wind. The stench is virtually suffocating. Yet many people seem oblivious to it. They are all excitedly enjoying themselves.<sup>16</sup>

Although Zhang Cixi and Zhao Xianyu attempted to understand Tianqiao by distancing themselves from the people and their activities there, they were just as confused as the writer Zhong Ruoxia. The common people’s excitement was obvious, but how it could be evoked in such a filthy place was incomprehensible.

The inability of Zhong Ruoxia, Zhang Cixi, and Zhao Xianyu to attain an objectifying distance from Tianqiao’s details had its European counterpart, as Timothy Mitchell discusses in his study of Cairo. When Gustave Flaubert first arrived in Cairo, he experienced Cairo “as a visual turmoil.” It was “indescribable, except as disorder.” In his first letter from Cairo he wrote,

So here we are in Egypt.... What can I say about it all? What can I write you? As yet I am scarcely over the initial bedazzlement... each detail reaches out to grip you; it pinches you; and the more you concentrate on it the less you grasp the whole. Then gradually all this becomes harmonious and the pieces fall into place of themselves, in accordance with the laws of perspective.<sup>17</sup>

It was not a coincidence that these accounts of Cairo and Tianqiao sound so similar, but this does not mean that Tianqiao and Cairo were the same. The key to the accounts' similarity lies in Flaubert's reference to "the laws of perspective"—in other words, the expectation of order inherent in a particular perspective.

Mitchell argues that modern consciousness, and the urban planning that attempts to produce and conforms to it, is based on viewing everything as an exhibition, a perspective best expressed by the world expositions. This world appears "to consist not of a complex of social practices but of a binary order: on the one hand individuals and their activities, on the other an inert structure that somehow stands apart from individuals, preexists them, and contains and gives a framework to their lives."<sup>18</sup> This principle of "world as exhibition," Mitchell argues, was reflected in the rebuilding of Cairo in the nineteenth century:

[The] layout of the new streets was designed to give the appearance of a plan. Such a plan was not merely a device to aid the work of urban reconstruction but a principle of order to be represented in the layout of the city's streets and inscribed in the life of its inhabitants. The new city remained, like the old city, simply a certain distribution of surfaces and spaces. But the regularity of the distribution was to create the experience of something existing apart from the physical streets as their non-physical structure. The order of the city was now to be grasped in terms of this relation between the material realisation of things themselves (as one could now say) and their invisible, meta-physical structure.<sup>19</sup>

This world functioned in "a two-dimensional form of individual versus apparatus, practice versus institution, social life and its structure—or material reality and its meaning."<sup>20</sup>

The case of Beijing was somewhat different from that of Cairo in that the expression of "plan" and "order" was not a uniquely new or modern phenomenon. Imperial Beijing was a very well-planned city, effectively creating a powerful image of order. But the dissimilarity stops there, at the experiential level. The differences between Qing and Republican Beijing (and Mitchell's modern city in general) lie in the relationship between the concept and the material reality of order. In impe-

rial Beijing, order was created by the very action of building the palace and ceremonial sites as well as the material existence of these structures. When the emperor performed a ritual, he was, to all minds, literally ordering the cosmos. The city was in a sense an enormous altar where the thought of distinguishing form from function, or “individuals and their activities” from “an inert structure that somehow stands apart from individuals, preexists them, and contains and gives a framework to their lives,” never arose. The situation was different in Republican Beijing. Before new streets were opened up, there was already an abstract concept called “the principle of order.” Plans were drawn to express this principle; construction projects were carried out to transform the plans into material forms. Even if the plans and projects were unsuccessful, even if the material structures were torn down, the principle still existed. And people expected that order everywhere, visible or invisible, in both space and other people’s behavior.

When Zhong Ruoxia attempted to depict Tianqiao, he wanted to see “the world as a limited totality, something that forms a bounded structure or system.”<sup>21</sup> But this attempt met with resistance. Tianqiao refused to cooperate—it was, in Mitchell’s words, “a place whose life was not yet lived as if the world were an exhibition.”<sup>22</sup> Space at Tianqiao, except the very few major avenues, did not follow any plan. The activities at Tianqiao were unprecedented on such a large scale in imperial Beijing, and they did not fit expectations for the new citizens of the Republic. Tianqiao’s position in the imperial order was long gone, yet the Republican order provided at best an unsatisfactory framework for understanding and explaining Tianqiao. Instead of looking at Tianqiao and discovering the logic in its activities, the viewers began with a vision of order and plan that might have come from other parts of the city, Shanghai, or even Japan and the West. As long as the framework of expectation for a Republican order was embedded in observers’ vision and minds, Tianqiao could be seen only in negative terms, as disorder.

But to many in Beijing, like Xiangzi and those who made their livings at Tianqiao, the district had an order and rhythm of its own. That Tianqiao’s disorder expressed an order can first be illustrated through a study of the formation of the district. As Beijing underwent a transformation in its spatial order, Tianqiao received its rejected elements: people who could not survive in the new city, things that did not appear representative of an imagined modern future, and activities and behaviors deemed too degenerate to measure up to the new moral requirements for citizens of the Republic.

### THE BIRTH OF TIANQIAO

To those unfamiliar with Republican Beijing, even the name Tianqiao sometimes seemed confusing: many were unclear whether it was an old or a new place. In the 1930s, a brand of cigarettes named Tianqiao was sold in Shanghai. Printed on the box was a beautiful landscape painting of a long bridge with numerous arches. Many people had heard that there was a place called Tianqiao in Beijing and naturally identified this with the bridge. Only when they reached Beijing did they realize that although the bridge and the place named Tianqiao both existed, they were falsely combined on the cigarette box. The bridge was the “Seventeen-Arch Bridge” (*Shiqi kong qiao*) of the Summer Palace to the northwest of Beijing, whereas the place called Tianqiao lay in the southeast corner of the city.<sup>23</sup> The two places were far apart and in no sense resembled each other—the Summer Palace was a tranquil former imperial garden and Republican public park, and Tianqiao was in every way its opposite (except for the fact that both were former imperial lands opened after 1911).

Although Tianqiao was grouped with “ancient” historical sites in some guidebooks, it had little in common with preserved imperial landmarks. It was an urban space that emerged after 1911, its formation and functions determined by fundamentally new forces. The political developments that resulted in the opening of this former imperial space, the changes in seasonal markets and temple fairs in Beijing, and the integration of Tianqiao into the new city plan via the new transportation system were all unprecedented and marked Tianqiao as definitively of the Republican era.

The name Tianqiao came from a bridge built in the Ming dynasty for the emperors to travel from the palace to the annual ceremonies at the Temple of Heaven and the Temple of Agriculture. Although the bridge was dismantled in 1907, the name persisted.<sup>24</sup> The district occupied about one square mile of land in the Outer City, due south of the imperial palace but separated from it by a city wall and the Qian Gate commercial area. It was bordered by East and West Zhushikou Avenues to the north, the Temple of Heaven to the east and southeast, the Yongding Gate to the south, and Dongjing Road to the west.

In the Ming and Qing dynasties, Tianqiao indeed enjoyed some “heavenly” fame. It was a scenic site where officials and scholars communed with their muses. There they wrote poems about flowers, clouds, trees, lotuses, wine, and, of course, courtesans. The pleasures of games

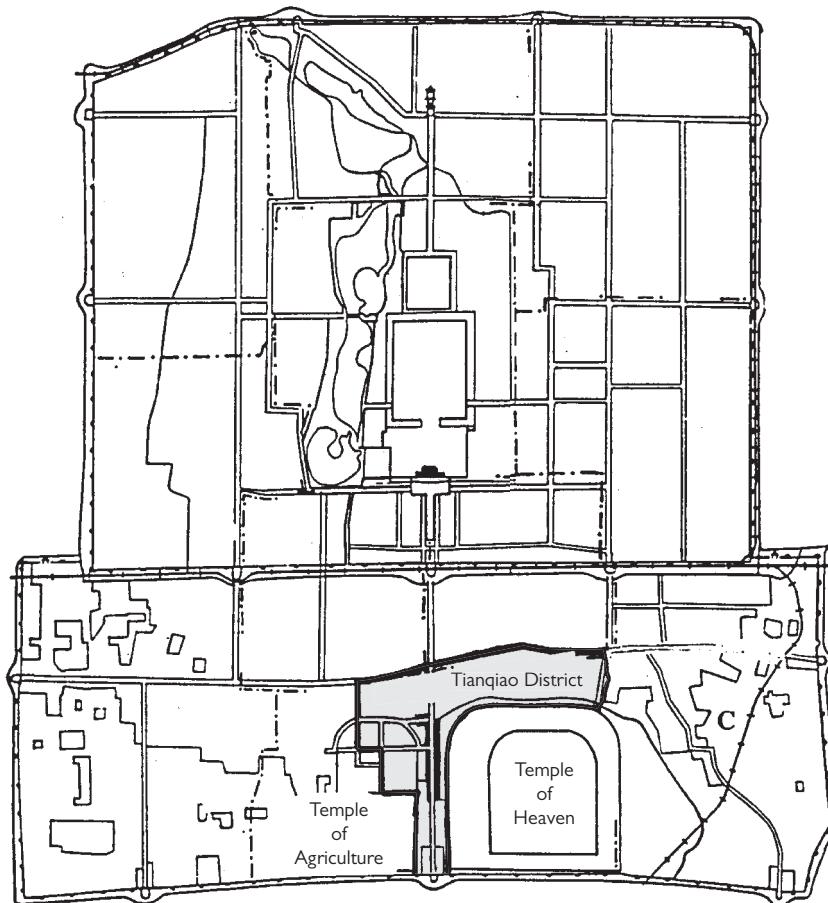


Figure 21. Location of the Tianqiao district.

and horse riding at the May Fifth Festival, boat rowing in the lotus ponds in the summer, and extolling flowers in the autumn filled their poetry. When they lost inspiration, they tried to rekindle it in the few wine shops north of the bridge. One reason Tianqiao was conducive to poetry writing was that it was devoid of people, giving the impression of being isolated. In contrast to the bustling market of "ordinary people" that it later became, this Tianqiao was a rural village resort inside the capital city. Its scenic views resembled those of south China and perfectly suited the elite aesthetic taste.<sup>25</sup> To most of the common people of Beijing, however, Tianqiao was hardly even part of the city. They rarely went there.

The development of Tianqiao was closely related to the fall of the Qing dynasty and the changes in Republican Beijing's spatial layout after 1911. Most of the old markets of Qing Beijing descended the new market hierarchy in the Republican era. During the Qing, there were six prosperous business districts in Beijing: Di'an Gate, Dongsi, Xidan, Huashi, Caishikou, and Qian Gate. Of these markets, all except the one at Qian Gate hosted not only commercial activities but also outdoor entertainment, commonly referred to as vaudeville (*zashua*). But all six districts declined when the Qing was overthrown. Without the eunuchs and princes, the Di'an Gate Market lost its prosperity. When grain for the consumption of the imperial household stopped coming into Beijing from south China, Dongsi forfeited its strategic position. After alterations in the transportation network, Huashi declined and was no longer a city center. Although Xidan remained a commercial center, its new appearance was no longer compatible with booths and folk art performances. As a result, when Tianqiao was opened up to commerce, booths and outdoor entertainment from all over Beijing slowly but surely migrated there.<sup>26</sup>

Tianqiao's emergence as a commercial center was tied to the efforts to improve Beijing's image, beginning with the modernization effort of the New Policies in the last years of the Qing. During the Republican era, developing Tianqiao was never a central part of the government's original plan and its new spatial regulations were not enforced there as vigorously as in other parts of the city. However, the process of constructing a new Republican Beijing—cleaning up the Inner City, opening the Temple of Heaven as a public park, building roads and railways, and designating Tianqiao as the terminal of the new trolley lines—all contributed to the making of a new, energetic commercial and entertainment center.

In 1906, the Qing government reconstructed the road from Zhengyang (Qian) Gate to Yongding Gate; this road directly bisected the Tianqiao area. Three years later, the Office of Outer City Police, together with some merchants, founded a company and sold stocks to develop the Xiangchang Market next to the northwest corner of Tianqiao, with the goal of making it into a model commercial area. They filled in marshes there and paid residents to move to facilitate widening the streets. At the time, Beijing residents enjoyed an annual fair during the Spring Festival at Changdian, northwest of Tianqiao. In 1912, the fair was moved to the improved site at Xiangchang due to municipal road construction at Changdian. As a result, Tianqiao became the neighbor of an active busi-

ness center, and its low land price naturally attracted those with business acumen.<sup>27</sup>

During the 1912 Xiangchang fair, Yu Zhenting, an actor, set up a shed, performed long dramas (*chengban daxi*), and invited the actress Sun Yiqing to join the troupe. Having females perform on stage was a novelty in Beijing at the time, and his shed theater attracted a large audience. He originally planned to perform for one month, the length of the fair. The business, however, was so successful that he moved his stage to the northeast of Tianqiao when the fair was over. He was followed by several other troupes. Soon all of them moved to Tianqiao—the first appearance of theaters in the district. Three theaters, Song Stage (Ge Wutai), Swallow Stage (Yan Wutai) and Music Stage (Yue Wutai), emerged at Tianqiao. The formerly highbrow (*ya*) Tianqiao became, in the eyes of some of the elite, a low-brow (*su*) place.<sup>28</sup> Later, to promote order, the government banned vaudeville shows in most parts of the city, and people in those professions gathered at Tianqiao. Thus the “lowbrow” reputation of Tianqiao was further strengthened by this government effort to create a more orderly city.

Tianqiao was the place where the government relocated those who were in the way of the new Beijing. In 1913, the Department of Internal Affairs proposed to build trolley bus lines in Beijing. The Bureau of Civil Engineering and the Bureau of Security of the Internal Affairs Department were to plan the construction. They decided to demolish the protective walls of Zhengyang Gate to build a street and charged the Departments of Interior and Transportation with the task.<sup>29</sup> In June 1914, they organized a construction committee and signed a contract with a French engineer to tear down the walls. More than sixty residential households and shops in the East and West Hebao Lanes next to the walls were paid to move within a year. The residents pooled their money and decided to take the wood and bricks from their old houses with them to the west side of Tianqiao. They built seven small lanes at Tianqiao and started wine shops, restaurants, dental repair shops, singsong teahouses, and other enterprises. More businesses followed.<sup>30</sup>

Initially, the government used much the same approach in establishing a spatial order at Tianqiao as it did at other places—it built better streets, repaired sewer ditches, improved hygiene, and so forth. Tianqiao’s early conditions were far from serviceable. The area was a swamp where water accumulated every summer. “At night, the frogs croak without stop, and mosquitoes swarm. [During the day], filthy water steams in the ditches.”<sup>31</sup> In 1917, Gao Erlu, the chief administrator of

the Outer Fifth District to which Tianqiao belonged, led a road-cleaning team to level the land and build roads. The city also improved the roads in the area north of the Temple of Agriculture. Open sewers were filled up and became streets to serve traffic, the outer walls of the Temple of Agriculture were torn down, and neighborhoods were divided by newly constructed streets. These activities all enlarged the Tianqiao area's usable land.<sup>32</sup>

Early efforts aimed at developing Tianqiao as an elite leisure center. In 1916, the police chief at Tianqiao proposed building a park called Water Center Pavilion (*Shuixin ting*) at the northeast corner of the Temple of Agriculture. Many merchants donated money, and the park was opened the next year. Until the pavilion burned down in 1920 and 1921, it played an important role in the growth of Tianqiao. In 1917, the government changed the Temple of Agriculture into South City Public Park. The following year, a merchant opened a South City Amusement Park in the Temple of Agriculture, and later the two parks merged. These parks attracted many visitors, undoubtedly boosting business at Tianqiao greatly. In 1926, the Department of Internal Affairs decided to tear down the outer walls of the Temple of Agriculture and sell some of the land to merchants. As a result, Xiannong, Huiyuan, Chengnan, Tianfeng, and West Tianqiao Markets were opened. As business at Tianqiao increased, any elite reputation that the district had once had disappeared.<sup>33</sup>

A crucial catalyst in Tianqiao's development was the construction of Beijing's modern transportation system of railways and trolleybuses. The station for the Beijing-Tianjin Railway was located at Majiapu, and the Beijing-Hanyang station was built at the Marco Polo (Lugou) Bridge, both south of Tianqiao. Passengers using the two railways had to pass Yongding Gate and Tianqiao to enter central Beijing. People going to Majiapu often met at Tianqiao first. In 1900, the Boxers destroyed the railways, and the stations were moved to the Temple of Heaven and Qian Gate itself. At the time, the imperial armies were stationed at Nanyuan, just outside of Yongding Gate in the south, and a local train commuted to Yongding Gate. With two train stations in the Yongding Gate area, it made sense to build the trolley terminals at Tianqiao, a location convenient for railroad travelers.

Zhang Cixi observed that "when the trolleybus company built its terminal at Tianqiao, transportation became convenient and thus the number of visitors increased. Tianqiao became very prosperous."<sup>34</sup> Wang Bolong supports this observation:

When the trolleybus company purchased the land at the Temple of Agriculture as the terminal for its lines one and two, it took only a moment to go from Beixin Bridge in the east to Xizhi Gate in the west. This is the main reason that Tianqiao became an extremely active area. Last year [1935] when Qian Gate Avenue was being repaired, the trolleys only reached Qian Gate [instead of Tianqiao]. During those several months, Tianqiao suddenly became quiet. From this we see the prosperity of Tianqiao really depends on people in the east, west and north parts the city, not only on people in the south city.<sup>35</sup>

With all these changes in the area, more people came to Tianqiao from all over the city. Tianqiao became a market for all Beijing. Efforts to develop Tianqiao into an elite entertainment center were halted after the fires in 1920 and 1921, especially after the trolleybus company decided to make Tianqiao the terminus of many of its lines.

Tianqiao was like Beijing's attic, a convenient repository for all that was not wanted at the present moment. But it was not simply a passive receptacle for disorder that the city could use to maintain order everywhere else. The discards, heaped and mingled together, sprang back to life with undaunted vibrancy and even charm. This energy, so easily mistaken for chaos, was distinct from that of other places in Beijing and was guided by the different rules of efficiency that reigned in the market for recycled goods. The sources of Tianqiao's excitement, its recycled secondhand goods and its various forms of folk entertainment, best illustrate this energy.

#### BOGUS GOODS AND GENUINE PERFORMANCES

To go to Tianqiao was to venture into a world of excitement and to escape completely from the tedious familiarity of daily life. Weighing one old pickling jar against another, or comparing the size and quality of one odd bit of cloth with another, required the application of life experience to a process of decision making. A visitor could marvel at the strong muscles of a wrestler or laugh in the audience at the popular "freaks of Tianqiao." This could be done without paying a penny if the visitor did not want to, so that even a beggar had the opportunity to be entertained.<sup>36</sup> As both a market for cheap and mostly secondhand goods and a purveyor of pay-as-you-like entertainment, Tianqiao offered almost unlimited accessibility but also required discernment. Money was always welcome at Tianqiao, but the consumer needed wis-

dom to evaluate and judge how much to pay for either an item or a laugh.

Tianqiao was first of all a market. With the lowest prices in Beijing, it was the source of an indispensable portion of daily necessities for the city's residents who were not wealthy. But the volume of goods and the level of excitement at Tianqiao made it something more than a market satisfying people's daily needs. The low prices not only allowed but also lured shoppers to buy. The commercial mechanism at work in the newly developed department stores was not totally absent at Tianqiao. In a sense, Tianqiao was a new market for old goods and a training ground for consumers in a modernizing city.

Although Tianqiao was the biggest market for low-priced goods in Beijing, it was not easy to shop there. Almost all its wares were second-hand, and Tianqiao's merchants were famous for cheating their customers. Tianqiao was in essence a market energized by the need to sell by all means. In such a place, savvy was needed to ascertain the value of an object. Sophistication and efficiency were crucial for getting the most out of the market.

Many of the goods sold at Tianqiao were gathered by the sellers at very low cost from all over Beijing, most often from homes and pawnshops or from the drum beaters who walked the narrow alleyways of the city collecting items such as cracked jars and decrepit furniture. Shoppers at Tianqiao bought such items as bargains, even though they believed that the sellers cheated them most of the time. The silk, shoe, cigarette, furniture, and clock businesses were all reputedly dishonest. It was widely believed that the silk stores starched their old fabrics to make them look better; that shoes bought at Tianqiao would last only a week, being made of shoddy materials although they looked new; that attractive furniture would collapse half a month after purchase; and that the cigarette booths never gave their customers as many cigarettes as were paid for. Even worse, it was thought that the wine stalls would add not only water to their liquor to reap profits but also arsenic and pigeon excrement to create a drunken feeling.<sup>37</sup>

Secondhand clothing, fabric, and leather goods stores were often vividly dubbed "tiger booths," suggesting that the customers were just like meat in a fierce animal's mouth. One source of secondhand clothing was wrongly tailored or damaged new clothes from tailors, but such finds were scarce. The major suppliers to secondhand clothes stores were pawnshops, which regularly cleared out their storage, selling the "dead numbers" that no one had redeemed. On auction days the sec-

ondhand clothing store owners would gather at the pawnshops to examine the quality of the clothes on offer. They wrote the price they were willing to pay on a piece of paper and handed it to the pawnshop owners, who would then sell the clothes to the highest bidders.

When one person with capital rented a place to set up a secondhand shop at Tianqiao, he would hire some sellers. The sellers were called, not clerks, but rather “pen assistants” (*zhu bi*) because, when an item was sold, the transaction had to be recorded in written form. The owner of the store marked prices for the clothes he bought from the pawnshops and then turned them over to the sellers, collecting the marked amount after the item was resold. If a seller could dispose an item for a price higher than the store owner had marked, the seller pocketed the difference. Hence the “pen assistant” would mobilize all his skills to squeeze as much money from the customer as possible and had the most notorious reputation. No matter how picky the buyer was, a pen assistant could always find reasons to defend an item and drive up the price. Even violence was applied sometimes where enticement and coaxing failed.

More than a hundred secondhand clothing booths adjoined one another in two rows. The variety of goods available was one of the main attractions to potential buyers: gowns for summer, jackets for autumn, and coats for winter were all offered. The narrow path between the rows was very often obstructed by the raised arms of booth owners who tried to stop shoppers from passing their stalls without a glance. Since women shoppers were expected to surrender more easily to intimidation, it was common to see them stopped by rude gestures when they refused to buy.<sup>38</sup>

With such practices rife, Tianqiao gained a reputation for dishonesty. Shopping there was seen as adventurous and risky. The risk was that nothing was what it appeared to be; there was no predictability in anything. For the shopper at Tianqiao, bargaining skills and discernment were the only weapons with the potential to overcome the risk and unpredictability inherent in secondhand goods. In this sense, both sellers and buyers were highly efficient, competing over who could extract the most value from the other. Sellers sought the highest price for the least use value, while shoppers tried to unwrap the riddle of the used commodity, to discern real use values from dissimulating exchange values. It was a test of one’s ability to distinguish good from bad, authentic from fake goods, and fair from unfair prices. Skill determined how well the market could be used. There was no taken-for-granted sense of trust there; shopping at Tianqiao was a challenging game of negotiation be-

tween seller and buyer, between the desire to buy and the constraints of the wallet, between the need for the use value of an item and the price ultimately paid for it.

In contrast to the retailing of secondhand goods at Tianqiao, which aroused universal suspicion, the entertainment performances there were enjoyed so much that the performers entered the legends of Beijing. If most of the material goods were anonymously secondhand, showing little of their origin, the performances were all directly personal, as if amending the low level of credibility in the secondhand goods trade. The reputations of Tianqiao's entertainers usually rested on physical adeptness achieved through grueling training. Some skills were personalized and named after their best performers. It was the conquering and controlling of the frailties of individual bodies that amazed the audience. Unlike entertainment in industrial cities, which thrilled audiences with mechanical equipment, Tianqiao's stars fascinated onlookers with their "true mastery" (*zhen benshi*) and "unique skills" (*jue ji*). They did not become celebrities; rather, their names were obscured under titles such as "eight freaks at Tianqiao."<sup>39</sup>

Watching shows at Tianqiao was similar to shopping there in that the visitor was constantly judging the performers' skills, such as their level of training, their age, and the degree of difficulty of the show. Star performers at Tianqiao acquired legendary fame by demonstrating unique bodily skills. The Old Daoist Hu (*Hu Laodao*) was called the "aberrant talent of Tianqiao." Even at the age of sixty in 1936, he was still very energetic. Many were amazed that at such an age "his waist and legs were still so flexible." He was believed to be the son of a high official from Henan who had practiced martial arts since he was a child. Trusty Dart Meng (*Xinbiao Meng*) was a boy of twelve or thirteen whose skills were especially admired because of his tender age. He drew faces on the ground with white powder, then marked the eyes, ears, mouth, and nose with brass nails. His specialty was hitting the nail targets with a small dart from ten feet away. His skills, bolstered by his rapport with the audience (*ren yuan*), always drew a crowd. Due to the physical nature of these performances, children could most easily appeal to people's compassion. Three children from Tianjin, ages fifteen, eleven, and eight, performed shows with wooden sticks. Performing silently most of the time and appearing not know how to ask for money, they depended on the audience giving them money out of compassion and never complained if this did not occur. Their silence won them even more popularity. Magicians were also favorites at Tianqiao for their nimbleness and quickness.

Most of them performed similar tricks, such as hiding and finding beans under bowls, blowing fire from their mouths, or swallowing iron balls, swords, and bronze bells. The magicians could make bells ring in their bellies then produce them from their mouths. Some could make a snake go into their mouths and then come out their ears or could retrieve a glass that had ostensibly disappeared into the ground.<sup>40</sup>

Entertainment in which no real physical skills were involved—for example, new shows that appealed to people's curiosity—were not nearly as popular. One such example was a young man who hosted a “pornographic bottle show.” He held some small white bottles in his hands, shouting temptingly, “Only one coin every time. There are women in the bottles, naked. I assure you it's worth the money. You will want to see it again once you've seen it. There are good things in it, but children are not allowed to see them.” Those who looked “all had a smile in the corners of their mouths.” The bottles contained pictures of naked women pasted on a ball at the neck of the bottle, which appeared enlarged through the glass.

There were two “moving electric shadow” houses at Tianqiao. A dozen or so people sat on benches in a dark room facing the east wall, where a piece of white cloth served as a screen. The projector was located outside of the window, and pictures could thus be projected onto the screen. In the beginning they depended on sunlight; later a small motor was available, and it became more like movies.<sup>41</sup> These shows attracted some onlookers but never attained the legendary status of those at Tianqiao who had “unique skills.”<sup>42</sup>

A good example of entertainment at Tianqiao was wrestling. Official wrestlers had served the Qing court. They had been divided into two camps: the left wing, located in the West City, and the right wing, located in the East City. The wrestling ground was located in the North City, at the Temple of Big Buddha (Dafosi). Wrestlers were all banner men and had ranks, which were presumably determined every winter by the emperors after inspections of their matches. When foreigners from tributary states were present, these official wrestlers also competed with or for them. The wrestlers were dismissed at the establishment of the Republic. Accustomed to a privileged life and unable to do anything else to make a living, they organized themselves and began to sell their skills, turning wrestling from a part of imperial ceremony into commercial entertainment.<sup>43</sup>

Beijing's first public wrestling grounds were at Tianqiao. In 1922, Yang Shuang'en, a former professional banner wrestler, started to per-

form martial arts there, living on tips from the crowd. Later, Shen San joined him and they started performing wrestling together. The show was a hit. Initially there was no charge for the performance, but later money was collected from the audience. Before long, many other wrestlers followed suit, and wrestling became a profession at Tianqiao.<sup>44</sup>

The wrestlers at Tianqiao developed their own professional guidelines. All of them carried three items: a jacket, camel-hair rope, and a special pair of boots, all used for self-protection. If a wrestler was equipped with these three things, his opponent could not be held responsible for his death if he was killed in the match. Another rule was that those hurt should not complain. There was no formal contract between wrestling teachers and students or between partners. Perhaps because of the lack of formal ties, more emphasis was placed on being very loyal (*yiqi*) to friends and respectful to teachers and on treating each other like brothers, father and son, or master and disciple. But disciples had to practice on their own. This self-training brought them more respect from the audience, who believed that no one without a strong will could achieve great skill. Audiences were moved not only by the wrestlers' performances but also by the years of training reflected in their skills.<sup>45</sup>

But wrestling at Tianqiao, after all, was a business. Unlike the earnestly competitive wrestling performed for the emperors, at Tianqiao there were two kinds of wrestling, the make-believe and the real. When it was time to pass the hat, wrestlers put on a stylish but not competitive show, but at the peak of the show one could always expect to see a real match between the wrestlers. In the wrestlers' own language, "real" matches were called "the top" (*jian*, meaning "to be competitive"), while fake ones were "rational" (*lixing*). The wrestlers paid the owner of the site 20 percent of their daily income. Of the remaining 80 percent, the emcee who provided patter before the shows and when collecting money kept 15 percent, and the rest was divided among the wrestlers according to their ranks of mastery.<sup>46</sup>

The same performers worked at Tianqiao every day. Physical virtuosity fueled their popularity over long periods of time. In contrast, mechanical entertainment required constant innovation. John F. Kasson observes that at Coney Island none of the amusements were lasting. Few people "try one more than half a dozen times in a visit and almost nobody wants the same thing the next season. The only way to make an old show go is to hand out a new sign—and that won't work more than one time with the audience."<sup>47</sup> For Tianqiao's performers, it was the

ability to demonstrate the same enduring skills and strengths over time rather than constant innovation that won the audience back over and over again.

At one level, the trading of material goods and the selling of bodily skills appeared to have opposing rationales. However, the two activities were in fact very often integrated. The connection between them is best illustrated by the medicine sellers, who attempted to overcome the aura of unreliability attached to their merchandise with the credibility of their own physical skills. They were figures of paradox revealing the complex relationship between the bogus goods and genuine performances at Tianqiao.

The medicine sellers adopted various means to promote their drugs because there was no evidence of effectiveness of medicines sold at Tianqiao. One medicine seller always reminded people that there were too many fake medicines in the market and that buyers should be very cautious. He would then claim that his medicine had been passed down from his ancestors and thereby withstood the test of time. By reminding people of fake medicine, the seller attempted to shorten the distance between himself and the consumers, showing them that he was their friend rather than one of the cheaters. Telling his personal story about how the medicine had been passed down from his ancestors served the same purpose. Under a piece of cloth with colorful drawings of patients with parasitic diseases, another vendor displayed all kinds of worms soaked in bottles of alcohol. Yet another seller's advertisement for his medicine was a few minutes of opera singing and the story of a dead bird he held in his hand. Here, an analogy was drawn between the bird and those with illness. As the seller graphically pointed out, a bird that fails to build its own nest dies in winter. People with disease were accordingly exhorted to learn a lesson from the bird and begin treatment early. The vendor further demonstrated the effectiveness of his medicine by giving pieces of adhesive plaster to a few people in the crowd, stating there was no charge if they did not work. After a while, he peeled off the plasters, and the "patients" would claim that the medicine worked. Some of the dealers used government authority to bolster their credibility. A man selling drugs for skin problems, instead of claiming the long pedigree of his merchandise, tried to establish his credibility by displaying the official licenses he had obtained from the government.<sup>48</sup>

But the medicine dealers who were most trusted and gained the highest reputation were those who concocted shows of martial arts and wrestling for their potential customers. One such vendor at Tianqiao

was the famous Niu Maosheng, who always attracted a big audience by pulling a large bow with extremely hard strings. The purpose of this demonstration of strength, of course, was to sell his muscle-building “big strength balls” (*da li wan*) rather than to earn money for his performances.<sup>49</sup> Mei Xingzhou and his sons’ performances of martial arts were very popular at the market. Once they had drawn a large crowd, they began to extol their medicines.<sup>50</sup>

These performances were the means by which the medicine sellers established credibility. Their nature was almost diametrically opposed to the means employed by modern department stores to promote the reliability of their wares, as Agnew insightfully points out:

Commerce involves risk and therefore prizes the clear and specific assignment of liability. Comedies, by contrast, glory in their avowed inconsequentiality as they do in the immunities that innocuousness invites. Theatricality is to the serious person of business what commerciality is to the serious person of the theater: a threat to the foundation of trust on which each enterprise stands.<sup>51</sup>

In contrast, at Tianqiao, and particularly for the medicine sellers, theatricality was central to good business. Trust in Tianqiao’s exchanges was not based on contracts, and there were no legal or customary procedures for ensuring a commodity’s reliability. Trust was created by the persuasiveness of the seller’s pitch and the evidence he could muster. Unlike merchants dealing in goods whose quality could be visibly demonstrated, personal good health and physical vitality were the best advertisements for the medicine dealers. Consequently, trading and performing were closely integrated by the medicine sellers at Tianqiao. In Agnew’s words, “[T]he decisive historical difference lay not so much between the two institutions as between them and the common social world whose needs commerce and comedy were understood to serve. To be thus set against one another, the two institutions had first to be detached from everything else.”<sup>52</sup>

All the methods used by the traders to win credibility, however, could only give rise to more doubts in the shoppers. It was in the negotiation between credibility on the one hand and skepticism and disbelief on the other that the trade in material goods and the performances at Tianqiao defined each other and worked together to attract large crowds every day. Again, as Agnew insightfully argues, “[I]n either instance the customer’s will to believe was a stipulated or conditional act, a matter less of faith than of suspended disbelief. What bound the market and theater together, then as now, were the same peculiar experiential proper-



Figure 22. Niu Maosheng, a patent medicine seller of body ointments, flexing a bow with his teeth in front of a crowd at Tianqiao Market. Photo by Hedda Morrison; courtesy of the Harvard-Yenching Library.

ties that set them apart from other kinds of exchange.”<sup>53</sup> The excitement of going to Tianqiao was in some ways similar to that of playing a role in a drama.

The low level of credibility made shopping at Tianqiao risky but also fun and exciting. In avoiding the danger of the scam, a visitor was proved a shrewd shopper who could not easily be fooled. Shoppers achieved a feeling of agency and pride from successful self-protection. Shopping at Tianqiao was not simply a process of satisfying a blind desire to consume; instead, it was a constant psychic battle between desires (or needs) and knowledge and wisdom. This could bestow a feeling of superiority on the downtrodden, unprincipled consumer. The buyer had the opportunity to discern and so was able to maintain an advantage in the unceasing battle of wits between buyer and seller. A shopper had to figure out what was worth buying and what to buy and had to do so carefully or risk ending up with a useless purchase or even garbage.

At Tianqiao, social status did not guarantee receiving better merchandise—or, to put it differently, the act of shopping would not confer social status. This denial of status differences amounted to a threat to the social hierarchy based on stratification. Stratification meant categorization, order, and thus stability. Ignoring or inverting stratification allowed people to play with status and to cancel and obliterate the categories, leading to a sense of disorder, instability, and also festivity. Status was constantly being dissimulated and turned fluid. Everyone could be, and necessarily would be, cheated. High social status would not bring better luck in the shenanigans; conventional social categories might be exaggerated, mocked, or defied, and no penalties could be applied. To borrow John F. Kasson's words about Coney Island, Tianqiao "appeared to have institutionalized the carnival spirit for a culture that lacked a carnival tradition," but it "located its festivity not in time as a special moment on the calendar but in space as a special place on the map."<sup>54</sup>

Tianqiao promised unlimited anonymity. The anonymity of consumers at department stores was sustained and limited by a basic level of economic status; they had at least to look right to shop there. Tianqiao, however, welcomed anyone from homeless beggars to curious foreigners. The commodities at Tianqiao were also anonymous. No one was clear as to where they came from, where they had been, or whose hands they had passed through. The anonymity at department stores allowed shoppers to role-play but also confirmed the status quo, a combination both amusing and safe, based on an underlying trust and an exclusion of certain social hazards such as poverty and dirtiness. But at Tianqiao, a visitor might do business with a criminal or brush up against a beggar with lice; appearances and transactions could not be trusted. Tianqiao's anonymity brought both freedom and threat.

In this way, Tianqiao was a public space that was integrated, anonymous, and porous. In its inclusiveness, it was the closest approximation to a cross section of the city as a whole, the broad "public" that urban planners invoked in their proposals. It was almost a utopia of integration, where everyone performed, half-hidden behind masks. Here was a type of anonymity that was far from homogeneous—perhaps better to say that people confronted each other as strangers, with the mystery, threat, and excitement that connotes. This broad public was not seen as composed of, or creating, "citizens." If citizenship required self-sacrifice and uniform orderliness, Tianqiao was the opposite: it required selfishness and self-protection from the interests of others at all times. This process did not create the egalitarianism of citizens but an egali-

tarianism of constantly reshuffled hierarchies. Criminals and political activists both went there to disappear into the swirling crowds.<sup>55</sup>

Despite the sense of agency that Tianqiao provided its visitors, the district was still part of the general system of the city as a whole. It was a training ground for the masses to learn how to make decisions in a consumer culture. In terms of the essence of commerce, buying and selling, its dinginess could not erase its similarities to department stores. Tianqiao ignited excitement through its sheer volume of material goods, the experimentation with new identities created by the power of money, the alienation of merchandise from the process of its production, and the willingness to buy prompted by advertisement—all conditions resembling those in a department store. What distinguished Tianqiao was that the performative aspect of the market was highly conscious, even spotlighted. Veteran shoppers at Tianqiao might approach department stores with more circumspection. With Tianqiao in mind, shoppers could not forget the highly unstable social core of market transactions that department stores attempted to obscure: that sellers were always putting on an act.<sup>56</sup>

#### ENTERTAINERS' ORGANIZATIONS AND AMUSEMENT PARKS: WHAT TOOK ROOT AT TIANQIAO?

The emancipation of Tianqiao from imperial control presented new opportunities for which different forces competed. Individual entertainers adopted and transformed existing forms of organization to survive the new challenges of a large-scale commercial society in which competition was more brutal. Larger investors also joined the competition, opening amusement parks and centers like those in industrial cities such as Shanghai. But these two very different forces met with unexpectedly contrasting fates at Tianqiao.

In the omnipresent dissimulation of Tianqiao, entertainers sought some stability by forming professional associations. These organizations made their businesses more secure, prevented trade skills from being spread too thin, and ensured the transmission of skills and the survival of older or less fortunate members. Entertainers protected themselves by stabilizing their entire profession, but in so doing they also established a new hierarchy.

There were more than twenty kinds of folk entertainment at Tianqiao. Many retained a regional flavor and the influences of an agricultural society, but all had been professionalized.<sup>57</sup> Tianqiao hosted *Henan zhuizi*

singing, Luanzhou (Hebei province) shadow shows, *Qinqiang* (Shaanxi) dramas, and many more forms of folk entertainment, which were in part distinguished by the dialects in which they were performed. Among these, *dagu* (drum singing) and *laozi* (a kind of central China folk song) were the most popular.

*Dagu* originated in the Yellow River regions, later spreading and developing into distinctive styles often named after regions or their unique characteristics. *Fengtian dagu* and *Jingyin dagu* were named after the places in which they were popular. *Qiekou dagu* originated in the region east of Beijing and was given its name because it was sung in a non-Beijing dialect (Beijing residents called all non-Beijing accents *qie kou*, meaning “guest accent,” pronounced as *qie kou*, shy mouth). *Lihua dagu* originated in the countryside of Shandong, Henan, and Hebei provinces and was named after the instrument accompanying the singing. *Dagu* became a pure entertainment form at Tianqiao, losing most of its original characteristics and connections with agricultural communities. The charge for listening to *dagu* was usually one or two big copper coins per person; the singer would stop at a critical moment during the story to make sure that everyone paid. Influenced by these regional forms, a Beijing dialect *dagu*, *Jingyin dagu*, emerged. This kind of drum singing was believed the best for telling historical stories because the lyrics were more polished than other *dagu*: “There is no profane slang from the society,...the words are very elegant and embellished.”<sup>58</sup>

*Laozi*, or *lianhua lao* (lotus flower singing) was a form of folk singing that originated in northeast China. Originally named *lianhua le* (lotus flower fun), it was accompanied by a drum or a clapper of four bamboo chips. It was already popular in the Song dynasty among beggars. Professional *laozi* singers emerged during the Qianlong reign, usually intoning folk stories and legends. The first *laozi* singers in Beijing gathered at the Datong Bridge outside of Dongbian Gate, the southeast gate of the city walls. This bridge served as a grain-shipping terminal for the Tonghui Canal. It was a port where both government and merchant boats anchored.<sup>59</sup> Grain shippers could make only a limited amount of money, so singing became their way of earning extra income.<sup>60</sup> Later, *laozi* singers were seen in the center of Beijing, but they were usually poorly dressed, and their performances were unrefined. Their income was paltry, and they could hardly support themselves.<sup>61</sup> A temporary *laozi* house first appeared in the Qian Gate area at the “cake house,” a boarding house for cake peddlers at night that was rented out to *laozi*



Figure 23. Street entertainers performing on stilts in front of a crowd at Tianqiao Market. Photo by Hedda Morrison; courtesy of the Harvard-Yenching Library.

singers during the day when the cake peddlers went out to do business.<sup>62</sup> At the end of the Guangxu reign (1875–1907), a teahouse in the Qian Gate district began hosting *laozi* singers. *Laozi* then for the first time became an indoor entertainment and developed into one of the most popular forms of entertainment in Beijing. *Laozi* made its debut at Tianqiao in 1914, and by 1916 Tianqiao had become a center of *laozi* singing, with houses devoted to this form of entertainment opening one after another by the Water Center Pavilion and the markets. The names of the houses, usually given by scholars, were considered very refined.<sup>63</sup>

Beijing *laozi* was no longer the unembellished peasant and beggar song it had once been; it was evolving into a highly professional form of entertainment. Performers adopted stage names, and every detail of their performance—from the instruments they used to requests to go to the toilet—was given a professional term. They sang tunes not just from one region but from everywhere and were responsive to the audience's requests. A small *laozi* house had five or six performers, and a big one could host more than ten; labor was clearly divided among them. They

also worshipped their own god, King Zhuang of the Zhou dynasty, who, according to legend, traveled in many states beating a drum and singing to persuade people to cultivate the land, abide by the law, and avoid war. He later became the god worshiped also by storytellers and drum singers.<sup>64</sup>

Another feature new to *dagu* and *laozi* at Tianqiao was that both became dominated by women.<sup>65</sup> The *laozi* houses were also called female storytelling houses (*kunshu guan*). Although these women were professional entertainers just as the men at Tianqiao were, the female *dagu* and *laozi* singers did not enjoy as respectable a reputation as did their male counterparts. Many members of the audience did not go there merely for the performances. In a demeaning way, these houses were given the name “arm-hanging house” (*diaobang guan*), implying flirtation. Many gossiped about these singers’ “second profession,” a reference to their working as courtesans.<sup>66</sup> It is difficult to determine the extent to which these common impressions reflected reality, but such gossip clearly shows the continuation of double moral standards for men and women and the disadvantaged position that women had in this new urban space.

Since Tianqiao’s women performers were still a novelty, they attracted a great amount of attention from the newspapers. In 1919, the *Yanfeng bao* (Yanfeng news) sponsored a “drum girl election” in which female performers were judged and ranked according to their skill in singing and their appearance. In 1922, *Xiaogong bao* (Small public news) held another election. Two years later, a twelve-member drum girl cabinet was elected, while another paper elected twelve *dagu* princesses. This was the heyday of female storytelling. In 1935 such elections were revived.<sup>67</sup>

Although these folk songs had regional and agricultural roots, their original characteristics had largely vanished by the time they were performed at Tianqiao, where they were commercialized and professionalized. The songs were no longer entertainment for breaks from agricultural work in the field, nor were they performed by and for people from a certain region. They no longer served as expressions of regional identity but instead became forms of urban entertainment disclosing little connection between performers and the regions from which they originated. Because the singers and houses had different ranks, performance prices differed greatly, ranging from twenty cents to one *yuan*. At the end of a song, the singer collected money from the audience. After rent for the house and furniture was deducted, the remainder was divided according to the amount of singing each singer had done.<sup>68</sup>

These forms of entertainment could not be mass reproduced at that time. In most cases there were no written scripts for the shows. Young performers learned the lyrics from their teachers, listening and then memorizing by heart. There were also strict requirements for pronunciation, posture, and vocal and instrumental skills. These requirements transformed performing into a specialized profession that could not easily be mastered or freely entered. Moreover, entertainers needed to keep their art alive by passing skills on to later generations. This was achieved through organization. In an effort to define the boundary of the profession and maintain control over it, each type of entertainment had its own secret language. According to Zhang Cixi's survey in 1936, "All the businesses at Tianqiao have their own secret terms (*chun dian*) not known to outsiders. People in the business are not allowed to reveal these terms to others. They are very strict about 'giving a stick of gold rather than teaching one sentence of the *chun [dian]*.'"<sup>69</sup>

*Pingshu* (storytelling) became popular around the end of the Qing and, during the Republican period, entered the rank of major entertainment forms in Beijing. One indicator of its popularity was the status of its foremost practitioner, Shuang Houping, who reigned as one of Beijing's most popular entertainers, or "big kings," along with Beijing Opera singer Tan Xinpei and drum singer Liu Baoquan. Storytelling achieved this status partly through effective organization. Among all the entertainment forms, storytelling was probably the easiest to learn. Certain people are natural storytellers and could easily establish themselves in the business; hence storytellers were subject to the most rigorous form of organization. They jealously guarded against newcomers by setting up a strict procedure regulating entry into the storytelling profession. What was enacted was no less than a control system to monitor the population in the business and to maintain monopoly.

The organization stressed membership in the profession. All storytellers had to worship three gods, King Zhuang of the Zhou dynasty, Confucius, and Sage Wenchang. In addition, a storyteller had to possess three props: a piece of *xingmu* (awakening wood), a fan, and a handkerchief. The *xingmu* was a piece of hard wood that the storyteller beat on the desk in front of him to distinguish paragraphs or sections of stories. When the story reached a critical moment, the storyteller would strike the desk to "wake people up." The fan could be used to represent a gun, a sword, bridges, a door, or even a house. The handkerchief could represent a letter or book.

*Pingshu* performers, in professional circles, were called “those who use small instruments,” whereas drum singers with stringed instrument accompaniment were called “those using big instruments.” Without these instruments, a performer was not considered as a member of the storytelling profession. Nor could a performer be recognized if these instruments were acquired without the necessary ceremony. They had to be awarded by a master at the successful completion of an apprenticeship period. A ceremony was then held for the gift giving. The disciple kneeled in front of the master, who then placed the instruments in a tray, covering them with a sheet of red paper. The master either handed the student the gifts himself or appointed someone to do it. The student accepted the gift with a kowtow. But before leaving the master, the student had to sign a contract with him:

In ancient times the sages said: “Since I began to study with the master, I have learned much.” According to this rationale, whether one’s skills be literary or military or business, none can be good at them without learning from a teacher. The  *of the teacher is surely great. To enter the door [of storytelling] to learn a skill is a way to support my family. This [profession] has lasted for many generations. The ceremony has always been solemn. Today, [name] introduced by [name], voluntarily learns storytelling under [name]’s guidance. He burned incense and kowtowed in front of the ancestral masters on [date], and performed the ceremonies to follow a master. From now on, although the hierarchy is teacher and student, the feeling toward each other is the same as that between father and son. I will follow the teachings of the ancient sages, and respect the teacher. I would never dare to forget what the teacher instructs me. This feeling comes from my true heart and I will never regret it. [Signed]*

The apprentice’s name changed on becoming a disciple, and one of the two characters of the new name was shared by all students of a certain master, as was usually the case with siblings. In this way, the students of one master became a symbolic family. The name of a performer thus revealed whose student he was.<sup>70</sup>

If one storyteller encountered another but did not know him, he would call him *haiqing* and try to discover the newcomer’s status. When the new storyteller finished a segment, or while he was collecting money, the other would turn over his *xingmu* on the table. The storyteller would then ask who upset his prop, and the interrogation would begin: “Whose student are you?” “How many years have you been learning this art?” Soon, if the newcomer had a teacher, he could declare it, and the two would become acquaintances. If he could not answer convincingly, he would be chased away. But if he humbly an-

swered, “I am only a beginner in this art and have never followed a teacher; please kindly bestow upon me some food [a profession], I am willing to be your student,” then the questioner might accept him as an apprentice.<sup>71</sup>

In addition to controlling membership, the storytellers’ organization, to some extent, also enforced its own “copyright laws.” Certain storytellers had exclusive jurisdiction over specific stories. For example, Tian’en tang teahouse was famous for rendition of the great classic *Journey to the West*, as told by a man named An. He imitated monkeys so convincingly that he acquired the nickname Monkey An. His *Journey to the West* was taught only to his own students, and anyone who wished to perform the story had to study under him.

The storytellers devised a performance schedule. To avoid conflict, they planned who would perform at what teahouse on what days, over a two-month period called a “single round” (*yizhuan*). When the round ended, a storyteller had to cede his place to someone else, whether the story was finished or not. For rent, the storytellers had to pay house owners or landowners 20 to 30 percent, respectively, of what they made.<sup>72</sup>

In the deceptive commercial market at Tianqiao, the entertainers’ organizations promoted stability. They set boundaries between performers and the outside world and protected and sustained their professions. In contrast to these organizations that sprang up around existing structures, new forces were also trying to establish themselves at Tianqiao: the enterprises of entertainment centers and amusement parks.

Even though Tianqiao was the source of energy for many in Beijing, some saw the shadow of death hanging over it. Sidney Gamble wrote, “Recreation in Peking reflects very clearly the transitional stage through which the people of China are passing and the possibilities and dangers of the change from the old to the new.” He saw all non-Western forms of entertainment in Beijing as “traditional,” even though some of them had only emerged or evolved distinctively at the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the early twentieth century. He observed that

the old amusements which have characterized the life of the capital for generations, theater-going, feasting, listening to story-tellers, Chinese horse-racing, and entertainment by the singsong girls or public entertainers, can still be found in much the same form as in ancient days.<sup>73</sup>

He did not accept these blossoming folk arts as “wholesome” recreations and presented them instead as something that was, thankfully,

dying and would be replaced by modern Western-style recreational centers. It is a fair observation that folk entertainment at Tianqiao continued in somewhat traditional forms, yet the notion that it was “dying” in no sense conveyed its history, dynamics, or meaning to ordinary people. Defying Gamble’s prediction, what died at Tianqiao were the “wholesome recreations” of the future sponsored by entertainment enterprises.

Tianqiao was a locus of competition for larger entertainment enterprises. The earliest promotions appealed to the gentry tradition of leisure. Some of the gentry (*shenshi*) residing in the district, headed by Bu Hequan, pooled their money to build the Shuixinting (Water Center Pavilion) next to the Temple of Agriculture in 1916. A river was channeled around the pavilion and planted amply with lotuses and water caltrops. Boats could be hired out, and amusement grounds were opened featuring three teahouses with music, one *laozi* house, and a restaurant, all bearing classical poetic names. Banks and bridges were designed for strolls. The admission ticket was two copper coins. The empty ground beyond the river was opened for horse riding.<sup>74</sup>

The Shuixinting closed temporarily after less than two years’ operation due to insufficient business. In 1919, when it was reopened, a gentry member, Lin Chuanjia, called for poems to be edited into a collection on Tianqiao. In his notice published in the newspapers, Lin’s description of Tianqiao mixed vocabulary from classical poetry and Western urban sites: “In the future, we will imitate the Eiffel Tower in Paris and expect the Yongding Gate to be the Arc de Triomphe. We will erect jade buildings like those in New York and look over the Zhengyang Gate Avenue like the Avenue of the Republic [sic].”<sup>75</sup> It was a mixture of classical elite Chinese images and ambitious modern expectations. According to the *Beijing Tourist Guide* of 1919, the Water Center Pavilion was a “quiet and elegant place in the South City” that offered Western food. In 1920 and 1921, however, the Water Center Pavilion suffered severe damage from three serious fires. Never having accumulated a large capital, it was unable to recover from these disasters. Later, the land was sold to the streetcar company and a terminal was built there. “Dust and noise became heavy, and it was no longer a world of bright flowers and green willows.”<sup>76</sup>

This early effort to gentrify Tianqiao did not go unchallenged. Two new amusement centers, focusing on excitement and fun rather than the old gentry-style tea tasting and poem writing, were built at Tianqiao. They were the New World and the South City Amusement Parks. Gam-

ble called them “totally new forms of amusement, imported from the west,...the Coney Island of Peking,...highly commercialized enterprises with distinctly middle grade entertainment, some western and some Chinese.”<sup>77</sup> Gamble predicted that these centers would be the successors to folk art entertainment. But their fate proved a disappointment.

The New World was built in 1913, financed by Chinese merchants and designed by a British architect. It was a five-story Western-style building in the shape of a ship and was located on the intersection of Huayan Road and Wanming Road. Its organization imitated Shanghai’s Big World.<sup>78</sup> The games inside the building were free with the purchase of a ticket for thirty big copper coins. Downstairs were four distorting mirrors and games like ring toss and toy shooting. On the second and third floors were a theater and a cinema. Some of the students from the famous Fuliancheng troupe, Sun Shengfu, Chen Shengsun, and Xu Shengyu, performed there at night. On the top of the building was a garden with flowers blossoming in all seasons except winter. In the summer, tables and chairs were arranged there and tea was served.

New World initially did a thriving business, which made many merchants jealous. In 1917, a merchant, Peng Xiukang, rented a large piece of land to the north of the Temple of Heaven and built the South City Amusement Park to compete against New World. At the same time, the district administration, using money levied on merchants at Tianqiao, built a clock tower, usually called the “four-faced clock” (*Simian zhong*), on the east side of the New World. Very soon after the opening of the South City Amusement Park and the erection of the “four-faced clock,” the New World went bankrupt. Some people explained this event by saying that the “four-faced clock” tethered the ship of the New World like a huge stone pillar, preventing it from sailing anymore. Later theories attributed the fall of the New World to bad management; to a lawsuit over the death of a Miss Yan (the daughter of a Qing official and a courtesan), who fell off its building; and to competition from the South City Amusement Park.<sup>79</sup>

The South City Amusement Park, which occupied about 3.3 acres of land, was divided into three sections. In the north were a theater, a cinema, and a dance hall surrounding a roller skating rink and a bowling ally. The eastern section was reserved for folk arts, and the southern section was occupied by a large pond in which red and white lotus flowers blossomed in the summer. The seats around the pond provided a cool refuge during the hot weather. The park was open from eight o’clock in the morning to midnight. The admission for adults was ten coins, and

for children it was half price. A ticket bought unlimited access to every section of the park. A few restaurants also opened there, serving reasonably priced quality food.<sup>80</sup>

Many of the performers at the park were famous. Among the Beijing opera actresses performing there were Meng Xiaodong and Fu Zhifang, who later became, respectively, the mistress and the wife of Mei Lanfang. Peng Xiukang sent scouts throughout Tianqiao to select the best performers to give shows in the Park. In the *quyi* (folk opera singing) house were Beijing tune drum singing (*Jingyun dagu*) by the “king of the Drum World” Liu Baoquan, plum flower drum singing (*Meihua dagu*) by Jin Wanchang, single-string singing (*danxian*) by the famous Rong Jianchen, comic crosstalk by Jiao Dehai, and vocal mimicry by Tang Jingcheng. In the new-style theater, the early movie stars Han Langen and Yin Xiuchen performed in productions of *Leiyu* (Thunderstorm), *The Imperial Viceroy* by Chekhov, *Hemu jiating* (A harmonious family), *Jia* (Family), and *Konggu lan* (A lily in a lonely valley). These plays were not only Western in form but also characterized by content either directly adopted from Western work or focused on conflict between Chinese and Western values, with obvious criticism of the old Chinese value system.<sup>81</sup>

In the circus, the most celebrated shows were performed by the “great master of magic Han Bingqian.” Han’s most famous show was “shooting a live donkey.” In the show, he put a live donkey into a big trunk and then asked four assistants to turn the trunk so the audience could see there were no trapdoors. Then he would open the door to reveal the donkey. Just as the door was being closed, Han would shoot at the donkey. When the door was opened again, the donkey had vanished. Han would ask several representatives from the audience to go back stage, and the donkey would be discovered there eating grass. Han performed this show only once a month, and he would never teach anyone his trick. His fame was enhanced by his traveling to Europe and the United States in his early years and his supposedly having performed magic shows with Western magicians.<sup>82</sup>

Most of the films shown at the movie theaters in the park were American. There were also some educational and animated films. The novel form of these silent films attracted a large audience. The patrons of the dance hall were “new-style” men and women. If men came without partners, they could ask dancing girls to dance with them. Some Russian refugees also performed Russian folk dances. After 1928, some Russian strongmen performed with dumbbells or did string pulling,

steel stick bending, or iron chain breaking. These shows became famous throughout the city, but some people made the sarcastic comment that “the monk from far away knows how to recite sutras,” implying that the Russians did not have any real command of their art but were only benefiting from their exotic appearance.<sup>83</sup>

On the empty ground in the southern part of the park, there was a fireworks show every Saturday night called “shooting at Xianyang City.” A huge box of fireworks, hung from a tall frame, blazed through the sky in a rainbow of colors, creating a variety of images that coalesced into an image of Xiangyang City, a theme adopted from a classical story. At the same time, two red and yellow fireballs were launched from another frame, shooting toward the city.<sup>84</sup>

Clearly, every effort was made to make the New World and the Amusement Park attractive to Beijing residents. But despite their initial success, neither of these entertainment enterprises endured. Indeed, Gamble’s vision of progress was realized in reverse. Why did the amusement centers fail while the individual performers working out on the open grounds survived? A comparison between Tianqiao and Coney Island at the turn of the century sheds light on a likely reason for the amusement centers’ financial troubles. John F. Kasson found that the New York entertainment center’s “special distinction lay in the new mechanical amusements and exotic settings” that transformed the audience into active participants, in contrast to most entertainment of the period, where “the public remained in the position of spectators.”<sup>85</sup> Coney Island could turn an audience into participants because of general conditions in American society and the relationship between work and leisure. Amusement parks in the United States came with the industrial age and were “made possible by swelling urban populations and an increase in leisure time and spending power.”<sup>86</sup> In addition, when visitors went to Coney Island to seek “escape from the demands of urban-industrial life,” they boarded machines of entertainment like roller coasters that, ironically, in many ways resembled the machines with which they worked. Audience participation made this amusement “an extension of work; a mechanized, standardized character pervaded both experiences.” The equipment at Coney Island “continued to borrow from the urban and industrial railways, so much so that some commentators marveled how much the amusements to which people flocked resembled the features of their daily life.”<sup>87</sup> People who worked with machines went to ride one that was both familiar and scary in order to be amused or thrilled. As Kasson argues, “To counteract weariness,

ness and boredom, Coney Island prescribed a homeopathic remedy of intense, frenetic physical activity without imaginative demands.”<sup>88</sup>

The amusement parks at Tianqiao, like Coney Island, also offered varied entertainment, but unlike those at Coney Island, they did not draw a clientele whose lives were marked by a clear distinction between work and leisure, who were familiar with mechanized equipment, and who had adequate spending power. The “middle-graded entertainment” at the New World and the South City Amusement Park was restricted to people who could afford and would be willing to pay for the entrance ticket. In Beijing at the time, people who could afford it were not necessarily drawn to it: for the most part, university professors and students, school teachers, government bureaucrats and clerks, and middle- to upper-class merchants preferred the tranquillity and elegance of the old imperial gardens, now transformed into such public parks as Central Park and Beihai Park. Instead of braving the chaos, dust, and filth of Tianqiao, these people chose to enjoy the newly widened and paved streets in the Inner City, such as Changan Avenue.

The city’s poor could not function as the consumers required by the new entertainment centers either. The amusement parks and centers charged regular entrance fees at the gates. For the poor, a gate price could still be an important factor in their choice of entertainment. Why pay at the gate exclusively for amusement when entertainment at the market was free? At the open market, the price of the entertainment was up to the entertained, who could choose to pay nothing and thereby risked at most being belittled by the hat passer. The performances at the market did not appear to be pure fun seeking, whereas the amusement parks and centers did. Being indoors or inside walls, the parks or centers required a special trip for the sole purpose of personal diversion. For such entertainment centers to survive, there had to be people who worked and were paid regularly. But Beijing’s masses were extremely poor, working long and uncertain hours for irregular and meager rewards. Their work time, often involving some aspect of the economy of recycling, was not regularized, and they had little or no time that was purely devoted to leisure.

In short, the failures of Beijing’s amusement parks were related to the style of work and life in the city. The consumers that the amusement centers aimed to serve simply did not exist. As a result, the parks were “rarely visited by anyone [and] later...just disappeared” by themselves.<sup>89</sup> At Tianqiao trade and performances were integrated, business and pleasure stayed partners, and purchasing and entertainment took

place simultaneously. But entertainment conceived of as a leisure counterpart to clock-punching drudgery did not draw enough consumers.

The story of Tianqiao was not a simple history of linear development or of the replacement of old things by the new. At Tianqiao, the concentration of elements expelled from the reordered Republican Beijing created dynamics new to the city. Focusing on what was new there cannot help answer the question “What were the attractions of Tianqiao?” Tianqiao satisfied the economic needs of the city’s poor population better than other commercial districts while providing a familiar sense of festivity similar to that of temple fairs. The members of the elite classes went there to look for connections to the past through particular material items at Tianqiao. Those who studied it recognized its powerful energy, importance, and centrality to a large portion of Beijing’s population. Although observers were sometimes critical of Tianqiao, they did not simply view it as an object of study and reform; they could not deny the amazement and puzzlement that they experienced there.

The attractions of Tianqiao were its trade in commodities and its physically oriented folk entertainment, both of which reflected “the lowering of all that is high, spiritual, ideal, abstract; it is...a transfer to the material level, to the sphere of earth and body in their indissoluble unity.”<sup>90</sup> The two combined to produce “the unique yet complex carnival experience of the people. This experience, opposed to all that was ready-made and completed, to all pretense at immutability, sought a dynamic expression; it demanded ever changing, playful, undefined forms.”<sup>91</sup> The sense of agency instilled in consumers by transactions involving secondhand commodities created the foundation for a community with unlimited anonymity, one that was marked simultaneously by instability and dynamic creativity. Even though Tianqiao was on the city’s geographical periphery, it acquired an impressive vitality due to the central position it held in the city’s economic and cultural life as well as in the formation of Republican Beijing’s identity.

Tianqiao was neither an expression of the hierarchical imperial order nor an example of the new order of a Cartesian grid aiming to allow citizens equal access to spaces and thus to achieve efficiency in commerce and production. Tianqiao was synchronous with the newly created urban order in metropolitan Beijing: as its dump, its mirror, its opposite, its enemy, and thus its essential supplement. The order and efficiency of Tianqiao were those of recycling. Tianqiao was made of the same materials as the rest of the city, but it occupied a different position

in the chain of circulation. The businesses there differed from both the old stores serving the imperial household and officials and the new department stores catering to the city's emerging new elite class; the entertainment there resisted mass reproduction. Tianqiao dissolved the social hierarchy formed in other parts of the city and constantly created its own hierarchies through dissimulation.

Tianqiao's dynamics grew out of its position as the city's recycling center. Recycling was not simply bringing back the old. Instead, it involved applying labor to fragments of the past to rekindle and create new values in them. Objects collected from all over the city, even from many periods in history, were reworked and assembled at Tianqiao. Their values were weighed and haggled over, and then they embarked upon another tour of the city. In secondhand goods shops, old functional objects were reincarnated as decorative antiques; old clothes were mended or sewn into shoe soles or mops; lame furniture would exchange legs and undergo amputations and refinishing. At the heart of the recycling process was the tension not only between the old and the new but, more fundamentally, between agency and its lack. The recycling potential of the old commodities themselves was limited by histories etched into them. Their past could be partly erased, mended, torn or elaborated, but it could never be eliminated—a product of recycling could only masquerade as new, and rarely convincingly.

That Tianqiao as a recycling center attracted the entire spectrum of Beijing residents does not mean that Tianqiao disguised the existence of social stratification and created an illusion of egalitarianism. Tianqiao did not promise the attainment of equality among people in all aspects and in every place. But it did provide the city's disfranchised with a place to feel at home, a chance to feel they could win, or just an opportunity to lose themselves in a whirl of curiosities, virtuosos, and charlatans at no charge. Ultimately, Tianqiao proposed an alternative to the prevailing economic and social order, but its egalitarian spirit did not create in its visitors the illusion that this order permeated the whole society.

Tianqiao endowed its visitors with a sense of agency. Instead of simply buying goods, they had an occasion for social exchange; instead of being manipulated by commodities, they felt that they controlled objects. In Lao She's story, Xiangzi escaped to Tianqiao to feel freedom and comfort. The free performances brought enjoyment, and paying for them was voluntary. The anonymity, the mixing of classes, and the obvious thrill that members of the elite would feel in going to this disor-

derly and threatening place demonstrated that in some unique way Tianqiao represented the end of the status distinctions of the old world without the order and rules of the new world of department stores and amusement centers. But visitors' sense of agency was in a way involuntary, for it was dictated by, among other things, poverty. It was a freedom in which necessity could never be entirely forgotten. Looking at Tianqiao was "like reading a history of life, or of society—rich, but hard to digest" because it was full of involuntary memory and unwanted elements.<sup>92</sup>

Moreover, the limited sense of agency that Tianqiao fostered could not determine Tianqiao's future. In the Republic, Beijing's future still seemed radically uncertain, but whatever form of industry eventually developed would almost surely annihilate Tianqiao. Tianqiao's tempo was incompatible with that of a proletariat. People were alienated from much of what a modern future seemed to entail: a lack of local detail or flavor, a daily material culture reduced to a froth of advertising, and a sense of being dictated to by Western powers. The uncertainty about the future further fed feelings of nostalgia and fantasies of a stable truth in a persisting past.

In the 1980s, interest in Tianqiao revived, and more books and articles were published that depicted Tianqiao as the symbol of "old Beijing."<sup>93</sup> In the 1990s, a committee was formed in Beijing to "rebuild" Tianqiao in order to preserve and develop "traditional Beijing culture" there. But even if today's Beijing can rebuild the commercial aspect of this culture and commercialize the already commercialized "tradition," the dynamics and energy of the place will be different from what they were in the past. The old performances will be revived but performed by entertainers organized as either a socialist unit or a capitalist company. Recycling, the essence of Tianqiao, will be forever gone. Just as Tianqiao in the first half of the twentieth century was part of Beijing, so the twenty-first century's Tianqiao will necessarily be a part of Beijing too: not less modern, not more traditional.



PART III

# The Lettered City



# Sociology

## *Examining Urban Ills*

From a distance, Tianqiao would appear to illustrate some of the serious problems facing Republican Beijing: poverty, prostitution, and crime. In fact, this was the picture of Beijing drawn by Chinese and Western sociologists who studied the city in the 1920s and 1930s and sought to diagnose Beijing's ills and recommend treatment. The voluminous scholarship left by them depicted the lives of people who were ignored in other records. But they did not simply expose the dark side of Beijing life; more importantly, in analyzing the causes of the city's social problems, they introduced their own ideas of the public interest and the relationship between the state and urban society.

Sociology was a popular college major during the Republican period. In the late 1920s, China seemed to be entering a period of stability and reconstruction, and students turned away from political enthusiasms toward the practical study of social realities. Sociology appealed to students because, as R. David Arkush argues, it was a "science from the West when Western science had great appeal; it was concerned with society at a time when China's social ills were crying for attention."<sup>1</sup> The study of sociology in China was clearly marked by Western influences. Methodologically, the sociologists' work was influenced by the Chicago school of sociology, distinguished by its empirical research on communities using some of the methods of the natural sciences. The leading figures of the Chicago school "made field work a legitimate academic undertaking and the basis of sociology; and...their chief concern was

urbanization and its social consequences.”<sup>2</sup> Institutionally, the Princeton Center in Beijing, established in 1906, played a key role in the establishment of the discipline in China. The Princeton Center ran Beijing’s YMCA and later supported and collaborated with the College of Public Affairs at Yenching University.<sup>3</sup> Sidney Gamble, a leading member of the Princeton Center, and John Stewart Burgess, another Princetonian and YMCA secretary in Beijing at the time, trained the first generation of Chinese sociologists and anthropologists. Wenjun Xing observes,

In the course of conducting his social surveys of Beijing, Gamble trained Chinese YMCA staff in the basic methods of social surveys and social work. He and Burgess also taught a seminar course at Peking (Union) University on social conditions of the city. The University’s Department of Sociology was founded in 1919, largely through their efforts. Yenching University’s College of Public Affairs was established under the auspices of the Princeton New School of Public and International Affairs through the Princeton-Yenching Foundation of which Sidney D. Gamble was the president. It was organized around Yenching’s Department of Sociology and Social Work, which offered courses on social problems, social theory, rural sociology, anthropology and social work.<sup>4</sup>

China’s first social studies thus began in missionary institutions—churches, schools, and charities.<sup>5</sup> Missionary sociologists strove to establish a pattern of ideal social development in which cities were pivotal. In his foreword for Gamble’s volume, Robert Woods argued that life in cities was “organized” and that cities were the homes of future “modern-minded leaders,” upon whom “the reconstruction of the nation...largely depends.”<sup>6</sup> The marriage between missionary institutions and sociology is not surprising. The social gospel movement in the late nineteenth century influenced the later development of sociology, and, as Martin Bulmer remarks in his study of the development of the Chicago school of sociology, “Liberal Protestantism...looked to sociology to provide a ‘scientific’ support to the social gospel.”<sup>7</sup> In later years, most of the sociologists in Chinese universities were trained in the West. Arkush found that “in 1947, of 143 university faculty members teaching sociology in all of China, 71 had studied in the United States, 27 in western Europe, and 12 were Americans.”<sup>8</sup>

In addition to its Protestant orientation, the sociological research on Beijing was based on the conviction that China was undergoing a transition from the “ancient to the modern.” As Gamble put it:

With the country changing from an ancient empire to a modern democracy, with the ancient g[u]ilds beginning to feel the pressure of new industrial

methods, with the passing of the old education and the coming of the new, with the gradual discarding of the age long primitive methods of philanthropy and the opening of new, well organized institutions, one can hardly imagine a situation where accurate detailed facts and a strong social program are more important or more necessary for those who would help China, whether they be students, officials, social workers, educators or missionaries.<sup>9</sup>

Gamble's comment indicates that the ideal of civil society served as a framework for the sociological study of Beijing. One central problem of adopting such concepts to the reality of life in the city, however, was the application of normative principles and frameworks to explain specific conditions. The Western sociologists who introduced the discipline into China were at least somewhat aware of this problem, as Herbert Lamson reflected in the textbook that he wrote for students of sociology in China, *Social Pathology in China*. “[This book] does not claim that solutions which have been arrived at by other nations will automatically fit China,”<sup>10</sup> he argued, but

our criterion of what constitutes a pathological condition in any society must be based chiefly upon considerations of human welfare and the opportunity for the highest development of every personality, not merely the personalities of certain privileged groups. It sometimes occurs that situations inimical to the highest human welfare and most robust social health are so numerous, extend over such a wide area, or involve such a large proportion of society as to be the usual rather than the unusual condition. We cannot, therefore, always depend upon what is usual or customary as a criterion of what is of the highest good.... [S]ocial pathology as a branch of sociology, is forced to be somewhat *normative* in that it must pass judgment as to just what social maladjustment involves.<sup>11</sup>

This problem of the relationship between norms and reality was demonstrated in the sociologists' narrative of the city's problems; more revealingly, however, it was expressed in the suggested solutions for these problems. Because of the presence of the Princeton Center, Beijing attracted more attention from sociologists than other cities in China. Sidney Gamble and John Stewart Burgess carried out major research projects in Beijing, as did faculty and students in the sociology departments at the American-funded Yenching and Qinghua Universities. When Gamble conducted surveys in Beijing, “Questionnaires [sic] had to be translated into Chinese and reports into English. The terms on one questionnaire were discussed for over two hours by a group of Chinese who knew English well, and foreigners who were expert in the Chinese

language, and even then the results showed that the entire meaning of the English terms had not been put into Chinese.”<sup>12</sup> Chinese sociologists encountered similar problems when applying certain sociological concepts to the residents of Republican Beijing. Gamble acknowledged that research might be easier to conduct in treaty ports such as Shanghai, Hankow, and Tientsin because “the people had perhaps had more contact with foreigners than in Peking” and sociological categories and terms could be more easily applied in these cities, but he considered this alternative less meaningful because the treaty ports “could hardly be called Chinese cities.” On the contrary, “Peking was chosen for study because it is the capital of China and the center of so much Chinese life; because, if we should be successful, our experiment would probably have a nation-wide influence and the chances of success seemed to be better there than in any other Chinese city.”<sup>13</sup>

The application of a sociological framework to life in Beijing enabled the sociologists to investigate some real but often unexamined problems. But the sociological studies of Republican Beijing, although appearing as objective information, were in fact products of a specific knowledge system. When sociologists were confronted with the reality of life in Beijing, the discrepancies between their disciplinary framework and its explanatory power were exposed. The sociological study of Beijing, therefore, was to some extent a dialogue between reality and norms derived from other contexts.

#### POVERTY, CRIME, AND PROSTITUTION

All the social surveys and sociological studies conducted during the Republican years ranked poverty as Beijing’s most “important and glaring” problem, the “main breeding ground for other social evils,” and the “chief force lowering public morality and undermining public welfare.”<sup>14</sup> According to a 1917 police survey, about 12 percent of the city’s population lived below subsistence level.<sup>15</sup> The results of a 1926 survey are shown in Table 2. The destitute were absolutely penniless and had no means of livelihood; the poor were those whose income were insufficient even for bare subsistence unless it was supplemented by gifts or relief; and the lower middle class were those whose incomes were narrowly sufficient to cover their daily expenses. In other words, 26 percent of the city’s population were living in dire poverty, and a total of almost three-quarters of the population lived in insecurity. Less than 5 percent of the population fell into the high-income category.

TABLE 2. DISTRIBUTION OF BEIJING  
FAMILIES BY ECONOMIC GROUP, 1926

Class	Total	% of Total
The destitute	42,982	16.8
The poor	23,620	9.2
Lower middle class	120,437	47.3
The comfortable	56,992	22.4
The well-to-do	10,350	4.3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>254,381</b>	<b>100.0</b>

SOURCE: Tao Menghe, *Beiping shenghuo fei zhi fenxi* (An analysis of the cost of living in Beiping) (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1930), pp. 7-8.

Li Jinghan, a professor in the Sociology Department at Qinghua University, described Beijing's most destitute as "half-alive and half dead"; many were homeless street beggars "similar to living ghosts." The rest had homes but still depended on charitable institutions to survive. They ate corn flour, sweet potatoes, and coarse millet with pickled turnips year round, and even those were often beyond their budget. They could hardly afford even secondhand clothes, and they rarely paid their rent on time. The main breadwinners of these destitute households were often old or feeble rickshaw pullers, itinerant peddlers, servants, unskilled workers, policemen, and shop attendants. All other family members also had to work as hard as they could; otherwise the family could easily slip into dependence on charity. Old women and small children in such families dug through garbage mounds searching for anything of value.<sup>16</sup> Skilled workers, employees of the trolley company, postmen, and some shop clerks lived a slightly more secure life but were always on the edge of slipping into extreme poverty. A "comfortable life" for a working-class family only meant being able to afford enough to eat, two sets of clothes for each season, a minimum of entertainment, and medicine if a family member became ill. Some children in these families were able to go to school. But very few skilled workers and a handful of highly paid shop attendants could aspire to this sort of life, and attaining it required that other family members work too.<sup>17</sup> Many Beijing women worked at home doing embroidery, sewing, weaving, and making matchboxes, silk and paper flowers, shoe soles, and toothbrushes.<sup>18</sup> Poor families usually economized on clothing, relying on the creativity of the women in the family to keep everyone dressed. Tattered adult

clothes were reincarnated as children's clothes; secondhand garments and shoes were patched and mended.<sup>19</sup> Some people recycled a single jacket throughout the seasons; a thin summer jacket would be padded in winter and then the wadding would be removed in spring.<sup>20</sup> Some households had no winter clothes and bedding at all, and others shared one comforter among the whole family.<sup>21</sup>

Poverty was not a phenomenon new to Republican China, but as Liang Qizi's analysis of the concept of poverty in late imperial China demonstrates, the social and cultural meanings of poverty changed significantly throughout history.<sup>22</sup> Liang notes that in Europe, poverty originally had a positive valuation; Jesus Christ had been poor and had praised the virtues of the poor. After the sixteenth century, as beggars and the poor in general came to be seen as carriers of epidemics, especially the plague, the moral meaning of poverty gradually became more negative. Finally, with capitalist commercial development, economic power became the determining factor of a person's social status, and poverty and unemployment were morally criticized.

In the case of China, Liang argues, diachronic changes in the moral valuation of poverty were more ambiguous. The emergence of the poor as a social category began with the gradual liberation of bond servants, or "low people" (*jian min*). Beginning in the Song dynasty, some "low people," who were not necessarily poor, were allowed to buy their way out of low status. As wealth increased with the development of the commercial economy in the late Ming, the old value system based on bureaucratic status and imperial power was threatened. The model of the upright official was one of selflessness and incorruptibility, and a wealthy one was morally suspicious. But wealthy officials were becoming increasingly common, and the rich, with or without degrees, were beginning to exercise greater social influence. The need to clarify the moral meaning of wealth led to a concern with poverty. Poverty relief emerged as the best means to address the social tensions generated by the new power of wealth and to bridge the gulf opening between the wealthy and the poor. Local elites became increasingly involved in charitable practices to help the poor.

In the late Ming and the Qing, clarifying who the poor and the "low" were and what wealth was legitimate became important. Ming and Qing welfare associations extended help, not to all in need, but only to those considered eligible, such as chaste women and filial sons. Those who were able-bodied but refused to (or, more likely, were unable to find) work were ignored, as were those still legally defined as "low." The in-



Figure 24. A beggar boy. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

sistence that relief be granted only on moral criteria and not on the basis of need alone kept poverty an ambivalent social category. Neither was poverty judged an urgent issue confronting the state. As population density soared in the Qing, subsistence became a more pressing social problem, but the state mainly acknowledged this issue indirectly. Pierre-Etienne Will and R. Bin Wong's study of Qing famine relief shows that the

Qing government was earnest and highly efficient in providing disaster relief, in large part to prevent peasant rebellions, but was uninterested in the question of routine poverty in and of itself.<sup>23</sup>

The same was not true in the Republic. If a nation's power was directly related to its level of economic development, then poverty was a sign of national frailty. A society suffering from mass poverty must have problems, and these would require diagnosis in order to be cured. Sociologists focused on two issues regarding the root of Republican Beijing's widespread poverty: personal moral failure and systemic problems. Niu Nai'e at Yenching University identified two major causes for poverty in Beijing: "bad habits" and "bad character." He criticized the many "unnecessary expenses" of the poor, such as alcohol, tea, and smoking. He noted their "excessive spending" on social occasions like weddings and funerals. The religious beliefs of the poor also came under scrutiny: "As for those who deeply believe in Buddhism and pray to Buddha for protection, the money they spend on incense, paper, and sacrifice in each season and on festivals constitutes a fair amount." The "bad character" of the poor, according to Niu Nai'e, was reflected in "laziness," "arrogance," and "an inability to endure long-term work and hardship."<sup>24</sup> Such criticism of the moral character of the poor was standard in sociological texts at the time.<sup>25</sup>

The most obvious signs of poverty in Beijing were the beggars, who simultaneously elicited sympathy and "annoyance." Y.L. Tong remarked,

A large number of able-bodied people make an existence by begging. They are ubiquitous in every street and lane of the city. Some sit at the roadside exposing their unsightly sores, while others follow passers-by with persistent importunities which are often very annoying. On a bleak winter day many of them may be seen plodding along the streets with bodies half bared and half covered with rags, and it is not unusual to see here and there one of them dying from exposure and starvation.<sup>26</sup>

These beggars were "annoying" but nonetheless pitiful. Tong showed little sympathy, on the other hand, for those he believed to be "professional beggars":

The members of their families come out to beg by turns and the alms they get very often amount to much more than an ordinary workman can earn. It is therefore not to be wondered at that some can afford even to ride on rickshaws after a weary journey. This also accounts for the story, told by a lady connected with the Peking Exchange, an industrial home for poor women, that several of the female beggars taken into the institution have

escaped and returned to begging, simply because they believed that they could make more from soliciting alms.<sup>27</sup>

The reason for Tong's lack of sympathy for these "professional beggars" was obviously their low morals.<sup>28</sup>

An argument based on ethnicity was also readily applied to explain social problems. Manchus were another group who were seen as morally deficient. A privileged group in the Qing dynasty, Manchu princes were given large residences and hereditary rank. Manchu families were not permitted to do business or practice crafts under the Qing, but ordinary Manchu banner men enjoyed regular monthly allowances of grain and yearly cash incomes. This system helped to bind their loyalty, for it tied their fate to that of the empire. But as the Qing declined, so did their living standard. By the nineteenth century, many banner families in Beijing were already living in poverty. Some descendants of Manchu families had difficulty acquiring work skills in the Republic due to the privileged position they had enjoyed in the Qing. A historian of the Manchus remarks, "Those poor [banner families] living in the Inner City [of Beijing] had neither place to borrow nor any means to make a living.... The little grain they received was not even enough for one person to survive, how can they support their families?"<sup>29</sup>

The Manchus experienced discrimination after the fall of the Qing. Some of the most powerful propaganda used to inflame the 1911 Revolution was venomously anti-Manchu, and after the empire's fall almost any symbol of Manchu culture was seen as anathema to social progress, although many of the material items connected with their aristocratic life were fought over on the antique market as valuable historical objects. Many believed that the Manchus' previous life of privilege had led to decadence and low moral standards. It was widely held that the Manchus were not strict in educating their children and that they looked down upon craftsmen and businessmen. It was thought that the Manchus knew how to enjoy the good life but knew nothing about making a living. They supposedly loathed work, even though a large number of Beijing's rickshaw pullers, policemen, and clerks were Manchus.<sup>30</sup>

These were common stereotypes, and ones to which some sociologists adhered. The fact that Manchus and Han were physically indistinguishable fed a suspicion that Manchus were the hidden culprits generating social problems. Although Niu Nai'e showed that Manchus constituted only 33 percent of the poor, he believed that they actually constituted half of Beijing's poor residents.<sup>31</sup> This was not totally im-

possible, considering that the well-to-do in the city tended to have come from outside of the city, working in higher education and the government. But in such a case, an economic and historical explanation would be much more convincing than one based on ethnic differences. Similarly, Tong claimed, despite a lack of statistics, that “there are at least seven thousand clandestine prostitutes in the city and most of these are Manchu women.”<sup>32</sup> But not all sociologists adopted this line of reasoning. Tao Menghe published a well-documented refutation of Niu’s accusations that poor Manchus were more profligate than Han in living habits.<sup>33</sup>

These same sociologists, however, also placed great weight on Beijing’s economic woes as the main cause of poverty. Even Tong, who was harsh about the moral characteristics of the poor, observed that “industry is not highly developed and there is not enough work to keep everybody busy. We often reprimand beggars for not seeking something to do, but it is questionable whether every strong-bodied person can secure employment if he or she so desires.”<sup>34</sup> As discussed in Chapter 4, Republican Beijing did not develop an industry. Although a large amount of goods entered the city, they only satisfied the consumption needs of the local wealthy and did not turn the city into a trading center. The city supported itself by serving officials before 1911 and continued to do so until 1928. When the Nationalist government moved its capital to Nanjing, Beijing’s service-based economy lost its customers and drastically declined. Employment grew even more scarce. Even those who had jobs were doing low-paid, unskilled work. Among the 1,200 poor households surveyed by Niu Nai’e in 1933, only 55.94 percent of the males over ten years old had steady jobs.<sup>35</sup> Their occupations included driving horse carts, working for small businesses or as servants or policemen, garbage picking, rickshaw pulling, cooking, building, weaving, agricultural work, toy making, and tailoring. Only 197 among the 1,523 men surveyed, a mere 13 percent, had skills.<sup>36</sup> Among the skilled were masons, carpenters, cooks, weavers, bootmakers, painters, barbers, oven builders, leather tanners—all craftsmen. Only one electrician had anything to do with industrial production. Beijing’s small industrial proletariat did not qualify as poor. Compared to men, women had even fewer paths to employment, and the pay for those lucky enough to have jobs was trifling.

The large number of refugees from the countryside who crowded into Beijing worsened the city’s unemployment problem. Tong listed rural refugees as the second biggest cause of high poverty in Beijing.

These peasants were not attracted to the city by employment opportunities; rather, they were driven from the countryside by hardship or wars. Tong remarked that “recurring famines in the countryside compel refugees to flock to the city, inasmuch as they are unable to obtain anything to eat in the villages. When conditions become normal again, some of them may return to their homes, but a large percentage remains behind.”<sup>37</sup> A survey conducted by the Welfare Department of the Beijing Municipal Government in 1930 showed that most of Beijing’s beggars were from the Hebei countryside.<sup>38</sup>

There are some obvious discrepancies in the sociologists’ analyses of the causes of widespread poverty among the city’s population. Sociologists argued that people fell into poverty due to weaknesses in their own moral character, particularly their unwillingness to do hard work, yet they also acknowledged that these people would not be able to find jobs even if they wanted to work. It is worth pointing out that the sociological studies usually began with moral analyses but ended in a tone sympathetic to the poor. The researchers matter-of-factly included both arguments in their work, but the criticism of individual moral character becomes problematic once the question is raised of who exactly was responsible for what.

Another social problem that the sociologists saw as closely related to, and sometimes even as the direct result of, poverty was crime. The two most important sociological studies of crime in Beijing were conducted by Yenching University sociologists Yan Jingyao (1926) and Zhou Shuzhao (1931).<sup>39</sup> Yan divided crimes in Beijing into four types: economic crimes, sex crimes, crimes against human life and public order, and political crimes.<sup>40</sup> The sociologists noted that unlike contemporaneous European and American cities, Beijing did not have large numbers of sex offenses and crimes against human life. The vast majority of crimes, 84.55 percent, were economically motivated.<sup>41</sup> This category included theft, fraud, robbery, scams, opium trading, hiding stolen goods, counterfeiting, gambling, grave digging, bribery, forcing women into prostitution, forgery, and salt smuggling.<sup>42</sup> Among men twenty-five to twenty-nine years old, the most common criminal offenses were theft and robbery.<sup>43</sup> Among women criminals, 82 percent committed crimes for economic reasons.<sup>44</sup> The biggest category of female criminals was widows, followed by married women and unmarried young women.<sup>45</sup> An astounding number, in fact the majority, of women in prison was there for forcible abduction, which involved the selling of young women to brothels. This practice had been looked down upon in the

Qing but had not been considered illegal and was often the last resort of poor families.<sup>46</sup>

Yan also established a connection between poverty and crime by identifying a pattern in the locations where criminals lived. He found that 45 percent of the city's criminals lived inside the city walls and 37 percent outside, while over 17 percent had no stable residence at all. Most of those living in the city lived in the Outer City, concentrated in slums in the area outside of Qian Gate and around Tianqiao. Those without stable residences also lived in the Tianqiao area. When it was cold, they would try to beg six copper coins during the day and crowd into a small shelter with twenty to thirty men and women at night. They either huddled around a small stove or crowded on a *kang* to escape the freezing cold weather. In the summer, they simply slept outdoors.<sup>47</sup> Those who lived outside the city walls gathered around Chaoyang Gate, the "poorest place in Beijing" where people were exposed to "any kind of dirty and filthy thing that exists in the world." It was a place where "the poorest of Beijing lived": wizened rickshaw pullers, beggars, and the jobless. Yan commented that "it is, just like Tianqiao, a place where crimes are hatched."<sup>48</sup>

Sociologists' discussions of the causes of crime, like their discussions of poverty, were somewhat muddled in their conclusions. Yan Jingyao developed a definition of crime that he felt fit the context of Beijing. He eschewed Western definitions of crime because he believed that the "social concept of crime changes; what is considered crime changes over time and place."<sup>49</sup> He started with the idea that committing a crime meant doing what the law prohibited or failing to do what the law required. He asserted that crime was related not only to law but also to society because only when society had the power to define crimes and organize punishments could the court discipline people's behavior. Society was thus both the standard setter and the disciplining force.<sup>50</sup> Yan further discussed the relationship between crime and society as follows:

Social changes depend on social forces. There are naturally problems for social progress if nothing blocks the development of thoughts and behaviors adverse to society. Social progress will naturally be affected if thoughts and behaviors blocking or hurting human groups (*ren qun*) are not stopped. Crime is behavior that disturbs the order of society. Criminals are malefactors (*bailei*). To control crime is to maintain social order and peace and to speed up social progress.<sup>51</sup>

Yan's discussion of crime and society merits close examination. Progress here is represented as the goal of "human groups," a term used inter-

changeably with “society.” Criminals are individual malefactors (*bailei*) who turn against society and commit antisocial acts. Punishment of crime is a process of bringing back into society’s fold those who place themselves outside it by breaking its rules. This process of punishment affirms that no one can be cast out from modern society and ensures social progress. In this definition of crime and punishment, the two parties are criminals and society, or human groups against whom, or whose rules, criminals offend.

Yan’s definition of crime points to criminals as malefactors or *bailei*, but the sociologists’ studies of specific cases of Republican Beijing, including the ones done by Yan himself, did not support this explanation. These studies, which were, to some extent, sympathetic to the criminals, focused not on the tension between individual criminals and society but on the criminals themselves and their desperate living conditions. Yan’s explanation for the particular pattern of crimes found was that criminals were unable to support themselves and lacked sufficient knowledge to survive in a society where industry and commerce were underdeveloped and jobs scarce. Crime was their only modus vivendi.<sup>52</sup> This also explained the behavior of female criminals. Most young women were under the supervision and protection of their families, but older women had to shoulder their family’s economic burden. In many families, women outnumbered men. Some had to support their husbands; others had to support themselves because their husbands were absent from the home. Although some men sent money home, it was rarely enough to support a whole family, so the women were left dependent on whatever resources they could find.<sup>53</sup> Zhou Shuzhao commented, “[T]he criminals are those who are oppressed, and the women criminals are at the lowest level among the oppressed.” These women had to make a living in a hostile urban environment, but their lives had not prepared them for these new challenges.<sup>54</sup>

From *bailei* to “the oppressed”—the inconsistency in their arguments is obvious. In the view of Zhou Shuzhao, crime was the result of losing “the balance among social forces.”<sup>55</sup> In other words, a well-balanced society in which these people could live was absent. The criminals were malefactors against the social order, but they were also the victims of a bad or poorly functioning society. In these discussions, the cause for crime was located more in the system than in the moral characters of individuals. Poverty, a result of a weak state and ineffective governing, was not immoral in itself; it was what turned otherwise moral people into social problems.

After poverty and crime, prostitution, termed a “social evil” in Gamble’s survey, was the third focus of sociological studies on Beijing. Major surveys on prostitution in Beijing were conducted by Sidney Gamble, John Burgess, and Yenching University sociologist Mai Qianzeng.<sup>56</sup> The number of brothels and women working in the city were recorded and compared over time and with other cities around the world. The studies also covered the prices for different services, rankings, and organization of the business, recruiting, training, advertising, causes of prostitution, and rehabilitation work. More importantly, as Gail Hershatter points out, the discourse on prostitution was also one “about other social relations, about sex as a medium through which people talked about political power, and cultural transformation, about nationhood and cultural identity.”<sup>57</sup>

Gamble’s survey clearly traced prostitution in Beijing back to Chinese cultural customs and traditions. Among the thirteen “conditions that foster prostitution” listed in his book, nine stemmed from “Chinese cultural traditions and customs.” One important factor listed was women’s low social status. “The girl babies are often not welcomed, and disposing of the girls in order to better support the boys is perhaps not as great a sacrifice to many persons in China as it would be in the west.”<sup>58</sup> The lack of “wholesome recreation” and the “absence of any normal social relationships between men and women” drove men to the entertainment district, as did the unpleasant atmosphere of homes that made women unable to hold the loyalty and interest of their husbands.<sup>59</sup> In addition, the pressure of custom and the examples set by high officials contributed to the problem. Gamble believed that the possession of concubines and the frequenting of the brothel district by many high bureaucrats paved the way for imitation by the masses. He also criticized the hope of the higher-grade prostitute that “she may capture the affection of some high official or wealthy merchant, become his secondary wife and consequently have a social position considerably above that of her family.”<sup>60</sup> Furthermore, Gamble attributed the existence of the prostitution business to human nature. He pointed out that 63.5 percent of the population of Beijing was male and that “so many men . . . away from home and living under abnormal conditions” would naturally lead to the proliferation of such businesses. In addition, the arduousness of men’s work led them to seek relaxation in the entertainment district.<sup>61</sup> Although Gamble was clearly aware that prostitution had greatly increased after 1911 and was legalized only in 1912, he did not stress the historical dimension of prostitution in Beijing.<sup>62</sup> He ac-

nowledged that certain changes might have contributed to the growth of the business, in particular “the new spirit of freedom which swept the country after the Republic was founded in 1912” that “has showed itself so plainly in freer social relations between men and women, [and] has doubtless been responsible for the increase in vice among young men and for the general letting down of standards.” Another new contributing factor was “the lack of public opinion against vice and the prevailing accepted standards [which] mean that those who indulge do not meet with any social censure.”<sup>63</sup> In locating the causes of prostitution in Chinese traditional cultural practices, however, Gamble could not explain the increase in this activity after 1911.

In contrast to Gamble, who only very briefly mentioned that economic pressure was “probably the principal cause for prostitution,” Mai Qianzeng focused in more detail on poverty, which he saw as the most important reason why women entered into prostitution.<sup>64</sup> He pointed out that a great many women and girls were sold into prostitution by their poor families or abducted by acquaintances. These women usually came from extremely poor backgrounds, earned little money, and lived under conditions of deprivation and often abuse. In the popular imagination, the often fashionable prostitute was believed to be well-off. But although a minority may have made good money, many more were caught in spirals of debt trying to pay for their chic dresses.<sup>65</sup> While Mai focused on the prostitutes’ sufferings caused by poverty and exploitation, he also asserted that the development of prostitution was closely related to shortcomings in Republican politics and corruption.

Mai observed that the supposed guardians of public morality—the state, politicians, business leaders, and newspapers—all had a hand in creating the problem of prostitution business in Beijing. The years between 1911 and 1928 marked the heyday of female prostitution, which was not officially sanctioned before the Republican era. Government-licensed prostitution in Beijing emerged with the birth of the Republic, and its fortunes varied according to the political changes going on in the city. The size and style of the business changed along with that of the city bureaucracy. Female prostitution was “officially recognized and legalized in 1911, the first year of the Republic,” and the number of female prostitutes increased from that time.<sup>66</sup> Gamble’s social survey of Beijing provided the same information: “The present system of licensed prostitution was inaugurated by Yuan Shih K’ai in 1911. Certain definite districts were set aside for the trade, and taxes were collected from the brothels and prostitutes from March, 1911.”<sup>67</sup> The purpose of

TABLE 3. NUMBERS OF BROTHELS AND  
PROSTITUTES IN REPUBLICAN BEIJING

Year	Number of Houses	Number of Women
1912	353	2,996
1913	366	3,184
1914	357	3,330
1915	388	3,490
1916	391	3,500
1917	406	3,887
1919	377	3,130
1923	387	3,962
1929	332	2,752
1930	346	2,929
1948	255	1,462

SOURCES: J.S. Burgess, "The Problem of Prostitution: Address Given at the Y.M.C.A. in Peking, November 18, 1923," *Chinese Journal of Sociology* 2, no. 4 (1925): 3; Mai Qianzeng, "Beiping changji diaocha" (An investigation of prostitution in Beiping), *She-hui xuejie* (Sociological world) 5 (June 1931): 115; Sidney D. Gamble, *Peking: A Social Survey* (New York: George H. Doran, 1921), p. 247; and Zhao Jin, "Beiping jiefang qianxi de shizheng he shehui zhuangkuang" (City administration and social conditions in Beiping before the Liberation), *Beijing dangshi yanjiu* (Research on the history of the Chinese Communist Party in Beijing), March 1994, pp. 46-47.

legalizing prostitution was, supposedly, to "prevent young men from taking the wrong path...and to assure that fewer women fall into the sea of bitterness."<sup>68</sup> Burgess observed, however, that the increase in the number of prostitutes "far exceeded the increase of population in the city, which indicates that this institution is growing."<sup>69</sup>

Mai noted that prostitution prospered when Beijing was crowded with national politicians. Social activities, even official and business meetings, were held in brothels. Gamble observed, "It is extremely difficult for a man to hold high official rank without spending a very large part of his time in the licensed quarter, attending dinners and wasting his energy in late hours."<sup>70</sup> Brothels were Beijing's equivalent of Western elite social and sports clubs, where a large part of real deal making took place in a relaxed atmosphere (see table 3).

Political corruption helped prostitution flourish in the capital city. This phenomenon caught the attention of newspapers such as *Da ziyou bao* (Great liberty news). One of the political satires published in the paper made a direct connection between the business of prostitution

TABLE 4. CHANGES IN  
CLASSIFICATION OF BROTHELS  
IN REPUBLICAN BEIJING

<i>Class</i>	1919	1929
First	642	323
Second	743	405
Third	1,465	1,692
Fourth	280	321

SOURCE: Mai Qianzeng, "Beiping changji diaocha" (An investigation of prostitution in Beiping), *Shehui xuejie* (Sociological world) 5 (June 1931): 115.

and the national political scene: "All businesses declined after the Revolution, except brothels and theaters whose business blossomed. This is no doubt 'a revolution for the brothels and theaters.'"<sup>71</sup> Another article derided the economic benefit that prostitutes gained from officials: "People who make huge amounts of money in the capital are senators, prostitutes and actors.... Now the senators are getting an increase in their pay, which means an indirect pay increase for the prostitutes.... Good fortune has arrived for the prostitutes."<sup>72</sup> The paper referred to drinking parties as "one of the worst fashions of Beijing." Men ranging from officials, congressmen, and senators to political party members and newspaper editors were all frequent visitors to the entertainment districts. "They take this as being masculine, waste time in it and neglect their duties."<sup>73</sup> The result of this was, in Gamble's view, that "many of the nation's present leaders are being robbed of their courage and integrity."<sup>74</sup>

The connection between politics and the business of prostitution is corroborated by the decrease in first- and second-class prostitutes after the political center of the nation moved from Beijing to Nanjing. Statistics show that the number of first- and second-class prostitutes decreased almost 50 percent in 1929. (See table 4.)<sup>75</sup>

Even newspapers played a role as advertisers of prostitution. Gamble noted the following practices in Beijing in the early Republic:

Practically all the newspapers give extensive publicity to the houses of prostitution and derive therefrom large financial benefit. Beauty contests are conducted among the prostitutes for the sake of the publicity the press can give to the winners, and special "write-ups" of such events are published, together with pictures of the women. In some of the Peking newspa-

pers attractive pictures of the women are pasted beside the advertisement for the houses, while in others an entire page will be given up to prostitutes' cards. These will give the girl's picture or her name in large type, her address and telephone number and then a bit of descriptions: "Her face is like a flower, and her body like a jewel." ... Newspaper men are either paid in money or in trade, and in special cases may even be allowed the privilege of giving a feast in the house to which they may invite their friends. Under such conditions it is obvious that it would be most difficult to inaugurate a press propaganda against the traffic.<sup>76</sup>

The Chinese sociologist Mai made the same observation:

When Beijing was still the capital city, everyone from cabinet ministers down to clerks took visiting brothels as a glorious deed. Society does not criticize this practice as immoral, and many military and national-scale decisions have been made in brothels. Society has become used to it, taking it as an unavoidable social activity. Even the representative of public opinion, newspapers, carry propaganda for prostitutes. Someone is pretty, some one is good at entertaining...the public is being told such things in the newspapers.<sup>77</sup>

According to these sociologists, the newspapers, instead of trying to correct prostitution as a problem and maintaining a moral standard for the community, were in fact helping to promote this social ill.

The sociological studies of Republican Beijing made it clear that the poor, criminals, and prostitutes were problems to society. Researchers were also aware that these problems resulted from other larger social problems beyond the control of the poor or those involved in crime or prostitution. Although these studies made some common observations, in general Western scholars emphasized cultural customs and individual responsibility and Chinese sociologists stressed the state's irresponsibility.

#### SOCIAL CONTROL AND REFORM

The problems the sociologists identified overlapped with the state's major targets for social control. Crime and prostitution were the two most important categories of activities that the government regulated and controlled, and the sociologists saw the control system as part of what made a state modern. There was almost no difference between the sociologists' ideas and the state's practices concerning crime control, but some differences remained on the issue of the state's moral responsibility regarding prostitution. Despite these differences, both the sociologists and the state saw controlling and reforming the population as

two aspects of maintaining social order that eventually converged into one process: the transformation of unproductive people into a productive population.

State officials and the sociologists agreed on the need for control in the urban environment. In addition to poverty, the urban environment was itself seen as an element contributing to crime. In the city, more people crossed paths, providing more opportunities for crime to take place. The head of the Beijing Prison, Wang Yuanzeng, observed that “the crime rate increases due to the increasing variety of the city’s residents” and that urbanites were more knowledgeable and skillful in committing crimes than country people.<sup>78</sup> In a large city like Beijing, competition over resources was severe; the conspicuousness of high living standards and higher costs fanned people’s desire for material goods.<sup>79</sup> The temptations of city life were hard to resist, often leading to criminal behavior.<sup>80</sup> Inadequate social control made this situation even worse, the sociologists observed. Some crimes committed in Beijing were urban by nature, such as disturbing public order and blocking traffic. The city, in other words, demanded a certain type of behavior, and transgression was punishable. Other crimes were encouraged by the urban environment, as most crimes were committed in the more “urban” areas in Beijing. Theft, for instance, mostly occurred in active commercial areas, typically outside the Qian Gate and Tianqiao areas, Dongan Market, Dongdan Arch, Dongsi Arch, Xidan Arch, Xisi Arch, Huashi, and Zhushikou. One-fourth of Beijing’s thefts were committed around Qian Gate, including the East and West Train Stations and Tianqiao. These places were always bustling with people, and it was easier for criminals to escape.<sup>81</sup>

A major form of criminal punishment was imprisonment, an important part of the effort to modernize the state and its legal system. This form of punishment was instituted at the end of the Qing dynasty and gained dominant status during the Republican period. New-style prisons were built with features that embodied many of the ideals of urban life. The prisons were planned with attention to lighting, air circulation, hygiene, separation of functions, grounds for exercise, and education facilities. Workshops were set up to transform the inmates into productive members of society. In a declining nonindustrial city, prison factories were among the first industries. The prisoners were organized and disciplined, and their activities followed strict time schedules.

Prison reform was among the earliest reform efforts initiated at the end of the Qing, and Beijing was an important locus for it. The prison reform

movement began in 1903, when Zhao Erxun, the Viceroy of Shanxi, petitioned the emperor and suggested replacing flogging and banishment with a labor penalty. In response, the emperor authorized the organization of workhouses for criminals. The practice spread throughout the country and was the forerunner of the later model prisons. In 1906, the Board of Punishment established a Prison Department, thus inaugurating prison administration by the central government. In 1907, a Japanese instructor at the Peking Law School began to offer special courses on prisoners and prison administration. Two years later, the Minister of the Board of Justice petitioned the emperor to establish model prisons in Beijing and the provinces. In the same year, the Beijing Prison was built, and a special edict was issued requiring all the provinces to establish schools devoted to the study of prison problems and the training of specialists in prison work. In 1913, a ten-year building program for the construction of 240 jails, one for every six or seven counties, was outlined. The central government codified and promulgated the prison statutes in 1915, thus providing a uniform basis for prison management throughout the country. By 1919, there were thirty-nine new-style prisons in China with accommodations for 14,185 prisoners. Four of these, with a capacity for 2,127 men, were located in Beijing.<sup>82</sup>

The prisoners in Beijing's penal institutions were there not just to be incarcerated but, more importantly, to be reformed. The means of reform was work. Printing, weaving, metalwork, sewing, and shoemaking workshops were set up, aimed at transforming prisoners into productive members of society.<sup>83</sup> The prisoners were required to rise at a set time every day according to season. Working, eating, and study schedules were fixed.<sup>84</sup> Whereas attending lectures at the public park was voluntary for free urbanites, attending lectures in prison was mandatory. Prisoners were required to sing songs about reforming themselves and listen to talks in a lecture hall.<sup>85</sup>

While the state paid more attention to disciplining criminals, sociologists showed more interest in understanding the causes of crime. But state and sociologists had one thing in common: the state's programs to train prisoners to become productive members of society in workshops were congruent with the sociologists' understanding of crime and the solution they proposed. Frank Dikötter argues, "Imprisonment in republican China was a new instrument of law used to pursue a more traditional vision of an ordered and cohesive social body governed by the rule of virtue.... Model prisons were...the microcosm of an exemplary society in which the emulation of models—whether in the school, the

factory, or the army—was seen simultaneously as a mission of educative transformation, a project for social discipline and a strategy of economic development.”<sup>86</sup> Gamble greatly appreciated the establishment of new-style prisons as a crime control mechanism. In his view, “Prison reform in China is one of the most encouraging of all the modern movements, not excepting even the great progress that has been made in education, for it shows so clearly what can be accomplished by a few trained men with a big vision.”<sup>87</sup>

But despite their sharing of certain views, prison officials and sociologists were separated by some fundamental differences. To the sociologists, imprisonment did not address society’s lack of moral standards and the tremendous poverty of the greater urban community. Prisons were at best a passive method of social control; they would not contribute much to helping the city become a moral community. In the sociologists’ view, the whole urban environment had to be reformed. As Zhou Shuzhao argued, “[T]he most important causes of crime are the problems in a society.” Criminal behavior was “the reflection of social evils.” He asked, “To what extent is an individual responsible for [his criminal behavior] in declining Beijing where economic pressure is huge?” He believed that the only way to prevent crime was to reform society, to eliminate the evils created by “society” itself. Imprisonment did not reach the root of the problem; in fact, it often punished those who were the victims of the general social system, such as poor women.<sup>88</sup> Prisons were necessary, but the real solution to the problem was large-scale social reform.

The brothel was another urban space that the government considered necessary to regulate strictly. Prostitution was criticized on many levels in contemporary writings. Participants in the numerous debates on the problem in newspapers and magazines argued that it endangered family life and society and spread disease, which, by weakening people’s health, would threaten the future of the nation. They pointed out in particular that it would corrupt young men at the age when their sex drive was highest. Observers believed that these youths were the people with the most energy and the greatest ability to make contributions to society and that prostitution directed their attention away from productivity and thus impeded social progress.<sup>89</sup> The women who were forced into prostitution, many of whom were virtually sold as slaves, were cruelly exploited and were vulnerable to all kinds of abuse.<sup>90</sup> Brothels, particularly the lower-ranking ones, were dens for crime and drunken disorder. The upper-ranking brothels frequented by politicians

were decadent establishments where enormous sums of public money were squandered.

Despite this lengthy list of condemnations, the legalization of prostitution was justified primarily with two arguments. One was that it was an unavoidable evil in a city where men greatly outnumbered women and that as such it was better managed and regulated openly than banned and forced into more clandestine and pernicious forms. The other justification was that legalized prostitution was an excellent source of revenue for the state.<sup>91</sup> After the Municipal Council was formed in 1914, “the income of the council [was] derived from taxes levied on stores, vehicles, theaters, prostitutes, and brothels; the sale and mortgage of property; and rent paid for the use of the city property.”<sup>92</sup> In 1917, the Police Board spent \$1,323 in registering prostitutes;<sup>93</sup> in return “a total of \$11,000 a month was collected from the 377 brothels and 3,130 registered prostitutes of the city.” The amount collected from prostitution equaled that netted from taxes on all vehicles: automobiles, carriages, passenger carts, rickshaws, freight carts, and hand carts.<sup>94</sup> From 1914 to 1918, among the four types of tax collected by the City Board—on shops, vehicles, prostitution, and entertainment (theaters)—that on prostitution was second only to revenues from shops and accounted for 30 percent of the City Board’s entire tax income.<sup>95</sup>

The controls imposed on prostitution included police supervision as well as examination by modern medical staff. In 1912, the government published its revised version of “Regulations on Brothels.” The regulations divided brothels into four classes and limited the number of each class allowed in the city. A brothel could operate only at a location approved by the Police Board and had to obtain a permit before moving to a new location. It was not allowed to have glass windows or porches facing the streets, and it could not be decorated in a way that would attract attention. An identification plate had to be affixed next to its door. At night, glass lanterns had to be hung outside the door with the prostitutes’ names and the class of the house written on it. All brothels had to close their doors and stop singing at midnight. The manager could not have a history of crime or bankruptcy. A list of all prostitutes and servants had to be filed with the police, and the brothel manager had the responsibility to report any changes to the police. No one besides the prostitutes and servants was allowed to stay overnight. The manager was required to notify the police immediately concerning any customers known to be criminals, firearm carriers, or drunkards and whenever there was a fight or disturbance. Men’s and women’s toilets in the house

were to be separated and kept clean. Gamble was “surprised” by the orderliness of brothels in Beijing. He commented that “instead of finding a place where the rougher elements of the community meet—a center of carousing, disorder, and drunkenness—one finds order, quietness and discipline.”<sup>96</sup>

Regulation required that prostitutes be divided into four classes corresponding to the four classes of brothels. Women who were younger than sixteen or who were sixteen but whose bodies had not fully developed were not allowed to be in the business. Prostitutes were not allowed to stand at the gate doing anything that would attract people’s attention. They were not allowed to visit temples to burn incense or to go to teahouses to solicit customers. Those who had an infectious disease or were pregnant over five months were not allowed to receive customers. Brothels were prohibited by regulation from receiving anyone underage or wearing a school uniform. Prostitutes were not permitted to receive customers in rooms rented outside of the brothel.<sup>97</sup>

In addition to police surveillance, prostitutes were also subjected to medical examinations. In February 1927, a clinic named the Office of Examination for Prostitutes was set up and began to function. All prostitutes were required to be examined every month to prevent the spread of venereal diseases. The examination, however, was not free. The women had to pay for the examination according to the class of brothels they worked in.<sup>98</sup> In 1928, a Bureau of Public Health was established when the municipal government was reorganized. The bureau took charge of the clinic and increased the examination fees. Only for fourth-class prostitutes was the examination free.<sup>99</sup>

In 1929, the name of the clinic was changed to the Office of Examination and Treatment for Prostitutes.<sup>100</sup> Previously, if a woman had been found ill, she had been ordered to stop working. Now she was required to receive treatment at the clinic every day. The clinic kept records of examination and treatment and distributed colored cards to the women—red for the first-class prostitutes, green for the second class, blue for the third class, and black for the fourth class. The women were required to provide them when asked by a customer. Fines were imposed if the women failed to show up for their examination. If a prostitute was ordered to stop working but failed to comply, both she and her brothel would be fined.<sup>101</sup> Many women tried to escape from the examination by claiming they had left the business or were sick.<sup>102</sup> The Police Board agreed to the exemptions of the first-class brothels at a charge of ten *yuan* per woman per month.<sup>103</sup> Not surprisingly, the

clinic proved to be a financial resource for the city government. With monthly expenses of about 700 *yuan*, the clinic returned over 1,800 *yuan* a month, or 21,600 *yuan* a year.<sup>104</sup>

This meticulous (at least on paper) effort to sanitize and supervise was still deemed insufficient to quarantine the city from the influences of this immoral practice. The government also drew up plans to segregate brothels from residential areas and other businesses, but this system went barely implemented, and almost all brothels remained where they were. All of the first- and many of the second-class brothels were located in the “Eight Lanes” (Bada hutong) area outside of Qian Gate, right in the center of the most active commercial district in the city. In this neighborhood were not only many hotels, drugstores, and grain shops but also bookstores, newspaper publishers, and family homes. Third-class brothels were located away from the center of urban activities, and fourth-class ones were found in the southeast area of the Outer City and around Chaoyang Gate among the slums. Unregistered prostitutes, whose activity was illegal and not affiliated with licensed brothels, were scattered all over the city. Many of the first-class brothels also distinguished themselves in architectural style, despite regulations to the contrary. Particularly in the “Eight Lanes” district, these two-story buildings with Western-style arched windows on the outside walls conveyed a distinctive image. Behind the walls was a Chinese-style yard. Banisters, lattice windows, trees, and ponds were used to create a relaxing and pleasant environment.

Gamble voiced disappointment with government weakness over the issue of segregating brothels:

In 1918 a large number of buildings especially designed for houses of prostitution were erected by the Board of Police directly east of the New World, their purpose being to move many of the women from the present licensed districts to this section of the city. However, the proprietors of the houses objected to moving, being very well satisfied with their present location close to the business and hotel district, and their influence was so strong, many of the officials having a financial interest in the houses, that the police had to abandon their scheme and rent their houses for commercial purposes.<sup>105</sup>

The author commented that “in the two districts to the west the brothels are on the ordinary Chinese *hut'ung* (lanes) and are often near small theaters, restaurants or even private houses, the segregation not being completed.”<sup>106</sup>

Mai Qianzeng also criticized the government's failure to segregate prostitution and pointed out many other examples of regulatory laxity. The examination of prostitutes for venereal diseases was ineffective. Although the women were examined, they often were not treated or stopped from carrying on their business. The doctor's signature in fact became a ruse for sick prostitutes to keep working because the men visiting them would believe that they were guaranteed to be safe from venereal diseases. Governmental laxity in implementing regulations indirectly abetted the increase of prostitution and the spread of venereal diseases.<sup>107</sup>

One of the most blatant hypocrisies of government-regulated prostitution was licensing. The law required that prostitution be voluntary, but brothels were known to be filled with women sold into the business. Brothels unabashedly made transactions in women, and there were even regulations to monitor these exchanges. As noted in the previous section, the majority of elderly women in prison were there for selling younger women into prostitution, and in light of the government's negligence about prostitution it is no wonder many of these women claimed ignorance that their actions were illegal. Women who "voluntarily" became prostitutes first had to obtain a permit from the Police Board. They had to turn in a form listing their name, hometown, birth date, marital status, family profession, and reasons for wanting to work as a prostitute, as well as the class of brothel they were entering. Women had to make clear on the form that they were not being sold into prostitution. Two photographs were to accompany the forms, and new ones had to be turned in every year. Every time a woman moved to a different brothel, she had to apply for a new permit. It was common knowledge, however, that most women were sold into brothels and that many were under sixteen years old. Mai criticized the Department of Public Security for insufficient attention to this problem.<sup>108</sup> To the sociologists, the state's attitude amounted to allowing organized crime to manage the selling of women into brothels. Mai believed that the registration system only harmed and did not help. The purpose of registration was to control prostitutes directly, but in fact it made people feel that prostitution was a legitimate business and implied that immoral behavior could be rewarded. Brothel customers, owners, and traffickers in women all obtained permission from the law to exploit women. State regulation turned a blind eye to forced prostitution, thus implying that prostitution was a legitimate profession for women. The state then profited

from it by taxation. By legalizing prostitution, the state was underwriting the destruction of Beijing's moral community.<sup>109</sup>

The sociologists were unsatisfied with how the state dealt with the problem of prostitution. Officials and politicians were the brothels' best patrons, and even when the state drew up regulations, these were rarely imposed strictly. But the sociologists did not argue that state control should be eliminated. On the contrary, they wanted the state to have stronger control of prostitution and to aim at its eradication. To the sociologists, merely controlling prostitution was not enough; it was more important to change people's attitude toward prostitution. Yet state policies only increased popular interest in encouraging prostitution, and officials' private behavior set a horrendous example of public morality. The sociologists argued that instead of despising the prostitutes, people should look down on the brothel owners. Besides exposing and criticizing the state's hypocrisy, the other solution advocated by sociologists was to promote industry in order to create alternative work for the women and to extricate their families from the poverty that drove them to sell their daughters into brothels. They were aware that this could not be achieved easily and that the current, stricter regulation was still necessary for the time being.<sup>110</sup> As with the problems of poverty and crime, a real solution to the problem of prostitution seemed out of reach.

In sum, the sociologists were trying to identify the systemic causes for this suffering and to prod their usually elite readers to take responsibility for reforming the moral community. In their view, the systemic causes of social problems demanded a systemic cure. Yet there remained much ambiguity in the solutions proposed by the sociologists or practiced by the state. What commonly characterized both was an emphasis on social control of individuals seen as problems. But sociologists' studies also demonstrated much sympathy for the objects of control. The issue of whether the state or the individual was responsible for social problems was never resolved.

#### SOCIOLOGY WITHOUT A SOCIETY?

What would be the solutions to the problems? This was an issue on which Chinese and Western sociologists also differed. It is important to understand what each group meant by "society."<sup>111</sup> None of the Chinese sociologists provided a clear definition, except for Yan Jingyao, who equated society with human groups. In their usage of the concept,

society was tied to the concept of a nation and progress: the population of a country progress together. The ideal society they imagined was a moral community, constituted by two key elements: a strong state and citizens with public consciousness. In other words, the creation of a society was expected to be initiated by the state and materialized by citizens' achievement of high moral character. All observers agreed that the goal of transforming Beijing's residents into national citizens had not been achieved; an often cited culprit for this apparent failure was Beijing residents' supposed lack of concern for "the public interest." Clearly, the ideal of the city as a moral community was crucial in shaping discourse about urban change.

The focus on morality when discussing life in the city was not new; Chinese elites had long emphasized differences between urban and rural lifestyles and had perceived urban life as dangerous, especially for young men, because of its material and sexual temptations. Cities were also crowded with merchants, who were too intimately tied to morally dubious dealings with markets and money. Moral codes derived from rural life were held to be superior to those derived from urban life that both country people and city dwellers were subject to, despite the differences in their environments. Merchant and craft guilds in late imperial Chinese cities like Hankou were arguably beginning to develop a civic consciousness, as William Rowe's two-volume study of Hankou has shown.<sup>112</sup> Yet an ideal of urban citizenship never fully developed and certainly never gained as much political or cultural currency as the ideal of the loyal and filial peasant commoner.

The twentieth century witnessed a new valuing of urban versus rural in terms of moral codes, as in many other dimensions of economic, political, and social power. When the government's priorities turned to commerce, development, modernity, and all things urban, the components of ideal urban citizenship became a critical issue. The development of Chinese cities represented not just a technical problem of planning and finance but also a moral problem of citizenship. The different problems intrinsic to urban and rural societies gave rise to proposals that there should be different moral expectations for city and country dwellers. Urban elites wrestled with the question of how to transform "cities of the agricultural age into ones of the industrial age," and "public consciousness" became the focus of attention. Zhang Weici, an American-trained Ph.D. in urban administration, argued that the terms *country people* and *city people* distinguished not only the locations where people lived but also "the vulgar" (*cu su*) from "the civilized"

(*wen ya*). In his preface to Zhang's book, Hu Shi supported this point: "Although we are living in cities, we are still trapped in rural living habits. Rural life is free, uncontrolled, random and passive; what is needed in city life is participation in politics, strict discipline, systematic organization, and active work. One is not qualified to live in a city, to be a member of a city, if one does not discard his rural habits."<sup>113</sup> Zhang's and Hu's arguments demonstrated a conscious effort to create an urban identity distinct from that of rural life. Another author on urban issues stressed the lack of "public consciousness" in peasant society. He complained that peasants thought only about their own families and ignored public interests. He warned that such attitudes needed to change, that in industrial society people had to pay more attention to the whole city.<sup>114</sup>

While these scholars diagnosed the cause of the lack of public consciousness to be city dwellers' tendency to keep the habits of a former rural life, others saw it as a result of distinctive urban problems. American-trained sociologist Wu Jingchao focused on the issue of inadequate social control in the city. He saw major differences between people's behavior in the countryside and in a city. In his view, "public opinion" (*yulun*) and "conscience" (*liangxin*) were the two most important mechanisms controlling a person's behavior. Both exerted a stronger influence in the countryside. A person who was very cautious in the countryside often became bold and performed evil deeds in the city. Wu attributed this to the lack of group pressure in the city. In the countryside, people all knew one another, and nothing could be done without others knowing. Any unorthodox behavior fed gossip, the most powerful mechanism of rural social control. In the city, however, neighborhood communities lost this power to exert social control. Even next-door neighbors rarely talked to each other. Although neighbors existed in the city, a person had only to go to another district to become anonymous. Wu Jingchao also argued that in the city, conscience lost its power to discipline behavior. People in rural areas supposedly shared similar values; but in the city multiple value systems competed against one another. The moral standard for behavior changed from absolute to relative, making it difficult for people to control their own behavior.<sup>115</sup> Yan Jingyao also attributed the higher crime rate in the city to weak social control, in the sense that no one was concerned with the common interests of society.<sup>116</sup>

There are fundamental differences, however, between an abstract moral community and a community that functions in people's daily life,

as Gamble pointed out when discussing the foundation of society. He lamented the gradual disappearance of “traces of democratic and community control in Beijing.” Formerly, streets and districts had had committees organized to look after various public works, such as repairing, sprinkling, and lighting of the streets and neighborhood security, but now almost all these functions were being taken over by official boards, particularly the Police Board. According to Gamble, “This undoubtedly makes for efficiency in carrying out a city-wide program, but at the same time the people are losing control and are more and more at the mercy of the officials who are responsible not to the people but to officials higher up.”<sup>117</sup> Gamble espoused what was clearly a classic version of civil society:

In the past the g[u]ilds have been powerful even over the officials and they still maintain much of this power. In Peking, however, there are signs that they are not as strong as they have been, that the police and officials are taking over more and more control of the business life of the city. So far the government forces have usually moved only after conference with the chamber of commerce or the individual g[u]ild affected. As far as we can find, there never has been a real test of strength between the g[u]ilds and the Government. In one or two instances, where the officials have tried against the wishes of the g[u]ilds to increase the taxes, the g[u]ilds have retaliated by a strike that has been maintained until the unacceptable taxes have been removed. These, however, have been minor matters rather than any question of ultimate control. Just what will happen when a real test comes, no one knows, but there is every indication that the power of the g[u]ilds is going to grow less and less as modern industrial conditions develop.<sup>118</sup>

Gamble’s fear of loss of citizen control and participation was justified. While the Municipal Council and the Nationalist government in Beijing never had the resources to remodel the city in their image, these institutions demonstrated an emphatic penchant for centralized control. To use the Beijing police as an example, by the late teens Beijing had twelve policemen for every thousand residents, a proportion almost five times that of industrialized cities like London and Paris. As Strand notes:

Policemen enforced hygiene standards in the food business, made sure that public toilets were cleaned regularly, gave licensing exams to medical practitioners,...censored public entertainments and political expression. They supervised...soup kitchens, schools, reform schools, and workhouses.... Sidney Gamble concluded that the police were “responsible for most of the [governmental] work done in the city and in touch with almost every side of the life of the people.”<sup>119</sup>

Despite a lack of ability to implement it, the municipal government aspired to thorough social control. For them, the interest of the city as a whole, as defined by government-sponsored construction projects, came first, and the interests of local groups or specific communities came second. It was their job to balance these interests and steer the overall course for urban development, but they made little effort to open channels through which the voices of less powerful interests could reach them.

The kind of communities Gamble highlighted, however, would not necessarily be helpful to the poor, to criminals, or to prostitutes. For most organizations engaged in urban politics, public interest was synonymous with *minsheng* (people's livelihood), a concept that formed the foundation on which the "society" and state carried on negotiations. The state used the rhetoric of *minsheng*, an obligation of the government to the people, to balance its enforcing of policies through command. A term from traditional Chinese statecraft adapted by Sun Zhongshan into one of his Three People's Principles, *minsheng* in imperial China involved protecting the welfare of the people in an economy focused on maintaining stability rather than developmental growth. According to Strand, "In Beijing in the 1920s the term *minsheng* was commonly used to refer to that part of the established social order which supported the material well-being of townspeople."<sup>120</sup> In Strand's *Rickshaw Beijing*, a textured account of municipal government, guild, and professional association politics, conflicting interests, both within these bodies and between opposing associations, could often be placated when a balanced solution that appeared to incorporate the ethic of *minsheng* was reached.

The "public" in this context, however, was primarily limited to the constituents of the organizations' own ministates. Beijing's professional associations were organized both vertically and horizontally: leaders of the chamber of commerce were always selected from a handful of the city's most prosperous businessmen; nightsoil carriers organized territorially, assembling around the powerful owners of composting yards; water carriers sought to be managed and spoken for by owners of wells; artist guilds provided welfare for bit actors while reinforcing the unchallengeable dominance of the most famous in their ranks. In sum, Beijing's enterprises and associations, including the many nominal unions that sprang up overnight to Nationalist fanfare in 1928, served the cross-cutting purposes of allowing laborers to voice grievances and bargain for subsistence and further entrenching the power of owners and managers. Strand observes: "This contentious process resembled state

building in miniature. When one considers that fully developed guilds performed a range of quasi-governmental functions, the resemblance becomes less an analogy than a description of the development of extensive local commitment to the management, control, and representation of city residents.”<sup>121</sup> According to Strand, much of the city was run by, and much of its stability was maintained by, this assortment of ministates, especially in the warlord years as militarist presidents again and again paraded into and later fled from the city.

A rule-proving exception is the case of the chamber of commerce’s opposition to streetcar development briefly described in Chapter 2. Chamber of commerce members resented being excluded from sharing in the potential profits of streetcar development and vehemently opposed the plans. Touting concern for *minsheng*, Sun Xueshi led the chamber of commerce in extracting a promise from the trolley company to contribute sixty thousand *yuan* to open a factory “for unemployed rickshaw men by way of compensation for the damage done to their trade.”<sup>122</sup> Such forms of charitable poverty relief had impressive roots in Qing dynasty politics, but usually the connection between patrons and benefactors was more direct. In this case, it was difficult to see any relation between Sun Xueshi’s business associates and the rickshaw pullers. Indeed, the demand was only a tactic by which Sun hoped to pressure the streetcar company. When the chamber of commerce failed to gain any claim to profits or significantly delay the company’s construction plans, the plans for the factory were forgotten. It never materialized. In contrast, when the Municipal Council proclaimed public interests to be paramount, they professed to be taking the entire urban population into consideration. Yet for the city government the responsibility of guaranteeing *minsheng* extended over such a large, diverse constituency that its role as mediator was often diluted beyond effectiveness. Hence it was often easily swayed by the interests of Beijing’s biggest power holders.

The problem of public interest was thus in many ways one of scale and scope. Unlike the leaders of professional associations, who focused primarily on the reciprocal relationships of *minsheng* politics, the sociologists went into the city to study the cases of people with whom they had no direct connection. While government bureaucrats worked to promote spatial mobility by opening up arteries of transportation, sociologists were going into the darker corners of the city. In the process, they visited poor people’s homes, entered prisons, and interviewed prostitutes. In other words, they entered spaces that the elite rarely visited

and crossed the widening rifts of an urban society that was becoming stratified along new and in some ways more rigid, though perhaps less visible, lines. They talked to the marginalized and spoke for those who did not have a voice, bringing up issues the state would have preferred kept quiet.

For Beijing's politicians, association heads, and officials, what the sociologists were pointing out was undeniable but highly abstract. In their day-to-day power struggles and business deals, development projects and margins of profit were finite, compromises inevitable, and maintenance of the status quo a must. They paid more heed to the concrete interest politics of *minsheng*. On the other hand, Beijing's sociologists, as a group, were not directly involved in politics. Their work touched upon suffering individuals, yet they had no concrete means to alleviate the misery of these people who lacked organizations or any power in political negotiations. The overall system thus became their focus. The premise and mission of their science was, by investigating particular problems, to throw light on this larger system called society, which in many senses referred to the state.

The differing viewpoints of the sociologists and the state could not be easily brought into balance. The people studied by the sociologists had no organizations to represent them, nor were they included in the local politics described by David Strand. The sociologists' work on Beijing in fact led to the conclusion that the Republican state failed to act as the sponsor and supervisor of urban moral community in several respects. *Minsheng*, after all, was as often empty rhetoric as it was a practice of limited compromise for the Republican state. A huge proportion of the city's population continued to suffer extreme poverty. Officials, rather than being ideal members of a moral community, often seemed corrupt, particularly and most commonly with regard to prostitution. Although the state did establish institutions to control crime, punishing criminals without looking at the causes of their behavior was, in Yan's words, "chasing the end while neglecting the origin."<sup>123</sup>

The hidden but central issue in the sociological studies of Beijing was how the ideal society and public order were to be created. The Chinese sociologists, following the established methodology of the academic discipline of sociology, began their analysis of poverty at the individual level but ended with the state, realizing that the individual's problem was a result of a lack of employment opportunities. It was this kind of poverty beyond individual control that led to other social problems

such as crime and prostitution. Although the sociologists criminalized poverty to a certain extent, they were also to some extent sympathetic to the poor, to criminals, and to prostitutes. They concluded that these poor people were, to some extent, victims of problems that they had not caused. If the government itself was responsible for the fundamentally systemic, economic problems, who had the power to enable change? By their argument, it could be neither the individuals nor the communities, as proposed in the discipline of sociology.

The sociologists' approach resembled that of the state in its expressed concern for the broadest public interest. But the city government's dedication to the public interest was almost always limited by the need to maintain the status quo. The sociologists found this most directly objectionable in the case of prostitution, where their studies clearly showed that the government's greed and collusion with brothel owners steered its policies. In the case of prostitution, the public interest clearly took second place to state and official private interests.

The kind of reform the sociologists deemed necessary, however, did require a strong state. In their work, *society*, *social progress*, *citizen*, and *nation* were the key terms rather than *community* and *neighborhood*. Analysis of the role of local communities was absent from most Chinese sociologists' discussions. The locale, whether slum neighborhood or brothel quarter, was described negatively and as symptomatic of a greater problem, the underdevelopment of Beijing and China as a whole. The sociologists' modes of analysis and their preferred mechanisms of reform focused on the individual's relation to "society" (i.e., the urban whole or the nation), not on smaller communities. They always looked at problems on the largest scale possible—the entire city, the system as a whole. Thus their solutions often required a strong state to act on the same scale to maintain order, to discipline the people, and to develop industry. These academics also agreed that the ultimate goal in creating a society was to achieve a level of public order sufficient to sustain production. T.J. Clark's interpretation of "society" can be applied to the work of both Western and Chinese sociologists active in Republican Beijing: "What else do we usually mean by the word 'society' but a set of means for solidarity, distance, belonging, and exclusion? These things are needed pre-eminently to enable the production of material life—to fix an order in which men and women can make their living and have some confidence that they will continue to do so."<sup>124</sup>

The Nationalist state hardly fit the ideal image of the strong state the sociologists thought China and Beijing needed. In exploring the causes

of social problems, sociologists charged the “social system” with more responsibility than individuals. But they never made clear what they meant by society, and the concept often blurred with that of state. Were the poor, prostitutes, and criminals victims of society or the state? The sociologists often wished that the state could be better, stronger, more efficient. To Li Jinghan, feeding the people was the state’s responsibility, and being fed was a right of the people. In Li’s words,

The quality of a government is always reflected in its people’s lives. If the majority of people in a country do not even have enough to eat and wear and have no place to live, this government is becoming an obstacle in people’s lives and should not exist anymore. If people do not stand up to overthrow a government like this, they do not deserve to enjoy a better life. In other words, they deserve to suffer. From this we can also see how strong or weak a race (*min zu*) is.<sup>125</sup>

In Li’s view, people should overthrow a government that does not take up its responsibilities and should replace it with a stronger one. This desire for a strong state was also reflected in the sociologists’ somewhat contradictory support for institutions like the modern prison system and work camps for beggars; while they saw criminals and beggars as above all the victims of a failing system, they also approved of the state’s increased disciplinary control over them. Mechanisms of modern state power were legitimized, although the particular Nationalist state was criticized. This stance was consistent with post-1949 development. The objects of disciplinary power changed after 1949, but the principles and methods remained, concentrating on the individual’s relation to a “society” of undefined and massive proportions that could only be concretely represented by “the state.” Thus the sociologists decried social injustice but helped bolster the legitimacy of modern disciplinary state power and neglected to seek a viable role for communities. In David Strand’s work, Beijing society and politics centered on the concept of *minsheng*. The sociologists criticized the current state and indirectly critiqued the dominant political order by reaching into vast and almost completely excluded communities. Yet they generally approved and legitimized state power in theory, thereby tending to support a strong state and to leave society weak. But society in Beijing was still a strong force, although not in the way the sociologists defined it.

It can be argued that what the sociologists hoped to see as an ideal state did not exist. A state that is able to carry out large projects, as James Scott has shown, creates its own kind of problems for people.<sup>126</sup> Both society and state, in the work of Chinese sociologists, are in fact

concepts referring to ideal forms rather than reality. The sociological studies created knowledge about Beijing but drew no hope from the city's past. From their perspective, any hope had to come from the outside, from above, and from the future. But the views of the sociologists, like those of others who had overarching projects to modernize the city, were challenged by voices from another quarter: historians and literary writers.

# History

*Recording Old Beijing*

The two and half decades covered by this book were in many ways a defining period when the way in which Beijing was written about underwent essential transformations. During the Republican period, the numerous publications on Beijing were distinctly new in format and content. The amount of energy expended on these publications testifies both to the importance the city held for the authors and to an intensification of the urge to document and narrate the city's experiences. The tremendous volume and evident sense of urgency of these writings provide an array of layered and rich materials for cultural analysis. This chapter will explore the motivations and meanings of this intense urge to record and represent.

An impressive number of publishing projects during the Republican period were devoted to reprinting gazetteers from the Ming and Qing eras as well as to detailing changes the city had undergone since the beginning of the Republic. Many volumes memorialized the disappearing landmarks and local customs with encyclopedic completeness. Folklorists collected ballads and children's songs; travel guides competed to shape an image of Beijing for potential tourists; intellectuals affiliated with modern educational institutions recounted their personal impressions and experiences of Beijing in vernacular essays; and the city was fictionalized in novels by writers such as Lao She. These writings reflect not only how people understood Republican Beijing but also how they wanted it to be known and remembered. Each genre had its own goals

and communicated important dimensions of life in the city. Not only do these writings provide reference points for understanding changes in the city, but, more importantly, they record various emotional responses toward these changes, thereby revealing a great deal about the authors' conceptions of modernity and society, the relationship between the local and the national, and similarly abstract yet intimate concerns of political and cultural identity.

These competing documents remind us that representing Beijing was a serious struggle. In this collage of various genres with their varied topics of interest, motivations, and intentions, Beijing in no sense appears as a homogeneous place with a continuous and unified history. Instead, it emerges as a city defined by interactions between different senses of time and space. Beijing was treated both as personal, individual stories and as a collective legend; it was represented both as a distinctive local culture and as part of national history. Republican Beijing existed in the conflict and convergence between the popular and the elite, the local and the national; representations of Beijing were carried out in struggles between details and abstractions, between how life was lived and what that life symbolized.

These texts are not simply reflections of the material city. As is the case in any period of history and in any society, writing about Beijing involved creating (or referencing) systems of knowledge about it. The process of writing about a city is meanwhile one of forming a spatial consciousness, expressing it in certain historical, social, and cultural contexts, and then expecting certain effects among the audience. The many different stories of Beijing simultaneously "reflected, distorted, and reconstituted the city."<sup>1</sup> The fact that the stories changed over time warns us that the archive was never neutral, that the texts "organized detail and difference and thus invariably regulated ways of seeing and not seeing. Accordingly, like the city in history, the city of words has always been characterized by refreshingly cosmopolite and dangerously coercive aspects."<sup>2</sup>

Taking these documents as representations, this chapter studies their narrative strategies. The concept of representation is adopted here not to refute the truth value of the narratives but to emphasize the relationship between what was selected to be discussed and the context in which the narratives occurred, as well as the purposes that such accounts were likely intended to serve. The goal here is less to use the writings as sources of information to reconstruct the city, as previous chapters have done to some degree, than to study what the authors

chose to narrate and how the narratives were structured. This chapter seeks to identify patterns in the authors' choice of "facts" and thereby attempts to divulge thematic structures that shaped the selection of details and stories for narration.

The process of composing a narrative of the material city was at the same time one of providing a structure for complex, often vague, feelings toward a volatile historical moment. The city served as an anchor and structure for complex sentiments and emotions generated by radical external changes, enabling their expression in language. Hence the process of giving the city a history was also one of inventing a framework and a vocabulary with which the city could be imagined, understood, and narrated and could eventually become a collective memory. Behind the narrative of the city was an effort to create a framework for the expression of certain ideas intended to enable the writing of a specific kind of history for modern China.

#### RE-PRESENTING IMPERIAL BEIJING

From the mid-1920s on, many gazetteers and other writings about Beijing from Ming and Qing times were reprinted in new series.<sup>3</sup> Qu Xuanying and Zhang Cixi (Zhang Jiangcai), both researchers at the Institute of History in the National Beiping Academy of Research, led the way. Several hundred copies of *Beijing lishi fengtu congshu* (Series on local customs in Beijing history), edited by Qu Xuanying, sold out within two months of publication in 1925, and the series was reprinted yet again that same year.<sup>4</sup> From 1934 to 1943, Zhang Cixi edited and published about twenty books, including several Ming and Qing gazetteers, which he organized into five large collections of Ming and Qing records of Beijing.<sup>5</sup> In addition to Qu and Zhang's substantial efforts, twenty to thirty other books about Beijing from the Ming and Qing periods were reprinted in the 1920s and 1930s.<sup>6</sup> Two newly organized institutions, Beiping National Research Institute (Beiping guoli yanjiu yuan) and the Association for Chinese Local Customs Studies (Zhonghua fengtu xuehui), actively contributed to these publishing efforts.

The reconstruction of Beijing during the Ming had resulted in a large amount of literature on the city. It took two major forms, personal accounts and local gazetteers, both of which were established in the Song dynasty.<sup>7</sup> The contemporary elite's fascination with this magnificent capital city led to the burgeoning of personal accounts resembling such Song literature as *Dongjing menghua lu*, a collection of nostalgic ac-

counts of Bianliang, which had fallen to the Jin.<sup>8</sup> Through their writings, many of those who had enjoyed the privilege of visiting the palace recounted what they saw within its walls to those countless less fortunate who would be forever barred from entering. Consciousness of a new level of maturity of urban life and recognition of Beijing as a distinctive local culture characterized these writings. A gazetteer of streets in Beijing, *Jingshi wucheng fangxiang hutong ji* (Streets and alleyways in the five districts of the capital city), by Zhang Jue, recorded all the streets and alleyways in the city, demonstrating an impressive level of consciousness of urban space.<sup>9</sup> A rich and sophisticated local culture never failed to amaze the city's visitors, and travel literature relaying the author's experiences in Beijing developed during this time. Sun Guomi's *Yandu youlan zhi* (Records of a visit to the capital city) was one such account of a visit to Beijing in 1632. Famous scenic sites in and around the city also inspired collections of poems. Local dialect interested some,<sup>10</sup> as did Beijing residents' elaborate celebrations of festivals.<sup>11</sup> A close connection between specific festivities and places was repeatedly asserted by these authors, demonstrating a clear recognition of and strong interest in the distinctiveness of local culture.

The Ming saw the further development of local gazetteers, another form of Song writing on localities, and the Ming format lasted through the next five centuries. The standardization of categories spoke of a centralized and uniform perspective embodying the imperial order and reflecting all the crucial elements of imperial rule. The gazetteers normally opened with an official history of the locality and a description of the boundaries of the region in administrative terms. They then chronicled in detail governmental institutions and functions such as military stations, household registration, grain storage, schools, ceremonial sites and religious institutions such as altars, temples, and monasteries, local gods and goddesses, the market system, and local products. Landmarks important to military and economic concerns, including mountains, rivers, passes, and bridges, were shown in maps and discussed. Eminent local figures, chaste women, and local customs also received detailed treatment. These topics were established as the major categories to be included in local gazetteers of all regions, and those for Beijing followed the same format without exception.

The Qing marked a peak for both the writing of personal accounts and the compilation of gazetteers on Beijing. The more than thirty government-sponsored gazetteers followed the format established in the Ming, covering all the counties surrounding Beijing. In addition, ac-

counts of personal experiences in Beijing multiplied in number and in format and viewpoint.<sup>12</sup> Legends and popular stories about the city,<sup>13</sup> seasonal festivals and local customs,<sup>14</sup> markets, shop signs, food, and peddlers' songs all emerged as categories of interest in writings on Beijing.<sup>15</sup> These accounts exhibited a new level of detail, richness, and vividness unprecedented even in the Ming and contributed to the representation of Beijing as a uniquely thriving mixture of elegant cosmopolitanism and distinctive local folk cultures.

Over the centuries, Ming and Qing writings about Beijing developed several notable characteristics. First, this literature included not only the objective-sounding official gazetteers but also memoirs conveying personal experiences of the city. It was a common practice in such personal writings, especially those of the early Qing, to eulogize the fallen Ming dynasty through idealized descriptions of the capital city, a technique that served political purposes when Qing governmental control was strict. Immediately after the fall of the Ming, *Jiujing yi shi* (Remembrances of the old capital) was printed, nostalgically detailing urban life in Ming Beijing. *Chunming meng yu lu* (Remnants of dreams in Beijing) and *Tianfu guangji* (A general record of Beijing) also evoked gilded memories of Ming Beijing.<sup>16</sup> Second, these Ming and Qing writings evidenced a growing attention to activities of daily life and local customs in the city, reflecting the gradual maturation of urban life in Beijing as well as the genre. The imperial, the local, and the urban mutually defined and promoted one another. The city, largely a creation of the imperial political system, was represented by officials and examination candidates brought there by their duties or privileges. The luxury demanded by the imperial household and supported by the officials living in the city was met by burgeoning urban commercial activities. The energetic urban life, the meticulous attention to details, the aristocratic refinement of lifestyle, and the tamed exoticism of various ethnic groups culminated in a distinctive culture, simultaneously local and cosmopolitan, which was in turn communicated to the whole country by the elite through their writings. The imperial examination system served as a powerful tool in cultural dissemination.

Among the Republican-era reprints of Ming and Qing writings on Beijing, the personal accounts of daily life and local customs in imperial Beijing were far more popular than the official gazetteers. This concentration on personal accounts and marginalization of the official representations had important effects on how Republican-era readers perceived historical Beijing. During the imperial period, the strict framework of the gazetteer

was always present in the background of the seemingly miscellaneous details of local customs featured in these personal accounts, but in the Republican reprints, these details were presented outside the structured context with little effort to specify when the accounts were composed or under what conditions the described customs and practices emerged. By “liberating” these details from their historical and structural contexts, Republican-era compilers wrought a Beijing history that was less intimately connected to the vagaries of imperial dynastic histories and thereby imbued Beijing local history with a sense of timelessness. Whereas in the temporal and intertextual context of the Ming and Qing periods, accounts and gazetteers presented Beijing as a metonym for the Chinese empire, Republican-era reprints presented Beijing as a metaphor that stood in for that empire. The different images of the throne in the imperial period and in the Republic help to explain the difference. The emperor physically occupied the throne when he faced his officials, through whom he ruled the whole empire. The emperor held the ultimate imperial power, but it was exercised through the interaction between him and his officials. The throne, as a physical object, symbolized imperial power but was not the empire itself. One could even say that the relationship between the emperor sitting high up and his officials kneeling low in front of him ensured the symbolic power of the throne. In other words, the emperor did not need the physical throne to possess and exercise his power. When the birth of the Republic rendered the throne empty forever, it became the absolute metaphor for the empire. Its image did not simply convey the physical existence of a chair; rather, it called to mind the now by-gone emperor, his officials, and their interactions. The material object of the throne displayed to visitors in the Palace Museum during the Republic thus stood in for the whole past empire and imperial power relations; and the visitor traveled through the empty spaces in the palace where officials had stood or kneeled to encounter this special yet ordinary chair that would bring to mind the story of the empire. In short, the changes occurring in Beijing’s textual status, in essence, were not all that different from the changes in the city’s spatial and social orders; they all followed the same logic.

The reprinted Ming and Qing writings on Beijing functioned as reminders of the city’s history, but they also recast that history. They attempted to give the impression that history was being represented faithfully and exactly as an unmediated “real past” seen through the eyes of people who lived it, rather than being re-presented within a new framework derived from contemporary concerns. The implications of this ap-

peal to authenticity will become clearer as other Republican representations of Beijing are examined.

The formats and styles established in the imperial period echoed through some of the new writings produced in the Republican era. Among these writings were the works of scholars such as Qu Xuanying, Zhang Cixi (Zhang Jiangcai), Chen Zongfan, Lin Chuanjia, Yu Qichang, Qi Rushan, Xia Renhu, and Jin Shoushen. Their works amounted to a concerted campaign to represent Beijing in its long history, not as the stage for the humiliating national political events of the preceding century, but as the home of a rich and valuable local culture. Two major categories were spotlighted here: the specificity of “place” and the uniqueness of local customs.<sup>17</sup> The debt that these new writings owed to Ming and Qing accounts was obvious in both their formats and perspectives. All were written in classical Chinese, sometimes unpunctuated, and all quoted Ming and Qing gazetteers at length. Many of the categories in the Ming and Qing gazetteers were followed in the new writings. But there were new developments as well, especially in representations of place and time.

#### PLACE AS HISTORY

Spatial changes functioned as the organizing mechanism for many of these writers. More than anything else, they wrote a history of places by meticulously recording changes in the city’s physical layout, the development of each district, the damage to the city from natural and man-made disasters, the locations of famous residences, and the numerous narrow alleyways that together made a labyrinth out of Beijing. They demanded, and at the same time created, a spatial consciousness in their readers. By immersing every street in Beijing in its own story, they gave each a meaningful place in the larger history of the city. The tracing of spatial changes was the center around which stories of Beijing were organized, and it provided a structure for writing a local history of the city. Books by Lin Chuanjia, Chen Zongfan, and Yu Qichang provide the most pronounced examples of this archeology of place.

Lin Chuanjia, a lifelong educator, was fascinated with *xiangtu* (local geography and history). He was the chief editor for the *Da Zhonghua dili zhi* (Geography of Great China) in the 1910s and wrote the volume on Zhejiang Province for the series. While teaching at a half-day school in Beijing, Lin sent his students to investigate and record the history of the city’s streets, an activity that echoed the Education Department’s

call for students in all provinces to investigate their own home regions during the summer. Lin edited the results of his students' work, which were published in 1920 as *Jingshi jiexiang ji* (Streets and alleys in the capital city).

The volume was organized by street or urban area. The description of the Paozi River by Lin's student Rong Tao provides a typical example of the kind of information recorded. The river, he began, was a section of the Tonghui River dug in the Yuan dynasty. It acquired the name Paozi in the Ming. A detailed description of its exact location followed. The river started in the area north of the Observatory, ran southwest to Chongwen Gate, then flowed into the moat along the city wall that separated the Inner and the Outer Cities. Two bridges, about one mile apart from each other, traversed the northern and southern sections of the river. The west bank of the river was connected to many small densely populated alleyways. Rong used the Boxer Uprising as a historical marker in his piece. Before the incident, there had been a Temple of the Earth in the south and a Ciyun Temple in the north, both "old temples from hundreds of years ago." The eastern section had been covered by willows and cattails, making it a very attractive scenic spot. The Taiqing Temple in the south, the Guandi Temple in the north, and the Master Lu Temple in the middle punctuated the river banks. In the year 1900, however, this utopian picture forever changed. All the buildings but the Master Lu Temple were destroyed by the Allied forces. Rong Tao asserted that this temple was built in the Ming and had been well maintained. The majestic temple compound was surrounded by monks' residential halls and was fronted by a gate resembling one at a mountain monastery. The hallways and ceilings of the temple were decorated with impressive, artistic plates, and flag masts rose behind the buildings. Rong lamented that "the view had indeed been great" but that the place had become deserted since 1900. In 1913, across from the Master Lu Temple to the north, a building hosting the Women's Association was constructed in an empty plot next to the river. This later became the Police Dog Research Institute (*Jingquan yanjiusuo*). In recent years, "customs have degenerated" as a result of the growing poverty of the residents in the neighborhood. The Master Lu Temple was no longer a favored place for people to linger. Recently, the Police Department had set up a half-day school in the western yard of the Master Lu Temple; many children in the neighborhood were studying there. The resonance of students reading aloud and singing partly revived a civilized atmosphere in this place.<sup>18</sup>

In this style, the volume edited by Lin recorded the history of ninety-eight streets in Beijing. Both historical continuity and changes were narrated in spatial terms. The stable elements in the spatial environment and the surviving architecture gave the local residents a sense of continuity, while interruptions were explained through political history at the national level.

Compared to Lin's book, Chen Zongfan's *Yandu congkao* (Investigations of the capital city) and Yu Qichang's *Gudu bianqian jilue* (A history of changes in the old capital) were more structured and systematic. The format of Chen's and Yu's books deserves close attention. Both books focused on spatial changes in Beijing, both adopted categories established in imperial gazetteers, and both demonstrated common patterns in their descriptions of Beijing's spatial order. Chen Zongfan's *Yandu congkao* recorded the old and new names of streets, described landmarks and locations of important governmental institutions and historical sites, commented on the present conditions of these places, and told stories and legends about the city. Its first section—an introduction to Beijing's history, boundaries, imperial palaces, gardens, and ceremonial sites—was published in 1930, and a second edition of the same section was published in 1935. The second and third sections, published in 1931, covered streets in the Inner and Outer Cities. Chen cited over two hundred titles as sources and covered more than four thousand streets in the volumes.

The section on the Huguosi Temple area is a good example of the format of Chen's book. This section opens with a description of the spatial relations between streets and landmarks in that area, representing space as specific sites from the very beginning:

East of Gangwa shi (Ceramic and Tile Market), Xi si pailou (West Four Arches), and Xinjiekou Avenue and north of Da jiangfang (Big Bean Paste Workshop) hutong is Yangpi shi (Sheep Skin Market). Further north from there is Prince Lang's residence, east of it is Prince Li's residence. The gate of Prince Li's residence is located in Dongxie Street. Today it is the campus of Huabei University. Further north from there is Banshang (half-day) hutong, Xi'anmen wai (Outside of Gate of West Peace) Avenue, the small alleyway to the south is Liangxiang (Grain and salary) hutong. North of this section is Bei taiping qiao (North Peace Bridge), also called Mashi dajie (Horse Market Avenue), which was recorded as Xi Mashi jie (West Horse Market Avenue) in *Shuntian fu zhi* (Gazetteer of Shuntian Prefecture). North of it is Xi'an Market; the small alleyway running in the middle of it is called Jiyashi (Gathering Elegant Scholars); its original name is Jiya shi (Chicken and Duck Market).<sup>19</sup>

This entire section is ten lines long in its original classical Chinese text. Following this are over fourteen pages of notes, often including quotations from previous historical records, detailing the histories of the various sites mentioned in the above passage. The author's comments form a third and final section:

Longfu si (Temple of Great Happiness) is usually called the East Temple, and the Huguosi (Temple of Guarding the Country) is called the West Temple. But the West Temple is far less prosperous than the East Temple. At the East Temple there are antiques, paintings and calligraphy, birds and flowers, hawks and dogs; one can find everything there. Many European, American, and Japanese men and women also visit the area. The West Temple only has about ten flower sellers that are worth visiting, the rest is all miscellaneous objects for daily use, plus some folk entertainment and food stalls. There is not much to see there.<sup>20</sup>

Chen was not alone in adopting this format. Yu Qichang's *Gudu bianqian jilue* resonated with Chen's volumes. Written in the 1930s and published in 1940, it recorded spatial changes in Beijing from 1900 to 1937. Growing up in a family that had lived in Beijing for three generations, Yu Qichang returned to the city to work as an official for the Qing after he had traveled to Taiwan and studied in Japan. He experienced some of twentieth-century China's most important historical moments in Beijing, including the Boxer Uprising in 1900 and the 1911 Revolution.

Yu's volume has one chapter on the history of the whole city of Beijing, two chapters on the Imperial City, four chapters on the Inner City, two chapters on the Outer City, and one chapter on the suburbs. Like Chen Zongfan's *Yandu congkao*, each section in Yu's volume begins with a brief description of the geographical location of a district. Previous gazetteers are quoted in the notes, and the author's comments, like the following one, are hidden in smaller characters crammed between the descriptive texts:

Fortune-tellers have a story about the three gates in the south side of the city walls. Chongwen Gate on the east refers to the Ming, which ended in the Chongzhen reign [the character *chong* is in both “Chongwen” and “Chongzhen”]; Xuanwu Gate on the west refers to the Qing, which ended in the Xuantong reign [the character *xuan* is in both “Xuanwu” and “Xuantong”]. The name of the central gate has been changed to Zhonghua, but its previous name was Zhengyang, which matches Chiang Kai-shek's name [his courtesy name, “Zhongzheng” shares the character *zheng* with the gate]. The fortune-tellers say that this hints at the rising of the Chiang family. I, however, think that the capital city was abandoned

when Chiang rose; the riddle is in fact one about the destruction of the capital city.<sup>21</sup>

Why did Chen and Yu record spatial changes in such a format and in such detail? What were they trying to achieve by adopting such narrative strategies? Their books have the effect of leading their readers into the city. First, specific locations are introduced in their present physical condition through descriptions betraying no personal or emotional color. Gradually, readers are given more information from historical records about these sites, culminating in comments by the authors that are more personal and engaging. In this textual process, the abstract space of the city is first impersonally plotted out and then gradually transformed into a landscape of specific places that acquire rich meanings through accumulated layers of historical information. The locations are transformed from mere physical sites, through collective history, into personal places relevant to contemporary politics. Yu Qichang and Chen Zongfan cited a large number of historical sources, providing each place with a chronology as complete as possible. The city is personified, treated as a subject that has experienced history. The specificity of particular places functioned as the best testimony to history.

In Chen's explanation of his motivation for writing *Yandu congkao*, he clearly stated his hope for revealing the layers of history embedded in the city. Chen maintained the imperial perspective according to which Beijing was built, even though he was aware that the city had already been transformed at the time he wrote. He commented that he could have treated the tourist sites, which had been almost exclusively imperial spaces, as parts of the districts and streets in the second and third volumes, but he listed them under the categories of "palace, imperial gardens, altars and temples" "for the sake of history" and for "studies by archeologists in the future."<sup>22</sup>

These new writings were not simply duplicates of previous records; instead, they demonstrated new characteristics. They attained an unprecedented level of clarity compared to previous writings. Space in these new representations of the city was systematically organized and rationalized. These spatial histories were laid out with the precision of Cartesian maps, and space was perceived from the perspective of looking down at a map, rather than from the vantage of an individual narrating what was noticed while walking in the streets. This style of writing embodied a major change: it was depiction of space instead of through space.

Second, the writers of these histories were driven by an unprecedented sense of urgency to save, or at least to document, these places before they were irrevocably lost. Qu Xuanying's preface to Chen's book and Chen's own preface both stated that their purpose was to write a history of the city for future generations. Qu explained, "If we do not write it down, what can future generations remember and refer to?"<sup>23</sup> With a sense of responsibility to record history, Yu Qichang expressed his concern that the names of streets were becoming unrecognizable. He wrote:

Not all the names for alleyways had [interesting] origins, they nonetheless all had some specific reasons behind them. There have been many changes since the establishment of the Republic. Some of the changes followed the sounds of the old names but used different characters: for example, Jiangmi xiang (Sticky Rice Alley) into Jiaomin xiang (Mixed People Alley), Zhushi (pig market) kou into Zhushi (jewelry market) kou. Some of the changes were made because the original names were not elegant enough: for example, Choupi hutong (stinky leather) into Shoubi hutong (longevity), Choushui he (filthy water river) into Shoushui he (branded water river). Some were changed arbitrarily: for example, Tiaozhu hutong into Taozhu hutong, Jinger hutong (well) into Jing (alerting you) hutong. Some of the alleyway names had historical origins, but these were also ignorantly changed: for example, Naizi hutong (breasts, referring to the wet-nurses for the imperial court) into Naizi hutong (the two characters in the new name have no particular meanings), Lingqing gong (Lingqing Temple) into Lingjing. This book attaches the original names under the current names of the alleyways in order to preserve their true history (*yi cun qi zhen*).<sup>24</sup>

Yu Qichang's discussion of street names is characterized by his emphasis on their sounds, which were more immediate and local and could be learned only by living in the place. The right pronunciation of these names could certainly distinguish locals from outsiders. In this sense, the contrast of the old spoken names with the new written names was a struggle between the maintenance and erasure of local knowledge and over the authority of formats of knowledge production.

These two factors—the maplike clarity of description and the urge to preserve vanishing traces of the past—are closely linked phenomena, both related to the rising dominance of a Cartesian spatial order. As discussed in Part I of this book, the 1911 Revolution marked a transition in Beijing's urban identity from an imperial space, in which particular locations were distinguished by how they functioned in relation to the imperial center, to the homogeneous Cartesian space of a city in a modernizing nation-state, in which every particular location was mapped according to its position on a uniform grid. In this Cartesian regime,

each and every point is available for and demands accounting. At the same time, all “places” are emptied of their unique inviolability. The homogeneous “space” of modern urbanism thus inevitably threatens to obliterate the particularity of “place” that characterized the imperial capital. Through Chen’s, Yu’s, and Lin’s detailed textual maps of Beijing, we glimpse both sides of the historical moment when Cartesian space comes to dominate perceptions of the city: the very same moment in which every point in space is held up to equal scrutiny and mapping is also the moment when the particularity of “place” is threatened with obliteration by that very same spatial regime. Under the imminent threat of homogenizing Cartesian “space,” every “place” becomes equally precious and, commanding its own unique history, cries out for preservation.

The particular way in which these new gazetteers recorded spatial changes in Beijing created a sense of long history and distinct local culture. Through their details and historical references they connected the present to a past. Although disruptions were acknowledged, these histories of place stressed and valued continuity as manifested in the concrete and the material. By using place as the anchor of their histories, they also avoided dealing with the boundaries of dynasties and political regimes: the various imperial pasts were condensed into a singular past. More specifically, by focusing on places that had become empty space after the fall of the empire, and describing them from an imperial perspective, as Chen Zongfan did in his organization of his volumes, they brought imperial history back into the picture in a seemingly apolitical way.

#### EVERYDAY PRACTICES AS KNOWLEDGE

At the same time that the city’s spatial order was changing, a lifestyle was disappearing. This, too, was meticulously recorded in words. Innumerable books and articles from the Republican period tried to convince the reader that life in old Beijing was unique and that each detail of everyday practice was endowed with a rich history and meaning. Whether one tasted a piece of rice cake, purchased a pair of boots, dined at a restaurant, or simply heard a peddler’s calling in an alleyway, one had to learn the relevant underlying *zhanggu* (historical anecdotes and legends) to truly appreciate the simple physical action. A fair number of scholars demonstrated great interest in these *zhanggu*. With encyclopedic completeness, bits and pieces from everyday practices were

catalogued, became *zhanggu*, and were turned into historical knowledge that later generations were expected to value.

Jin Shoushen (1906–68) was one of the major compilers of catalogues of everyday practices. He wrote special columns on Beijing for newspapers in the 1930s. In 1935, he wrote “Tourist Sites in Beijing History” and “Beiping Silhouettes” for the *Huabei Daily*. In 1937, he wrote “Stories of the Old Capital” for *Xinxing News*, “Beijing Expert” for *Zhengbao*, “Old Stories of the New Capital” for *Quanmin bao*, and “Surviving Stories” for *Xinmin bao*. He also published a large number of short essays on Beijing local customs and daily life for the newspaper *Liyan bao*, which became *Liyan huakan* (*Liyan pictorial*) in 1938. Jin Shoushen published more than two hundred essays in the special column called “Beijing Expert” (*Beijing Tong*), which ran in the weekly *Liyan Pictorial*. Jin stated, “In Beijing’s local customs and daily life, everything has its flavor, everything has its history. Even a very small toy has its complex and long history....On the one hand, recording these old things can give people who have experienced them something to attach to; on the other hand, I write down Beijing local customs that have not been recorded previously so that we can preserve them.”<sup>25</sup> Jin’s topics ranged broadly and included major imperial ceremonies, cricket fights, pet birds, the way Beijing people cooked chicken and duck, all kinds of shops, various professions, city markets, famous toy peddlers, and even snacks and barbers.

Nothing conjures memories of place and time more evocatively than food, and this is especially so of “old Beijing,” where specific foods were reserved for specific seasons and festive occasions. Such foods were described in detail in Jin Shoushen’s writings. He wrote about the “spring pancakes” served on the first day of spring with such relish that his account whets the appetite and is detailed enough to serve as a recipe: Mix the flour with hot water; divide the dough into small, even pieces; combine two pieces with a small amount of sesame oil and roll into thin pancakes; remove from the pan when lightly brown. The “right way” to eat these layered pancakes was stuffed with a savory filling and rolled. “The pancake should not open up, and the sauce from the dishes should not drip out—only this counts as knowing how to eat it. I once saw a gentleman who wrapped up the pancake, held it to his mouth, and ate it like a cabbage wrap. Everyone who saw him eating it could not help laughing.”<sup>26</sup> Sweet flour bean paste and thinly sliced green onions were a must—“goat-horn (*yang jiao*) green onions are the

best." Equally crucial were a variety of thinly shredded smoked meats and meats boiled in soy sauce, usually bought from shops (Jin listed the three most famous, which included a palace provisioner). Next in importance was the "spring pancake mix" of bean sprouts and bean noodles. The best bean sprouts had to be the second layer from a bucket, or ones grown in water in a basin. The bean sprouts should be quickly dipped in boiling water and the dried bean noodles soft-boiled. After cooling in cold water, they were mixed with vinegar, black and white soy sauce, and minced garlic.<sup>27</sup>

With the same careful relish, Jin Shoushen described the foods that evoked the joy of summer: thirst-quenching hawthorn juice, pleasant lotus leaf porridge, and the sour green bean milk for which Beijing was famous. In autumn and winter, tempting roast meats, fat crabs, and steaming hot pot were the center of life. All the ingredients had to come from the right place, and there was one—and only one—perfect way to cook every dish. Even something as simple as stir-fried cabbage had to be chopped in precisely the right way in old Beijing, and the details of the twelve ways to cook fish and the sixteen ways to eat poultry were even more exact.<sup>28</sup> In this city of history, refinement was not only for the rich to enjoy; even small snacks and family style food could be special. Jin wrote about them with the same obsession for detail and the same stress on the specificity of season. What made this food so memorable was its special connection to time and place, so different from food as a commodity available when and wherever wanted.

Food, however, is just one topic covered in such writings. Clothes, children's games, local forms of entertainment, ceremonies such as weddings and funerals, famous teahouses, markets of all kinds and sizes, and the sundry goods peddled in the small alleyways were all included in these collections.

These writings focused on what made everyday practices locally specific—time and place. The authors of these catalogues tried to create an image of a distinctive local Beijing lifestyle. In his book *Jiujing suoji* (Miscellaneous records of the old capital city), Xia Renhu (1873–?), made serious efforts to record what he saw and knew about as a Qing official and a resident of the imperial capital city: the rituals and customs, lantern shows, seasonal festivals, cricket games, food, fashion, means of transportation, neighborhood associations, local dialects, miscellaneous stories of famous figures in the political world, markets, and much more.<sup>29</sup>

Qi Rushan (1877–1962), one of the most important chroniclers of Beijing's history, provided the same detailed records of everyday prac-

tices, with a special focus on the various professions in the city. Qi was once a student at the Jingshi da xuetang (The Imperial Academy of Great Learning), and had visited France several times before World War I. He devoted his life to the study of drama, especially Beijing opera, and became one of the most important figures in transforming Beijing opera into a “modern and national” form of entertainment.<sup>30</sup> His vantage point was the alleyways and markets, and he covered almost every aspect of everyday life in Beijing, including the sounds people heard from morning to night, the food they ate every day, the vocabulary they used, their festival customs, and even the activities they engaged in on summer days.

*Gudu sanbai liushi hang* (360 professions in the old capital), written in the 1930s and published in 1941, in which Qi recorded the disappearing professions of the city, is a good example of Qi’s writings on Beijing. Qi observed that items needed in daily life that had once been supplied by handicraft were being replaced by industrial products; that fashions had changed along with the fall of the Qing; and that religious activities had declined. Consequently, most of the old professions had declined. Some, such as making shoe soles for bound feet, carving wooden fish to be used to accompany the recitation of sutras, making feather fans, and tailoring for Buddhist and Taoist monks, had totally disappeared. Qi recorded the names of these professions, explained their functions, and detailed the reasons for their decline. A vanished world was vividly reconstructed through Qi’s descriptions.<sup>31</sup>

Why did the authors consider these details important enough to write down? Xia Renhu answered this question with a self-proclaimed disavowal of importance in his book *Jiujing suoji*. To judge from the wide range of topics he covered, Xia expended great effort to record what he considered worth knowing about the imperial capital city. He also had a clear purpose in mind when writing his book: “What I am writing today has already become traces from the past (*chen ji*). If I tell it to the younger generation, they would think that I am fooling them.” In a mood of “missing the old capital” (*huai zai jiu jing*), he wrote down his personal knowledge of the city.<sup>32</sup> But at the same time, he claimed that he was leaving the “bigger history” to “official historians” (*shi guan*) and “those who can wield a big pen” (*da shou bi*). Explaining that his book covered the period between the Tongzhi-Guangxu years and the fall of the Qing, Xia stated that, for the era before this time, there were old records; as for the “new stories, there are *da shou bi*, I would not want to mix in.”<sup>33</sup> Xia preferred to focus on miscellaneous

stories of daily life, and topics that people would only talk about “at dinner and tea.” He wrote, “Even if I occasionally touch upon politics, I only pick the events and issues that are not important.”<sup>34</sup> Yet Xia’s very act of writing such an “unimportant” history testified that he himself, at least, considered these details valuable historical knowledge, even if they were not usually enshrined in official history.

Unlike Xia Renhu, Qi Rushan straightforwardly stressed the importance of such details. To him, it was the details that made the Chinese who they were, and he chose to interpret history through the disappearance and emergence of various details in everyday practices. In his writings, he presented a view of the imperial past that was not in accordance with the modernization projects of the new political regimes. *Gudu shiyue tukao* (Music from markets of the old capital, 1933) is a catalogue of musical instruments used by peddlers in Beijing. It contains drawings of musical instruments used by peddlers, accompanied by captions explaining their functions. In explaining why he drew these pictures, Qi stated that musical instruments used in imperial ceremonies in the Qing had been disappearing. “The peddlers are doing a great thing to preserve ancient culture. I draw these pictures to show the beauty of these instruments so that they can be passed down to future generations forever. Otherwise, I am afraid that these instruments will be abandoned and disappear from history because everything is being reformed today.”<sup>35</sup>

Qi’s comments raise the interesting issue of the content of “Beijing culture” during the Republican period. These writings gave the impression that what they recorded was common to all residents of the city irrespective of class and status. But in fact only the wealthy and well-off in Beijing could afford most of the food described by Jin Shoushen. Many of the practices chronicled, such as keeping pet birds and cricket fighting, were characteristic of Manchu aristocratic life in the Qing. As in Qi’s description of the musical instruments, very often the imperial past survived in ordinary people’s daily lives, much as the former imperial ceremonial spaces in Beijing now served as public parks. When the Qing fell and the aristocracy declined, those who had once enjoyed a refined way of life became part of the ordinary population of the city; some even became impoverished. Yet certain elements and habits in their former lifestyle were carried over and became mixed into the general lifestyle of the city, and so too did their knowledge. Commercialization also played an active role in popularizing the lifestyle of the former aristocracy and upper class. In this sense, what was recorded in these catalogues were not exactly old traditions. What these authors

were witnessing was a process of commercialization and popularization of certain aspects of aristocratic lifestyle in the Qing. Hence, the so-called “old Beijing” constructed in these details was, in fact, Republican Beijing. Although the seasons for the local customs and practices recorded in these writings were noted very specifically, historical periods for them were not. There was almost a total silence about when these practices started and when they disappeared. They were simply placed within the generic category of “old practices of the past.” In glossing over class and temporal differences, these writers expressed the partial perspective of elite literati caught between the old and the new. Consciously or not, however, both the ambiguity in class and status differentiation and the lack of specificity in historical time contributed to the creation of a collective memory of the city.

The Republican years witnessed growing interest in Beijing’s local history and cultural traditions. Worrying that the persistent changes of the Republican era would eventually result in the irrevocable disappearance of the city’s distinct history and culture, various groups made efforts that together amounted to the taking of an inventory of the increasingly threatened material traces of this history and tradition. Institutions and individuals reprinted a large number of Ming and Qing gazetteers and other literature on the imperial capital city, and scholars wrote new works about changes in the city’s spatial order and customs. These publications brought a past into the present out of the fear that this valuable past would be irredeemably lost in the future. They created a sense of historical continuity and at the same time demonstrated strong anxiety about and resistance to the breaking of this continuity.

If the gazetteers of the imperial period represented Beijing as simultaneously local and cosmopolitan, the new writings stressed the local and unique nature of the city. But some characteristics first developed in the imperial gazetteers were inherited by the new genres that emerged during the Republican era: an obsessive attention to detail, an apparent attempt at encyclopedic completeness, and a textual format dominated by tropes of collection and textual display. This phenomenon raises some questions: Why was there such an obsession with spatial changes, local customs, and everyday practices? Why were they represented in a catalogue? And why was there such an urge toward encyclopedic completeness? What kind of history did these collections create?

When the old imperial system as a whole was gone, the everyday practices formed under it floated around as fragments. With the system

beyond salvage, the fragmented details became collectible debris. The authors examined here tried to create a complete record, an inventory of a waning Beijing and a way of life that they sorrowfully expected would soon disappear. This history, written as a treasure hoard of fragments, was marked by a strong sense of nostalgia and condensation of a broad and diffuse way of life, much like the diminishing of a figure as it is about to disappear over the horizon. One discerns lamentation but also hope behind such practices of collecting: the hope that the more pieces of the relics are saved, the more accurate a picture of the past can be preserved for future generations, or even the hope that one day the fragments may again be pieced together into a whole.

Of course, nostalgia was not a sentiment new to the Republic; many Qing period writings about Ming dynasty Beijing were quite nostalgic. But that was a sense of nostalgia for something already passed, the fallen Ming dynasty. In contrast, the nostalgia of Republican authors is rather different. Yu Qichang and Qi Rushan were preparing for a disappearance that had not yet happened, anticipating the death of practices that still persisted. A paragraph by Yu Qichang best expresses this mentality:

I am getting old, and the capital city is not the city it once was anymore. The good times are over, and there is nothing we can do about it....The changes in institutions, death and survival of famous sites, changes of roads and alleys, I saw them all and remembered them in my heart. Nowadays, the situation is always changing, everyone is forgetting about these events. But I always feel attached to the old capital and cannot bear to cast it aside. I am so lucky to have lived in this capital city of six hundred years with great culture. I have seen its glory, its decline, and its destruction. Until today, I am still stealing a life in this city [*tou sheng*, said of a survivor or a leftover remnant, especially after the reason for living is gone]; over this my sadness cannot be assuaged. Recently I saw an advertisement in a newspaper calling for information on the old names of Beijing streets. It seems that old people who know about the past are hard to find these days. In another hundred years, maybe even the relics of this splendid and glorious capital city will be unrecognizable. How regrettable that will be!<sup>36</sup>

Yu's sentiment brings to mind T.J. Clark's comment on Paris in the late nineteenth century, which is worth quoting at length here:

"The old Paris is passing," Balzac had written in *Les Petits Bourgeois*, "following the kings who have passed." The new Paris was struggling to be born; and once again what is striking is the commentators' wish to have it there already, fully fledged....But all the same these texts, especially Hugo's, anticipate modernity: it is as if the various authors needed it to be there, and

made believe it was, in order to anathematize it.... We might say of these writers that they seem to want the city to have a shape—a logic and a uniformity—and therefore construct one from the signs they have, however sparse and unsystematic. They see or sense a process and want it finished, for then the terms in which one might oppose it will at least be clear. The ultimate horror would be to have modernity (or at any rate not to have what had preceded it), to know it was hateful, but not to know what it was.<sup>37</sup>

In both the cases of Beijing and Paris, the anticipation of modernity was a political strategy to deal with the challenges and shocks of modernizing transformation, and thus such expressions are in themselves important elements of the structure of modernity. Yet if the anxiety of anticipation was similar in Beijing and Paris, the focus of such anticipation was rather different. Parisian writers imposed order on the disruptions of modernization by envisioning it as a future order, an overpowering framework that had already arrived; the writer-collectors of Beijing in contrast stressed the importance of preserving the past into the future. Although in the Parisian case the attitude toward modernity was a critical one, modernity nonetheless became the center of the discourse. With the Beijing writers, the situation was the opposite: the past remained their focus. They were unwilling to embrace the new framework, but neither did they choose, like their Parisian counterparts, to write their own critical history of this new modern framework. Instead, they collected fragments from the crumbling framework of the past. Their efforts to reprint what had been written in the past, and to collect and transform everyday practices into knowledge with encyclopedic completeness, kept the future, at least on the surface, far from center stage.

The scholars of old Beijing focused their efforts on the parts of the city's history that the state worked to dismantle and the new intellectuals deemed backward. Their encyclopedic catalogues became useful to later generations in their new efforts to reinvent traditions by using political or commercial forces. Despite their intention to preserve history, the format of their representation erased specificities and, as a result, appeared to be ahistorical. They in fact created a false binary between the modern and the traditional.

Yet if this group of Beijing scholars attended to the “past” with modernity hardly surfacing explicitly in their “collections,” another group of writers documenting Republican Beijing focused much more on the modernizing future. It is to them that this analysis will now turn.

# Literature

## *Writing New Beijing*

Beijing was a city that inspired strong emotions. In addition to the volumes of writings on the city produced by the older generation of scholars, hundreds of essays about the city were written by the “new intellectuals.” At first glance, the new intellectuals’ writings, especially those written after the mid-1930s during the Japanese aggression and invasion, appear just as nostalgic as those of the old-style Beijing scholars. But a closer look reveals that their sentiment was not directed toward the same things or for the same reasons. Although they also strongly identified with Beijing, they did not share the almost personal pain that scholars like Chen Zongfan, Qi Rushan and Yu Qichang expressed in their anticipation of the disappearance of the “old Beijing.” Many of the “new intellectuals” were from the south and lived as temporary renters in Beijing. Their presence in the city was tied to the new educational institutions, in which they either taught or studied, so their personal relationship with the city was quite different from that of the scholars described in the last chapter. They viewed Beijing through different lenses of comparison, contrasting it with other cities they had experienced rather than with the Beijing of previous decades. Most of these new intellectuals worried little about the disappearance of “traditional” Beijing until the eve of the Japanese invasion in the mid-1930s. Those who did express such concern posed as somewhat detached observers, for what was disappearing was not their own lifestyle but that of the locals. Unlike the nostalgic scholars discussed in the last chapter

who stayed in Beijing after 1937 and continued to compile local history, most of the new intellectuals left when the Japanese came and then wrote about their memories of Beijing while living in the south.

Their writings, therefore, embodied a different relationship with the city's history. Instead of detailing life in old Beijing, they focused on contemporary transformations of culture and social structure. The center of their lives was Republican Beijing, the already transformed city. Their Beijing was different in spatial terms as well. They had their own favorite places in the city, different from those of the locals. Only under the threat of Japanese invasion did a note of nostalgia common to both groups arise. But the similarity stopped there, and the more fundamental differences remained. The Beijing of the locals could be only an object of observation and research for the new intellectuals. Yet not all literary representations of Republican Beijing adopted the same perspective. Beijing was fortunate to have Lao She to tell its stories. In his fictionalization of Beijing, the novelist may have revealed more historical truth about the city than what historians have been able to achieve. After studying the new intellectuals' view of Beijing as their city, and Beijing in the folklorist movement, this chapter ends with an examination of Lao She's Beijing.

### "MY BEIJING"

The focus of new intellectuals' writings about Beijing shifted over time. It is not possible to impose rigid dividing lines in periodizing the writings, for there was always overlap in their contents, but changes were nonetheless evident, and the writings can be roughly divided into three major periods: the 1910s to the mid-1920s, the mid-1920s to mid-1930s, and 1936 to the early war years.

The teens and early 1920s were marked by new intellectuals' active, though sometimes critical, participation in the formation of a new Republican urban order in the imperial capital. These writers looked to Western cities as models, anticipated the creation of a civic culture, and demanded a more efficient city administration. Their works dealt predominantly with issues of citizenship. Their personal experiences became the grounds for more general sociological observations and evaluations of the state of civic responsibility in the new Republican city. Social equality, city administration, and behavior in public spaces were the central concerns.

One of their central concerns was to see the political ideals of the Republic embodied in urban life, specifically in the use of the city's public spaces. Li Dazhao expressed his distress over the poverty so omnipresent

in Beijing, as evidenced by the pickers of coal pieces and the beggars, phenomena he deemed incompatible with a Republican capital.<sup>1</sup> Li Dazhao and Chen Duxiu, protesting against police brutality toward demonstrating students, argued that peaceful demonstrations should be allowed in the city's streets.<sup>2</sup> Zhou Zuoren used his own encounter with the police to criticize their unlawful treatment of citizens. While he was walking around the Qian Gate on June 5, 1919, a group of passing police on horseback threatened pedestrians. Partly as a condemnation of the government's recent suppression of student movements, Zhou wrote a short article about his experience, criticizing the emptiness of the concepts of "Republic" and "law." He commented that "I was never scolded or chased by police and soldiers when I walked in the streets in foreign countries, let alone being put in life-threatening situations. It is truly shocking to have encountered such an event in the capital city of my own country."<sup>3</sup> For the woman writer Bing Xin, the city was a location where she could carry out her charity work. In mid-December 1920, she made the rounds of the city's schools collecting donations for famine victims and was overwhelmed by the sense of social responsibility exhibited by the citizens of the new Republic who donated.<sup>4</sup> In her essay "Going to the Black Dragon Bridge" she also described her encounter with some soldiers and her surprise at how polite and law-abiding the soldiers of the new Republic were.<sup>5</sup> To her, an ideal Beijing was a civil society in which everyone, including soldiers, was similarly responsible and law-abiding.

When comparing Beijing to Western cities, these writers criticized the city administration's low level of efficiency. Chen Duxiu's essay "Ten Characteristics of Beijing" recounted a friend's impressions of Beijing after a recent trip to Europe. In the opinion of Chen's friend, Beijing lacked order, general urban planning, and a sense of "public spirit" when compared to European cities:

A friend of mine just came back from Europe, and he said that he had noticed ten major characteristics of Beijing that are absent in any other country: 1. Policemen carry guns to scare the citizens although it is not a time of martial law. 2. Xinhua Street is fairly good, but it [is half finished and] stops at the foot of the city wall. 3. Cars are driven in narrow streets and through crowds rudely, but the policemen never stop them. 4. High-ranking military officials do not ride horses; they sit in cars and are driven fast, as if they are going to the front. 5. Boys as young as twelve to thirteen years old and men as old as over sixty all pull rickshaws in the streets, but the policemen never interfere. 6. The dust reaches the sky on windy days, but water is spread only by men, not water carts. 7. Most of the roads are

paved, but the most important one, the Qian Gate Bridge, is still covered with stones.<sup>8</sup> Although the parks bear the word “public,” one has to pay to enter.<sup>9</sup> People are not allowed to walk in front of the President’s residence; they are not allowed to pass by the headquarters of the Feng Army either.<sup>10</sup> The filthiness of the manure piles outside Anding Gate is unequalled in the whole world!<sup>11</sup>

It is obvious that most of the ten criticisms had a point of reference to Western cities and that the government was the party expected to bear the responsibility to correct the problems. This stance was also expressed in a statement by the famous journalist and social critic Shao Piaoping on the condition of Beijing’s streets and public hygiene. Shao felt it would have come as a shock to Westerners that “as the nation’s capital, Beijing’s streets are this deplorable.”<sup>12</sup> The reason for such poor infrastructure, Shao argued, was that half of the funds to maintain streets in Beijing were “eaten” by the Municipal Board (*Shizheng gong-suo*). He reported that only two-fifths of the budget for road maintenance was actually spent on roads while three-fifths went to administrative salaries or was embezzled.<sup>13</sup>

Until the early 1920s, the places most often visited and written about by the new intellectuals included Central Park, Changdian, the Ming Tombs, the Taoran Pavilion, and the Great Wall. At that time not many new public spaces and parks had been opened; with the exception of Central Park, the places written about were mostly sites that had long been visited by scholars in the past. Changdian’s charm was its old-book business and its regular outdoor markets that attracted many of the city’s residents. As for Central Park, the new intellectuals focused on the activities there rather than the scenery. They were concerned about proper behavior in this newly opened public space. When Qian Xuantong visited Central Park in 1918, he encountered some people performing Beijing opera and complained that they were too noisy and disruptive to the quiet environment.<sup>14</sup> Lu Xun recounted buying candies in Central Park and being offended by the distrust the candy peddler showed toward him.<sup>15</sup> The enlightenment mentality in these writings is unmistakable. But whether these essays conveyed satisfaction with the conditions in the parks or not, they suggested that the parks were indeed places where people from different social groups mixed and interacted with one another. In general, the degree of spatial segregation between intellectuals and others was relatively low.

The second phase of the new intellectuals’ writings, between 1924 and 1935, was a flexible time in which different opinions regarding Bei-

jing coexisted. It is evident that the intellectuals were now feeling more attached to the city and finding their own spaces in it. Essays by Yu Pingbo, Shi Pingmei, Chen Xuezha, Gao Changhong, Zhu Xiang, Ye Lingfeng, Yu Dafu, and Sun Fuxi clearly identified the places they enjoyed visiting.<sup>11</sup> All the museums and parks appeared in their essays: the Palace Museum, the Summer Palace, Central Park, Beihai Park, Capital Park, the Temple of Agriculture, South City Amusement Park. They also visited the Taoran Pavilion and the Western Hills, places that had always attracted scholars in Beijing. The newly opened Tiananmen was added to the list, as occasionally was Shishahai, a center of activities during the summer for Beijing's lower-class residents. Liulichang was the center for books and stationery, and the Beijing Hotel was the place for a taste of fancy Western-style dining and dancing. Zheng Zhenduo, a central figure in the writers' community who worked with Lu Xun on collecting and reprinting classical stationery from Liulichang, found enjoyment in Beijing at Tiananmen, Central Park, Beihai Park, the Ancestral Temple (Taimiao), the Imperial Academy (Guozijian), the Scenery Hills (Jingshan), the Palace Museum, the Drum and Bell Towers, Shishahai, and the Taoran Pavilion.<sup>12</sup> In the writer Yu Dafu's diaries recording his visit to Beijing, the places he visited can be grouped into four categories: educational institutions (Beijing University), parks and museums (the Temple of Heaven, Jingshan, the Palace Museum, the zoo, Beihai, Central Park, and West Changan Avenue); shopping districts (Liulichang and Xidan for book shopping, Dongan Market, and Tianqiao), and restaurants (Central Hotel, Damei, Fengze yuan, Zhengyang lou). He also went to the Beijing Hotel for dinner and dancing.<sup>13</sup>

In sum, through their experiences and representations of the city during this period, the new intellectuals were establishing an emotional connection to their own Beijing. But, as the list of places above already implies, the Beijing they grew to love was not that of the average residents, the peddlers, rickshaw pullers, and the like that made up the majority of the city's longtime inhabitants. Instead, their Beijing was predominately the imperial Beijing transformed into public vistas and parks, the scholars' Beijing of Liulichang, or the tourists' Beijing of modern entertainments and consumption, as well as grandeur from the past.

Beihai Park was their favorite haunt, the landscape with which many identified most strongly. Chen Xuezha described an early morning visit to Beihai in an essay. When she came out of the park, she saw many people walking in the streets, but no one was walking into Beihai; everyone was totally ignoring the park. Chen wrote: "Lonely Beihai!"

Maybe the loneliness of Beihai is also the loneliness I feel?"<sup>14</sup> Ye Lingfeng compared Beihai and Central Park: "Indeed, at Central Park, sitting amongst noisy crowds in hundreds of bamboo chairs, crunching melon seeds, commenting on women passing by—this is too boring." Beihai, in his opinion, was much better: clean, quiet and free of annoying people and distracting activities.<sup>15</sup> Gao Changhong compared four parks in Beijing: "The Temple of Agriculture is for the low-class, Central Park is full of middle-class people, Beihai is close to a gentlemen's park, and only Nanhai can be turned into a palace of arts."<sup>16</sup> "The ordinary and vulgar tourists of course should go to the ordinary and vulgar Central Park....I stayed in Beihai for two hours, and saw fewer than fifty people, so it [Beihai] has become my best working studio."<sup>17</sup> Shi Tuo also observed that Shishahai was for the *xiao shimin* (petty urban dwellers) and that Central Park hosted a mixed population; neither exactly fit the taste of the new intellectuals as Beihai did.<sup>18</sup>

There is an apparent overlap between the new intellectuals' Beijing and the tourist Beijing. "Seven Days in Beiping," a tourist program presented in the magazine *Luxing zazhi* (China traveler), recommended that tourists visit the Temple of Heaven, the Temple of Agriculture, the Drum and Bell Towers, the Yonghe Palace, the Confucian Temple, Guozijian, the Summer Palace and the sites in the Western Hills, the Palace Museum, Central Park, the Great Wall, Jingshan (Scenery Hill), the Observatory, the Tang Mountains, and the zoo.<sup>19</sup> The perspective of the new intellectuals was similar to that of the tourists in that it took as the major attraction of Beijing the sites and emptied imperial spaces as landscapes rather than the lives of people. It was also a national, rather than a local, perspective of the city.

The new intellectuals not only provided impassioned descriptions of favorite sites in Beijing but also raised sharp criticisms of the city. What the old scholars of Beijing considered to be the unique aspects of a valuable local culture appeared too antiquated and shabby in comparison to Western cities or Shanghai or in the context of what the nation needed. Tong Yiping criticized Beijing's "oldness" and its lack of energy for change:

Beijing! Beijing is a piece of barren desert: there are no mountains, no water, no flowers. In streets full of dust, only shabby and broken rickshaws, haughty automobiles, shining bayonets, and new military uniforms move around in front of people's fearful eyes. Camels are too tired to walk, the buckets on the shoulders of night-soil carriers are full, coal-deliverers' faces have become so black that no one can tell where their eyes and eyebrows

are. In this state of unbearable filth, I see the four thousand years' doom of our ancient country. My friends, pathetic, it is pathetic that I am only a materialist living in the dust! When I walk alone in the deserted barren streets, I cannot stop dreaming of "flowing human desire" (*ren yu heng liu*). I dream of the prosperity of Paris, the grandeur of Berlin, the skyscrapers and speedy cars of London.<sup>20</sup>

Ding Xilin echoed Tong in his sarcastic article "Beijing's Streetcars Are Actually Running!" Ding listed all the problems of Beijing's streetcars: they were even slower than rickshaws; there were no clear regulations and enforcement of the existing regulations was ineffectual; ticket prices were not clearly posted; and the ride was more expensive than it was worth.<sup>21</sup>

In the same critical vein, Chen Weimo commented that Beijing was dirty, inspired feelings of loneliness, and harbored unbearable social inequality. Chen believed that the Xuanwu Gate area was the real Beijing because everything could be found there: "Western-style buildings, decorative arches with faded colors, cars dashing through the streets, accompanied by heavy, slow mule carts, dirty-faced locals of all kinds."<sup>22</sup> Peng Fangcao's dislike of Beijing was more general: he hated everything about the city, strongly. In his eyes, "Ancient things fill the city, even the new has been smoked in the dusky, despondent atmosphere (*muqi*). As a result, everything is gray.... Beijing after all is only a place for foreign visitors to see and to have fun in. How pathetic it is that a nation's capital city possesses only this tiny bit of advantage."<sup>23</sup> Xu Xu directly confronted the nostalgic view of Beijing. To him, Beijing's leisurely lifestyle favored by so many was simply something created in the imagination. "If one was used to living in a capitalist society, if one had a correct consciousness and clear stance, one would hate Beijing's sense of leisure and slowness."<sup>24</sup>

Almost as if summarizing the opinions of Beijing's critics, Xu Zhimo, the most highly acclaimed poet of the time, called Beijing a "dead city" (*si cheng*). He imagined a conversation between a college student and a cemetery guard. "Do you love Beijing?" the student asked. "How funny this student's question is! Do I love Beijing? When a man is poor and old, what love are we talking about?" exclaimed the cemetery guard. "Beijing is doomed" was Xu's conclusion.<sup>25</sup>

He Changqun tried to come up with a political-economic analysis of Beijing's problems. He admitted that there was some attraction in Beijing's leisurely style, but he believed that the absence of Chinese-owned businesses in Beijing was the weakest aspect of the city. In Shanghai, life

was fast paced; even the time for using the restroom had to be scheduled. But in Beijing, everything was relaxed: people walked slowly in the streets, and seeing a car approaching from afar, they got out of the way. He admitted that Beijing was a cultural center: old-book shops, the Palace Museum, libraries, antique shops, and cultural relics were everywhere, provoking thoughts of the past all the time. But the environment was too relaxed for his taste; people were too comfortable to think about the nation. Shanghai was becoming the economic center of the whole country, and Beijing's time of prosperity was over. He believed that the revival of China had to depend on the Yangtze River region; Beijing was no longer playing a vital role in the nation.<sup>26</sup>

Criticisms subsided in the mid-1930s, when Beijing was under the threat of Japanese invasion. In this third phase of the new intellectuals' writings, nostalgia began to dominate. The only criticism still raised was about the weakness and nonresistance of Beijing's residents; Beijing as a place became a treasure shared by the whole nation. This tendency reached its peak in 1936. After the majority of the new intellectuals escaped to the south, almost every essay they wrote about daily life in Beijing assumed a nostalgic tone.

The new intellectuals stopped talking about their own favorite spaces; Beihai hardly appeared in this picture of Beijing. They finally began focusing on the locals' world. Before 1936, observations and descriptions of the locals' lives began to appear, but in 1936 the whole picture of Beijing life represented was that of the locals, and the authors themselves seemed to disappear. They no longer recounted their own experiences, and their narratives were no longer dominated by a tone of alienation or criticism. They wrote about other people's lives. They were at once more distant and closer to the city; more distant in that the experiences were not their own but closer in that they no longer stressed the "otherness" of Beijing residents. They portrayed this local culture as a national possession under threat of destruction by the Japanese. Yu Dafu expressed this attitude in very emotional terms: "Beiping is where culture has accumulated over the past five to six hundred years; Beiping is where every month of every season is lovely. From afar, I deeply wish her peace and progress, for her to stay forever the ancient capital for the children of the Yellow Emperor."<sup>27</sup>

There was, in fact, no contradiction in the feelings these intellectuals had as a group toward Beijing. The Beijing they loved was the "cosmopolitan and modern" Beijing, and the Beijing they criticized was the backward, crowded, lower-class Beijing. The new intellectuals identified

with certain places in the city and considered them their own. In comparison to the alleyways and temples that dominated the writings of the old-style scholars, their spaces were the parks and the new commercial centers created by the government's concentrated efforts. The new intellectuals took advantage of and enjoyed the government's new urban reconstruction projects. The daily routes they took were different from those of the locals. In fact, they set themselves apart from the locals, very often on purpose. Quietness, rather than the chaotic excitement of Tianqiao, was what appeared attractive to them. Instead of wanting to see the crowds, they preferred their own little haven, a "gentlemen's park," or even better, a "palace of arts." In criticizing the city, they looked at it from above, a position in many ways identical with that of the government, the only difference being that they demanded a level of efficiency in urban administration higher than what the current state was able to achieve.

An interesting convergence of the imperial and the Republican emerged in their views of Beijing. Many of the sites the intellectuals favored were former imperial ceremonial spaces now transformed into public parks or museums. But what was most significant to them was the present: the imperial sites had become parks, places where they could have tea, read, meet with friends, and enjoy themselves. The qualities that were important to them in these spaces were cleanliness, quietness, and plenty of private corners where they did not have to see or be seen by others, especially those who did not belong to their own class.

Unlike the scholars of old Beijing, they did not focus on bringing out the history of these spaces in their writings but kept it ambiguous in the background. Their attitude toward imperial architecture is a good example.<sup>28</sup> To them, it was a symbol of Chinese civilization. They were not sentimental about the fall of the imperial system, and they did not wish to emphasize the fact that the places they enjoyed had been imperial ceremonial sites, which would in most cases conflict with their ideological commitment to "new culture." They were amazed, even mesmerized, by the grand scale of the city and its architecture. But though history was part of what made the city attractive to them, they did not acknowledge it. Beijing, stripped of its historical specificities, was to them an aesthetic experience. Rather than consciously keeping the city situated in its history, they neutralized the historical dimensions of places. If the scholars of old Beijing were obsessed with the details of the imperial framework, the new intellectuals abstracted the framework into aesthetic principles and made contemporary uses of them.

A close reading of literature on Beijing by the new intellectuals reveals that although in their more conscious and systematic work the majority of them were committed to a future-oriented vision of China that centered on making the nation strong, they were far from being a coherent group with ideological consistency. In their praise as well as criticism of Beijing, their operative criterion was cosmopolitanism. Ironically, the cosmopolitanism they enjoyed in Beijing was what had epitomized imperial culture, and their ideal urban spaces were actually highly exclusionary of the very “public” that constituted the citizens of the new nation of their dream. The imperial past became an important part of the daily life of the new intellectuals, something with which they consciously made connection, as is reflected in their praise of Beijing’s parks, for example. Other factors that enabled them to enjoy their elite and leisurely lifestyle—maids, cooks, rickshaw pullers, a low cost of living in the city in general—hardly ever entered their writings. The literary elite’s romanticization of Beijing was thus built on their distance from the rest of the population and was sustained, in some ways, by the general poverty in the city. Nonetheless, the writings of the new intellectuals did undermine the sociological examination of the city and remind us that the representation of Republican Beijing was not dominated by one single voice but instead was something much more complex.

### **BEIJING AS GUXIANG (HOMETOWN)**

The new intellectuals’ representation of Beijing reflected a deep ambivalence in their attitude toward “Chinese cultural tradition.” An essay by Yu Dafu, one of the most important writers of the May Fourth generation, illustrates this. Yu Dafu explained his feelings toward Beijing in the following way: Anyone who had lived in Beijing for a few years would find the city a bit suffocating, with its lack of change, and would want to leave it. Once he left, he would feel as if he was starting a new life. But after a while, “when he lived in any place other than Beijing—except his hometown, he would miss Beijing, and hope to go back again, and have a strong nostalgia toward Beijing. Anyone who has lived in Beijing has this kind of experience.”<sup>29</sup> Shi Tuo, another May Fourth writer, expressed the same sentiment:

Of all the cities I have lived in or happened to pass through, I can think of none but Peiping as a place where I am likely to run into an acquaintance just around the corner. All cities in China, whether in the course of prosper-

ing or on the decline, according as they are favorably situated or not, fall into two categories: one the mere home of the inhabitants, the other a big hotel. People come in haste to these cities from all directions, for business sake, and go away in haste again. Their inhabitants live and die there from generation to generation. No one will ever think of them, nor do they leave any deep unforgettable impression on one's mind. But Peiping is an exception. Whoever has been there, no matter how tired he has got of the Peking people and their dust-filled streets, and no matter how far away he has gone, he will always feel a tenuous link with them, which will become stronger as his absence lengthens. One day he will even find it necessary to seek every opportunity to return once more before his death, or else he could not close his eyes in peace.<sup>30</sup>

Through their writings, the new intellectuals expressed another side of themselves that they were often unwilling to admit: their attachment to some dimensions of the tradition they vehemently attacked.

A comparison to some of the writings on Shanghai highlights this point. An essay by Lin Yutang entitled “An Ode to Shanghai” portrayed Shanghai as “a very scary place!”<sup>31</sup> “It is the place where the low things of the East and West mix. Its superficial prosperity masks its hollowness, tediousness, money-worship and vulgarity. It is full of unnatural women, inhuman laboring, lifeless newspapers, capital-less banks, and people without any concern for the nation.” Lin poured out his sarcasm for the city’s “incomprehensibility,” its “deformity, evilness and arrogance,” the “pale-skinned fat bankers,” the wealthy women who ate ginseng soup but still “had no breasts,” the slippery servants at hotels, massage women, prostitutes, the opium addicts, and just about everyone else. He mocked the upstarts who did not know how to eat Western-style dinners and the “modern” people who never let slip a chance to try out their “Many thanks” and “Excuse me,” probably the only words they knew in English. He ridiculed the girl students who held their school bags under their arms, sat in rickshaws, and wore shorts and hats embroidered with colorful robins and chrysanthemums. He despised the foreigners who were nonentities in their own countries but imperious in China. He called Shanghai a city of “robbers, bureaucrats, officers, and cheaters.” The city to him was “China’s cozy nest where even beggars are dishonest.”<sup>32</sup> The modernist novelists Mu Shiying, Shi Zhecun, and Liu Na’ou discovered new sensations and modes of expression in a Shanghai that intoxicated with its dazzling lights and the soft music of its dance halls.<sup>33</sup> Mao Dun ruthlessly ridiculed the old gentry landlord who was so shocked by his first glimpse of the metropolis’s speed and its women with exposed legs that he fainted and died.<sup>34</sup>

The new intellectuals' attachment to Beijing can be partly explained by aesthetic taste and choice of lifestyle, such as the authors' appreciation of Beijing's architecture and its generally slower pace of life. But there was also a social dimension to this difference. Not many people enjoyed a higher social status than intellectuals in Beijing; there they occupied the upper echelon of the social hierarchy. In Beijing, their social lives revolved around other scholars and the like, people who recognized and appreciated the same status symbols as they did. In such an environment, they could feel in control and secure. Their persistent criticism of the government showed that they believed their intellectual and academic work was significant to the nation. Whether they were satisfied with the government's performance or not, there was a government run by Chinese that they could criticize, and it had to respond to their criticism and demands, although at times through means they did not welcome. This made their political ideals meaningful. In Beijing, the old hierarchy comfortably dominated under a new mask, and the new systems and modernization projects (including the urban spaces) were, ideally, created for people like them. If they felt like "others" in Shanghai, they claimed a master status in Beijing and looked at the locals as "others." The new intellectuals in Beijing were not flaneurs, or idlers, as was Baudelaire in the eyes of Walter Benjamin. They were not poets of the crowds, they were not even *in* the crowds. The closest they came to the locals were their usually unsuccessful efforts to start a conversation with the rickshaw pullers who transported them around the city, keeping them away from the dust and mud. They were clearly aware of this distance, but it was never a problem of serious concern, except in the failed efforts of communists, such as Deng Zhongxia, to revolutionize them.<sup>35</sup>

They in fact felt so comfortable in Beijing that they claimed it as their hometown (*guxiang*) and considered the locals the "others."<sup>36</sup> But unlike the scholars of old Beijing who considered the city and the values it represented absolute, the new intellectuals always saw Beijing in comparison and relation to other places, even when they were writing about Beijing as their *guxiang*. When they claimed Beijing as their hometown, Shanghai was always silhouetted in the background: Beijing was a *guxiang* because Shanghai could not be. In January 1938, the magazine *China Traveler* (*Luxing zazhi*) published a special issue on the topic of hometown. Some of the essays shed light on the discussion here. Sun Enlin wrote an essay entitled "Where Is My Hometown?" His family lived in Shanghai for several generations, but he did not feel that Shang-

hai, “the largest metropolis in the East with a population of three million,” “the skyscrapers, the city of night with no nights” could be his hometown. He could only consider the Shanghai represented by Nanshi as his hometown. “As Shanghai expands, the hometown in my heart shrinks. What I feel sorrow about is, when other people mention the term *guxiang*, it is always connected with green mountains and blue waters, or some kinds of delicacies, or some precious and unique local products. Except for the greasy, yellow, and dirty Huangpu River, it is difficult to find other elements representing the soul of *guxiang* [in Shanghai].”<sup>37</sup>

Before Christmas, foreigners living in Shanghai always send a lot of Christmas cards back home. A lot of the cards are pictures of life in my hometown: boats with high masts on the Huangpu River, Indian police at intersections, dancing girls in night clubs, street-side barbers, pancake stalls, childhood pictures of men who are already fathers today in short red jackets like monks’ robes, women with two little braids on the top of their heads wearing fashions from our grandmothers’ times, all these are taken as the themes for the cards. But if you ask me to pick a souvenir of my hometown from all these cards, I would find it extremely difficult to do so”<sup>38</sup>

To the new intellectuals, Shanghai was too new, always renewing itself, too cosmopolitan, too industrial, and too foreign to be a *guxiang*, and Beijing, in their imagination, could be a *guxiang* for someone who had not been born there, precisely because its traits were the opposite of Shanghai.

But as they wrote about the quietness of Beihai Park, the new intellectuals could not ignore the fact that the leisurely pace of life in Beijing was associated with the city’s growing poverty. When they claimed Beijing as their *guxiang* and denied Shanghai that status, they could not deny their feeling that *xiangtu* (local culture and customs) and *guxiang* as an ideal, very often utopian, were dead after the May Fourth Movement, as Lu Xun had so profoundly expressed in his essay “Guxiang”: “Then I rationalized the matter to myself, saying: Home was always like this, and although it has not improved, still it is not so depressing as I imagine; it is only my mood that has changed, because I am coming back to the country this time with no illusions.”<sup>39</sup>

Yan Chonglou’s essay “I Do Not Have a Hometown” illustrates this point. Having left his hometown in Shaanxi over ten years ago, on each return visit, he found himself hurrying away after only a few days’ stay.

I am getting farther and farther away from my hometown. As for the customs of my hometown, I think I can call them honest and plain (*chun hou*

*zhi pu*); but people who are honest and plain are unavoidably limited in knowledge; in other words, they lack the new spirit and wisdom to deal with the complicated situation of the present world. The title of my essay is “I Do Not Have a Hometown.” In fact it is impossible not to have a hometown, and it is impossible not to miss a hometown. What I mean is that we cannot hold onto the idea of sticking with the hometown. If a person can enrich himself, even if he leaves his hometown, he can still keep his hometown; if a person does not progress, or even regresses, then he will not be able to protect his hometown even if he stays there all the time.<sup>40</sup>

The reasons Beijing was seen as *guxiang* were exactly those that prevented Shanghai from being *guxiang*. Beijing as *guxiang* was the result of a conscious choice that was contingent on political needs, and places like Shanghai were the reference point in the making of that choice.

The attachment expressed by the new intellectuals to Beijing was not sentiment toward the rural, as Yingjin Zhang has argued.<sup>41</sup> It was instead a political statement of their preference for a certain kind of city. They preferred a city where the spatial and social orders were still dominated, at least superficially, by a central power run by Chinese that could be criticized for problems and exhorted to work more efficiently—a place where the new intellectuals could decide whether to value “traditions” or not, even if those traditions were not their own.

As the intellectuals’ own writings show, Beijing was deemed their *guxiang* not because the city represented absolute values to them, or because of the role its history played in defining the details of their daily lives, but because of a system of national political geography. They did not feel hurt when the city’s history was diminished by the government’s urban development projects; they were only upset when the Japanese army took the city away from China, when it was no longer a place where they could freely come and go and where they could claim master status. Beijing natives recognized modernity coming in the changes in details of their daily lives. They anticipated it and imagined it so that they could deal with it or even resist it by keeping a history for the future. But from the viewpoint of the new intellectuals who came from the south, modernity did not represent such a threat, and Beijing was not disappearing. On the contrary, for them, there was too much of the past in the city. In fact, the intellectuals’ impression of Beijing was almost the opposite of the locals’ in that what the locals considered new was seen by the intellectuals as old. The locals felt that the Beijing of the present was no longer the city they knew, but the intellectuals took this Beijing as the symbol of “the old” for the whole nation. While the locals felt

Beijing to be under threat from modernization, the intellectuals saw the city as stagnant and asleep, not even awakened by the invasion of the Japanese, which to them was the real threat to Beijing. The Japanese army was seen as the force eradicating a place that represented the “old” for China, for Shanghai. It was only when Beijing as a symbol of national tradition was thus threatened that the new intellectuals became nostalgic about the city. But this nostalgia was not personal. Beijing to them was more a geographical concept. In contrast to the old-style scholars, who looked at Beijing from the inside, seeing it as a place and culture in itself, the new intellectuals always looked at the city from the outside, as a geographical part of, and symbol for, the nation.

A view of Beijing in a national context is the feature that marks all three stages of the new intellectuals’ relationship to Beijing. Beijing was a location in the nation that they could visit but could also leave. Yet even when they left, they could still claim it as theirs because it was part of the nation. This contrasts dramatically with the old-style Beijing scholars, for whom there could be no Beijing once they were parted from the place. Beijing for them was not just imperial architecture or enjoyable parks, it was a lifestyle; it existed in the life that went on there every day. Interestingly, it was only in the shadow of Japanese invasion that the new intellectuals began representing Beijing, not primarily as a collection of landscapes or historic sites, but as a city created and inhabited by *Beijing ren* (Beijing person or Beijing people). They began identifying with Beijing, abandoning their scholarly detachment and alienation from Beijing’s specific local culture and daily life, but only at the moment when they saw Beijing as the nation’s cultural and historical capital under imminent threat of invasion. Ironically, only when Beijing came to serve as a symbol for the nation under foreign threat did the new intellectuals personally identify with its local specificity.

#### “THEIR BEIJING”

Not all intellectuals’ works concentrated on parks empty of Beijing’s locals. Around 1924 and 1925, when the long decline of the imperial system was sharply ended by Emperor Puyi’s final exit from the Forbidden City, a folklorist movement (*minsu xue yundong*) began to gather force. Because the center of the movement was in Beijing, the city became an important site for folklorist studies, which in turn added another dimension to Beijing’s literary representation.

A conscious folklorist movement in China took shape in the early years of the Republic. The Chinese word for folklore, *fengsu*, was first crafted by Zhou Zuoren in 1913, taken from Chinese history.<sup>42</sup> Lu Xun and Zhou Zuoren began to be interested in ballads and legends and to work on them when they were studying in Japan. Lu Xun was the first to advocate the formation of organizations to study folklore: “We should set up a National Culture (*guo min wen shu*) Institute to collect and study ballads, local dialects, legends, and tales, to understand their significance, to recognize their nature, and to develop them to help education.”<sup>43</sup> In 1918, a Folksong Collection Society was established at Beijing University, borrowing the institutional power of the national university. Two eminent scholars of the May Fourth period and professors at Beijing University, Liu Bannong and Shen Yinmo, initiated the movement. When they presented their proposal to Cai Yuanpei, the president of Beijing University, Cai requested that five thousand copies of it be made and sent to provincial governments and schools all over the country. In 1920, the organization was expanded into an Association for Ballad Studies (*Geyao yanjiu hui*). Two years later, it began to be affiliated with the program of “national studies” (*guo xue*) at Beijing University and began publishing the journal *Ballads Weekly* (*Geyao zhouskan*). The organization lasted until November 1927. In May 1923, an Association of Local Customs Studies (*Fengsu diaocha hui*) was established that was also part of the National Studies Program in the Research Institute at Beijing University. Its members created a form to be used in surveys (*fengsu diaocha biao*) that was published in *Chenbao* and *Dongfang zazhi*. In 1935, the Institute of Humanities at Beijing University decided to reconstitute the association. The following year, its name was changed to the Association of Local Customs and Ballads Studies (*Feng-yao xuehui*), and it lasted until 1937. In addition to the above organizations, an organization studying local dialects (*Fangyan diaocha hui*) was also established in 1924.<sup>44</sup>

Most of the work related to Beijing was done by the Association of Local Customs Studies in the second half of the 1920s. In 1924, studies of Beijing’s local customs became fashionable. Yang Derui recorded old-fashioned wedding ceremonies in Beijing in *Ballads Weekly*. In 1925, even more studies appeared. A special issue of *Ballads Weekly* was published devoted to pilgrimage to the Miaofeng Mountain. Rong Zhaozu studied the “mentality of the pilgrims at the Miaofeng Mountain.” Gu Jiegang, in his preface to the special issue, argued that local customs

were not worthless and low-class material; on the contrary, they should be studied through systematic research.<sup>45</sup> Later, Gu also wrote a preface for the *Miscellaneous Accounts of Miaofeng Mountain* by Feng Kuan, a Manchu banner man.

Had we not done this survey, when this activity dies out in the future, what could we do to let people know about it? ... Our work rescued (*qiang dao*) from oblivion some facts about pilgrimage to the Miaofeng Mountain and preserved a picture of the past two hundred years. When people criticize our special issue on the Miaofeng Mountain, I always respond to their criticisms by saying, "This is the only book about it that exists. It is not about the quality of the editing, but about the existence or non-existence of material!" ... In mid-May this year, Jiangong and I went to the Miaofeng Mountain again. There were very few pilgrims there, far less than that year [1924 or 1925]. This custom, maybe because of the difficult conditions of life, or because of popular enlightenment, will disappear very soon. We need to pay attention to this dying fire immediately.<sup>46</sup>

While Gu Jiegang stressed the importance of Beijing local customs as proper subjects of scholarly studies out of concern for their imminent disappearance, other intellectuals appealed for the preservation of these traditions. In his preface to the special issue of *Folklore* on the Number Two Dam (Er zha) and the Princess Tomb (Gongzhu fen), the famous playwright and critic Jiao Juyin voiced his concerns over the destruction of historical sites. The government was not doing enough, and people did not care enough to preserve them—they were the ones who were in fact dismantling them. "One day they sell to the 'foreign masters' a Buddha statue for them to ship to a museum in another country, another day they cart a pillar from a great hall away for cooking fuel at home." Jiao suggested that a committee organized by the public should take charge of the issue, repair the sites, and "clear up and record (*zhengli*) their history."<sup>47</sup> This indicates a perspective that separated these researchers from the people they studied. Preservation, in their view, had to come from outside forces—the state and/or the elites like themselves, not the people.

An important objective of the folklorist movement was to draw inspiration from folk arts for the vernacular language movement. Li Jiarui's work best represented this effort. His *Beiping suqu lue* (Folk songs in Beiping) and *Beiping fengsu lei zheng* (A catalogue of Beijing local customs) established him as a leading scholar of Chinese folklore.<sup>48</sup> His efforts at collection included thirteen categories: seasonal festivals, marriages and funerals, professions, food, clothes, containers and tools, language, customs, feasts, entertainment, markets, temples



Figure 2.5. Pilgrims watching temple society members performing a flagpole balancing show called *zhongfan hui* beside the stupa-style pagoda on Miaofeng Mountain. Photo by Hedda Morrison; courtesy of the Harvard-Yenching Library.

and taboos, and miscellaneous. Although the encyclopedic completeness of his collections was very similar to that of the scholars' collections discussed in the last chapter, there was an important difference. While the collections of miscellaneous information on old Beijing discussed in the last chapter presented the local customs and practices as experience, Li's information all came from old books from the Liao to the Qing dynasties. Unlike Qu Xuanying and Zhang Cixi, who reprinted old books in their entirety, Li Jiarui studied the old books and recompiled them according to categories he established himself. When stating his motivation for compiling the volumes, Li argued, "People did not pay much attention to books recording local customs before. As a result, even books published in the Kangxi reign are hard to find now. But this kind of book will be very important in the future. It is necessary to compile an encyclopedia in order to preserve this information."<sup>49</sup>

The work of the folklorists might appear similar to that of the scholars of old Beijing, but their actions were in fact different. The old schol-

ars were aware that what they were collecting were fragments, but they tried to locate them and thus preserve them in everyday practices. To them, history was found in mundane details. The new intellectuals, on the other hand, believed in “systematic rescuing and preservation.” Some of them tried to pick up some elements from folk arts and life to serve the goals of the vernacular language movement. In short, unlike the scholars and collectors of old Beijing, who kept the past alive at the center of the stage, the new intellectuals were trying to fit the folk literature into their new ideological regime. Sun Fuyuan, in his essay “Chao shan ji suo” (Miscellaneous accounts of the Maofeng Mountain Pilgrimage), recounted his sudden discovery of his relationship to the local people. In a way it is an accurate description of the new intellectuals’ relationship to the city and its people whom they studied. Sun often saw people carrying interesting objects in their baskets during a certain time of the year—eight little flags, each with a small bell—but he could not understand what the items were for and what these people were doing. From his vantage point, that of “the knowledgeable and cosmopolitan,” he “often thought that they were people from ‘another world,’ and never thought of asking them [about it]. People from the Jiang-Zhe region, in particular, would not understand what these items were for. But once one gets to the Miaofeng Mountain, one feels ashamed and realizes that we are the people from another world, this world totally belongs to them.”<sup>50</sup> Sun’s reflections, although intended as self-criticism, indicates that there was a Beijing that was, after all, the local people’s Beijing, and that the new intellectuals were not able to grasp it easily. As Laurence Schneider argues in his *Ku Chieh-kang and China’s New History*, the purpose of the folklorist movement was, in “the educationalist mentality,” to learn about people in order to enlighten them.<sup>51</sup> The movement demonstrated these intellectuals’ desire to distance themselves from what they called “aristocratic culture,” such as the literary canons of the past. They studied folk literature and culture, not to see their value in themselves, but to enlist them in the enlightenment project and enliven the new literature. This constitutes the most fundamental difference between the folklorists and the scholars discussed in the last chapter.

#### LAO SHE’S BEIJING

The various representations of Beijing discussed above were integrated in fiction, in particular by Lao She, whose work significantly contributed

to the formation of a stable image of Beijing and *Beijing ren*. His novels created some of the best-known fictional residents of Beijing, with the city itself playing a central role in the development of his plots and the fates of his characters. Through his depictions of how Beijing's local customs and lifestyles came into often abrasive contact with new challenges facing the whole country, Lao She's fiction also played a crucial role in making connections between Beijing's local culture and national issues.

Lao She was rhapsodic about his love of Beijing and about the important place the city held in his literary imagination. In 1933, when he felt that two of his novels, *The Daming Lake* and *Cat City*, had "failed," he decided to "return to humor" and "seek help from Beiping."

Beiping is my hometown; hundreds of feet of "panoramic views of the old capital" appear in my mind every time I think of the word. Alas! A "person" immediately appears when I see Beiping. I don't know him, but I almost saw him every day when I was twenty to twenty-five years old [1920–25]. I always admire his manner and clothes, and I find small changes in him every moment: one day he carries a refined cane, another day he rides a bike along the side of the road, so balanced, he never runs into a pedestrian, but neither will he ever reach his destination. He is too well-balanced, so well-balanced that everything seems like a display of taste (*quwei*) for life. I cannot let him go.<sup>52</sup>

This paragraph conveys three of the most important elements in Lao She's representation of Beijing: the city as the stage and setting of his stories; a certain type of character, *Beijing ren*, who is an integral part of the city; and humor, the attitude Lao She adopted to examine the city and its people.

Lao She began publishing literary work in the late 1920s and reached the peak of his career in the 1930s. Among his novels and short stories during these decades, the most important ones set in Beijing include *Lao Zhang's Philosophy* (1926), *Zhao Ziyue* (1927), "Divorce" (1933), "An Old Shop" (1935), *Camel Xiangzi* (1936), and "My Whole Life" (1937). These stories, especially those written in the 1930s, are undeniably endowed with a specific "Beijing flavor" evoked through his descriptions of the city's landscape, local customs, and the manners of the characters and his use of local language. In a sense he took the motionless, frozen world captured by the collectors of the miscellaneous "old Beijing" in the reprints, meticulous spatial histories, and encyclopedias of local customs and brought it to life by inserting living characters into it.

Lao She, like Chen Zongfan and Yu Qichang, was very familiar with Beijing's spatial history and local customs: "I was born in Beiping and

am familiar with the people, events, views, smells, and the calls of the peddlers selling sweet-sour plum juice and almond tea. When I close my eyes, my Beiping appears in my mind with completeness, like a painting with vivid colors. I have the courage to describe it. It is a clear stream, I can pick up a lively fish every time I reach my hand in it.”<sup>53</sup> More than two hundred real names of places in Beijing appear in his fiction,<sup>54</sup> making it clear that he was not writing about an imaginary place. Lao She’s characters live in *siheyuans* in the *hutongs*. At night, they can hear the bell on the Bell Tower (*Zhao Ziyue*); during the day, they can hear the passing streetcars (“Divorce”). The singing of snack peddlers penetrates the quietness of their deep and narrow alleyways (*Zhao Ziyue*). Major landmarks of the city—the decorative arches at Dongsi, Xisi, Dongdan, and Xidan, the Jin’ao Yudong Bridge at Beihai, Jishuitan, Beihai, Central Park—serve as points of orientation in Lao She’s stories just as they did in the actual city, and his characters meet and wander through these sites. Numerous shops and restaurants appear in his fiction under their actual names. In the story “Divorce,” on a weekend, Mr. Li and his family go on a shopping spree at the Dongan Market. Later, when visiting Longfu Temple, Mr. Li runs into the woman he fantasized about during that spree. For entertainment, characters listen to Beijing opera at theaters or sing the tunes at home. For someone like Xiangzi, Tianqiao is the best place for recreation. While Chen Zongfan drew a map of Beijing through his detailed descriptions, Lao She made the map three-dimensional by letting his characters live there.

Many of Lao She’s characters also practice the local customs described by Jin Shoushen, Qi Rushan, and others. His women wear robes in the winter, and his men don a special style of cotton shirt in the summer. They paste their windows with a particular type of thick paper in the winter and use screens during the summer. They know how to make the best dumplings with lamb filling, and their children enjoy candied crabapples. Lord Rabbit (*Tu’er ye*) is an indispensable gift for every child in Beijing during the Mid-Autumn Festival, no matter how poor a family is. Sour soybean milk that might smell foul to a non-native is a treat to a true *Beijing ren*. Most important, the right food has to be served at the right time of the year; the pomegranate tree in the courtyard has to be accompanied by a goldfish cistern; and one will gain face if one cultivates good lotus flowers. Lao She’s characters know how to greet relatives in the right manner, following a complex set of rules, and employ a distinctive Beijing vocabulary. Doing the right things at the right times—Lao She portrays this as the essence of life in Beijing. His characters are

the bearers of the kind of knowledge “the collectors” tried to preserve, but they embody it as if playing a musical score in perfect pitch and with the proper, living, emotional rhythm. They are the living bearers and inheritors of the knowledge compiled by the collectors.

But in Lao She’s fiction, when the knowledge and its bearers are united, their world falls apart. All the items that the collectors enumerated can be found in Lao She’s work, but unlike the Beijing of the encyclopedias of spatial history and local culture, which appear to be self-contained and complete, the Beijing of Lao She’s fiction is neither stable nor whole. There are conflicts in his fiction, and his beguiling *Beijing ren* encounter misfortunes, often exactly because they are such perfect *Beijing ren*. This is most clearly reflected in his works from the 1930s, especially “Divorce” (1933), “An Old Shop” (1935), *Camel Xiangzi* (1936), and “My Whole Life” (1937). These stories have a new kind of heaviness that is closely tied to the history and fate of the city itself.

“Divorce” centers on the life of a group of clerks. Elder Brother Zhang behaves like “everyone’s elder brother.” He enjoys matchmaking and helping others work out their family problems. Lao She depicts him as a typical and perfect *Beijing ren*: he lives a well-balanced life, neither falling behind anything nor too aggressive; he is always busy but never does anything extreme. Misfortune, however, falls upon the head of this well-balanced man who has never offended anybody. Zhang’s son is suspected of being a communist and is thrown in jail. Zhang loses his job, his house, and almost his daughter in order to save his son.

All of Zhang’s colleagues and people whom he has helped begin to distance themselves from him, except one colleague, Li. Li is from the countryside. Although he is full of new ideals and dreams of a poetic life, he is unschooled in urban ways and becomes the object of mockery and trickery by some of his colleagues. Under pressure from his colleagues and on advice from Zhang, Li brings his spouse and their children to Beijing, although his country wife inspires no passion in him. This only makes him more frustrated. Li fights two battles at the same time, one in his domestic life and the other in his social life. For a while, he tries to look at life from Zhang’s perspective, vaguely believing that he can enjoy life just as Zhang does. But he only finds that his country wife is changing into a vulgar city dweller, a *xiao shimin*. Li is just as disappointed in his social life. When Zhang’s son and daughter are eventually saved by Li’s efforts, Zhang recovers his position in the office, and everyone goes to his house to congratulate him. Everything returns to normality. Life goes on as usual, and Beijing becomes the

same Beijing as at the beginning of the novel. Li now realizes that Zhang only helps society to perpetuate itself, making people want to continue to live in it. The story ends with Li's moving back to the countryside with his family.

*Camel Xiangzi*, which has long been considered one of the highest achievements in the history of modern Chinese literature, was first published as a series twice a month in the magazine *Yuzhou feng* (Wind of the universe) in Shanghai from September 1936 to May 1937. Xiangzi, the hero of the novel, comes to Beijing from the countryside when he is eighteen years old, having lost his parents and their small plot of land. He is strong and ambitious and wants to live a good life in the city by relying on his own hard work. After saving ten cents every day for three years, he is able to buy a rickshaw. But bad luck strikes just when life is beginning to look more promising. Xiangzi is captured with his rickshaw by some warlord soldiers while he is carrying a customer to the western suburbs. He manages to escape, taking three of the army's camels with him. He sells the camels for thirty-five *yuan* and runs back to the city. People say that Xiangzi took soldiers' camels and got rich, so they begin to call him Camel Xiangzi.

Xiangzi deposits his money with Mr. Liu, the owner of a rickshaw shop, and resumes his upward climb, but again fate strikes, this time from a different direction. Liu's daughter, nicknamed Tigress (*Hu niu'er*), likes Xiangzi and tricks him into marrying her by pretending to be pregnant with Xiangzi's baby. Her father, furious, refuses to return Xiangzi's money. Then Xiangzi starts to save up some money by working for a Mr. Cao, but soon Cao is falsely suspected of being a communist and is forced into hiding. The corrupt police, unable to find Cao, fleece Xiangzi of all his savings for yet a third time. One misfortune follows another. Tigress eventually does become pregnant but then dies giving birth. When the woman Xiangzi loved is sold into a brothel and commits suicide, Xiangzi's last hope in life is finally extinguished. He becomes so weak both physically and mentally that he can no longer pull a rickshaw. He is no longer the proud young man who, though poor, had confidence in himself and hope in life. He loses his integrity, his abstinence, and his pluck. He betrays friends to the police for money; he stands in funeral processions holding ceremonial banners to earn some small change. When people scold him, it is as if he cannot hear them. His eyes are fixed on the ground, not out of shame, but because he is looking for cigarette butts.

The main character in “My Whole Life” begins the story as a perfect *Beijing ren*. He becomes an apprentice in the paper crafting business at the age of fifteen. Paper crafting is a very important profession in Beijing in the Qing. For weddings and funerals craftsmen make paper replicas of any item customers order, from food, money, flowers, and plants to furniture, sedan chairs, carts, and houses. Three years of apprenticeship not only make him into a capable paper craftsman but also teach him how to deal with people and temper him into a man of patience. He acquires the ability to withstand suffering that many a soldier does not have. He is a popular young man among his friends and relatives, and, in his own words, he is “sophisticated.” “My braid was black and long, and my shaved forehead shone. When I put on a satin vest with fur collar, I really ‘looked like somebody!’”<sup>55</sup> But neither his craftsmanship, nor his patience, nor his sophistication save him from his fate. His wife runs away with a fellow apprentice, and this event changes his life. He becomes a policeman, a profession reserved for Beijing’s poorest men at the time, because he can no longer stand seeing anyone in the paper craft profession. He mobilizes all his ability and sophistication but cannot keep up with the changes: the end of the Qing dynasty, the establishment of the Republic, the comings and goings of warlords, and the Nationalists’ rise to power. When he is fifty, his son dies, he loses his job, and he has to take care of his baby grandson. After a lifetime of struggle, he has come full circle.

These are sad stories that lead inevitably to the question “What caused these people’s worlds to fall apart?” Lao She does not blame his characters themselves. It is commonly agreed that Lao She does not judge these “typical *Beijing ren*” harshly but instead approaches them with a humor that combined satire, sympathy, understanding, and forgiveness. In relation to this culture, Lao She is an insider who knows how to appreciate its people. All are the best the city could produce, and all, just yesterday, thrived in this city into which they fit perfectly. Moreover, unlike the decadent Manchu descendants criticized by the sociologists, Lao She’s characters all work extremely hard. Lao She cannot and does not condemn them, yet they live the lives of the condemned. Is it Beijing culture that destroys them? It does not appear so. The city is lovely in Lao She’s stories, and he takes every possible opportunity to describe its beautiful views, attractive markets, and details of the small rituals of daily life and of colorful festivals. In Lao She’s works, Beijing is in every sense a city full of charm.

This painful discrepancy between the love and obsession that Lao She expresses in his portrayals of the city and the unfortunate fates of the perfect characters it produces marks all of his stories of this period. The characters are created by and tied to the city, but a misfit somehow occurs between the two. The characters are ultimately unable to survive in the city that shaped them. The city they used to feel so comfortable in becomes almost a trap from which they cannot escape. What they learned earlier in their lives becomes useless. Their struggles always prove futile. Some higher power wants to destroy them. But Lao She never clearly identifies this power and never gives a reason that would explain his characters' misery. In *Camel Xiangzi*, when the "Tigress" is dying, Lao She writes, "Ignorance and brutality are the phenomena here, but there are reasons for the ignorance and brutality,"<sup>56</sup> yet he never clearly points out what those reasons are. There is nothing wrong with the *Beijing ren*; all their shortcomings are also what make them lovable. But they simply cannot survive any more. Lovely city, perfect people, but for some reason their world is falling apart.

Lao She's reluctance to explain the reasons for *Beijing ren*'s fate is accompanied by a sense of "inexpressibility" in his love toward the city. While all the other writers thought they knew what Beijing was about, knew what they loved about the city, Lao She said he did not know.

If someone asks me to write a novel, using Beiping as the background, I will not be afraid, because I can choose to write about what I know and try to avoid what I do not know. But if someone asks me to just write about Beiping abstractly, I don't know how to do it. Beiping is so huge, there are so many things about it, I really know so little. Although I was born there, and lived there until I was twenty-seven...the tiny bit I know is only "my Beiping," and my Beiping is only like one hair on a whole cow....But I really love Beiping....I can never express my love, a kind of love that is inspired by music and paintings.<sup>57</sup>

Lao She stated that loving Beiping resembled loving one's mother, something that "language is insufficient to express." "It is easy to praise a certain point about this city, but that trivializes Beiping. The Beiping I love is not some branches and twigs and the like, but a whole history that is attached to my heart and soul, a huge place....[I]n every small event there is a me, and in every one of my thoughts there is a Beiping; this can only be inexpressible."<sup>58</sup>

Lao She had two Beijings: the one he knew by experience and the one that was bigger and beyond his own experience. He wrote easily about the Beijing of experience but was unable to write about the bigger Bei-

jing: it required abstraction, which he felt himself unable to achieve. The result, in his view, was that he wrote only about the trivialized Beijing, leaving the “whole” Beijing hidden and inexpressible. What made abstraction so difficult? To abstract something is to come up with a structure, a theory for it; that possibility, for Lao She, was gone, as, in a sense, was the Beijing that needed a structure and theory to be represented. Beijing had become segmented, fragmented. Each segment only existed in individual experiences. Lao She could not write about all of the many different Beijings; as Zhao Yuan insightfully commented, “Beijing rejects abstraction, it can only live in the vivacious sensations of individuals.”<sup>59</sup>

Two paragraphs at the end of *Camel Xiangzi* clearly summarize Lao She’s view of changes in Beijing and are worth quoting at length:

After Beiping was crowned “the old capital,” its ostentation and extravagance, its craftsmanship, food, language, and policemen... have all gradually permeated outwards, spreading to people and places that enjoy the same majesty and wealth as the sons of heaven. The Westernized Qingdao also has Beijing-style lamb cooked in a chafing pot; the bustling Tianjin can also hear the peddlers’ low, sad call of “hard dough cakes.” In Shanghai, in Hankou, in Nanjing, there are policemen and servants for officials who speak a Beijing dialect and eat pancake with sesame paste. Jasmine tea travels from the south to the north, then goes south again after a double smoking. Even Beijing’s pall bearers sometimes take the train to Tianjin or Nanjing to carry the coffins of high officials or the wealthy.

But Beiping itself is slowly losing its original ostentation and extravagance. One can still buy flower cakes at bakeries after September 9; sellers of *tangyuan* (sticky rice ball) may begin to appear in the market in the autumn. Shops two or three hundred years old suddenly think of holding anniversary celebrations, so that they can use the occasion to spread handbills advertising big sales.... Economic pressures are forcing ostentation and extravagance to look for alternative outlets; respectability cannot substitute as food.<sup>60</sup>

Lao She did not blame *Beijing ren* for the problems; he did not ever locate a culprit. But, if, as discussed above, part of the essence of *Beijing ren* was an appreciation of doing the right thing at the right time, then the shift to a new economic temporal order meant, not that all practices disappeared, or even stagnated, but that the new order made appreciation of “the right thing at the right time” meaningless. Because of economic decline and loss of stable customers, Beijing was losing extravagance, and shops were thus forced to create new occasions and new markets. What was a living part of the past became commodified tradition, and “respectability” was conquered by the logic of the market.

Lao She's contemporaries recognized his unwillingness to reach a final verdict and criticized him for not expressing any hope. It was only in the 1940s that Lao She's stories were reinterpreted as expressions of the hopelessness of the old society and the need for a new one. It was pointed out that Lao She had failed to give a clear reason for Xiangzi's fall.<sup>61</sup> His humor was criticized because it could not contribute to the cause whose aims were to "save the world, save the nation, and save literature."<sup>62</sup>

Lao She's forgiving attitude toward *Beijing ren* in his stories also left him vulnerable to criticism as an "orientalist." The translation of Lao She's *Camel Xiangzi* into English under the title *Rickshaw* worried some Chinese. Xu Jie observed that after the translation of *Camel Xiangzi* into English, Lao She's works won international acclaim and especially praise from Americans. But business motivated Americans' praise of the book to some extent, which was partly because of the nature of the book itself. Xu told the story of an overseas Chinese photographer who flew back to Beijing to make a film of *Camel Xiangzi*. The photographer was disappointed to find that rickshaws had been largely replaced by three-wheel carts.

Chinese society can, unexpectedly, progress, and the prosperous view of rickshaws of Xiangzi's times could become history; how can this not make the "high noses" [Westerners] who want to learn about the Chinese situation a bit disappointed? China is always a myth, and a backward nation. In the minds of the "high noses," what they have always known and they have always been interested in is a pigtail on the head, women's bound feet, and eating mice meat.... otherwise, it is the rickshaw under which a man is ridden like a horse. In recent years, maybe their attitude toward Chinese culture has changed, but not much. They now know that China is poor and chaotic—that there are constant civil wars—and that is about it. There are many kind-hearted old ladies and good citizens who are concerned about China, and they are eager to learn a bit more, but they cannot find good sources of information. Lin Yutang's fortune not only does no good for Chinese culture, it does not help the "high noses" who want to learn about the real situation in China. At this moment, *Camel Xiangzi* appeared. It was written by a first-class Chinese writer; it not only describes wars, dark politics, the lives of people at the bottom of society, but also depicts rickshaws and rickshaw pullers. Is this not really discovering the real China? Who can deny that the Americans with a commercial perspective have a point?<sup>63</sup>

The author then quoted Lu Xun's essay "Dengxia manbi":

Those foreigners who praise [Chinese culture] out of ignorance are forgivable; those who occupy a high position in society, and forget their consciences, and praise it because they are fooled are also forgivable. But there are two more kinds: one kind praises old Chinese things because they think

that Chinese are an inferior species that only deserves to stay the old way; another kind hopes the world will stay different so that it will make traveling more interesting: to see the queue in China, wooden shoes in Japan, and *kat* [a special kind of hat] in Korea. It would be boring if everyone in the world wore the same thing, and they oppose the Europeanization of Asia for this reason. These are all loathsome. As for Russell's praising the Chinese when he saw the smiles of rickshaw pullers at West Lake, there probably are some other meanings. But if the pullers could stop smiling at those who sit in the rickshaw, then China would not have been today's China long time ago.... This civilization not only intoxicates foreigners, it has also been intoxicating the Chinese so much that they keep smiling.<sup>64</sup>

The author further commented that the business perspective of Americans in the film industry focused on sex and the exotic lives and costumes of differently colored races. It was considered best not to touch upon social, racial, or national problems or to have a white male hero or an imperialist ruling power suppress these problems. "Although there are some social movements and some incompetent or faked socialists in *Camel Xiangzi*, none of them....have any critical edge. Quite the opposite, there is Tigress, there is sex, and this is probably the reason why the 'high noses' like it. I am truly worried!"<sup>65</sup>

Whether it was Lao She's intention or not, the characters in his stories began to be interpreted as the image of every *Beijing ren*: he was nonaggressive, righteous, and calculating and sophisticated in his own way; he cared about face and was diligent but not ambitious; he could claim no great achievements, but he did nothing terribly bad either. He was a man who cared about the enjoyment of life, not the tussle of politics, so he was not part of any of the rebellions or revolutions.<sup>66</sup> Collectively, *Beijing ren* represented "culture"; they were depicted as people whose central concern in life remained the same no matter what regime was in power.

Lao She shared not only the old Beijing scholars' obsessive love of the city but also the new intellectuals' sense of Beijing's lack of a future. The result was what he gave us in his stories: strong love of Beijing, deep sympathy toward his characters, but no answer to the question of why such kind people living in such a lovely city should have such miserable lives. What distinguished Lao She from other writers was not his portrayal of Beijing's local culture but his interpretations of and comments on the city and its culture through the fate of his characters, which required a national perspective on Beijing's local culture. Lao She's fiction contributed tremendously to the integration of representations of Beijing by different groups, as well as the stabilization of the image of Beijing and *Beijing ren*.

The gulf between the Beijing that could be written about and the inexpressible Beijing was at the same time the severed tie between everyday practices and the system that produced and supported them. Lao She could not find a structure to fully convey his love of Beijing; that structure had been replaced by something else, something that threatened to destroy *Beijing ren*.

The fate of the characters in Lao She's stories throws into question the values that distinguished the city he loved, although he avoided directly confronting the question. In contrast to the new intellectuals discussed in the earlier part of this chapter, Lao She viewed the city from among the teeming crowds of "folk" in the streets and Tianqiao. But unlike the compilers of the encyclopedias, for whom the disappearance and decline of this culture were represented only in frozen timelessness, Lao She let this culture play out vividly in the immediate present of his characters' experiences. As if using two sets of principles to look at the world, Lao She explained, "On the one hand I savor the world with my feelings, on the other hand I restrain my feelings and try not to judge the world by my feelings."<sup>67</sup> And, as for *Beijing ren*, he would "laugh at them but not press them into a corner."<sup>68</sup> He recognized that this culture was under threat, but he was unwilling to deny its values. Between the best of this culture and the new challenges it faced was a wide gap that also separated the Lao She who had a national perspective akin to those of the new intellectuals and the Lao She who had a deep love for the city.

Perhaps it was not entirely true that Lao She could not "abstract" beyond particular experiences, but what would abstraction have cost in terms of violence to his characters? None of the prevalent frameworks of understanding modern society, such as capitalism or national citizenship—frameworks that undoubtedly were of growing importance in these characters' lives—did justice to their personalities or practices, yet the framework of the collectors of old Beijing could not encompass these characters' daily social struggles. To abstract and attempt to present Beijing as a whole, Lao She would have had to reduce his fiction to a sort of taxidermy of a life that was still vibrant and that he identified with and loved. Perhaps the concepts of metaphor and metonym could be deployed to describe this refusal. The old-style collectors, of course, refused abstraction as well, but through their obsession with encyclopedic completeness they performed a covert act of abstraction, transforming Beijing, which had long served as the metonymic quintessence of imperial China, into a metaphor for the past. The cost of imagining that they could preserve a complete Beijing was that they served it up as a

dead entity, both severed from any connections to the urgent social concerns of the living present and historically decontextualized. Lao She refused to make Beijing a waxworks metaphor of “history.” Instead, he constantly made his readers aware that a crisis permeated this grand city, and he never claimed or aimed to capture it *in toto*. He thereby constructed Beijing as a metonym, one that was linked, not to some visible system, but to the “inexpressible.”

Nor was Lao She’s Beijing metonymic in the way it was at times for the new intellectuals, sociologists, and the like. For them, Beijing was a symptom of the larger national and social disease of traditional decadence and hidebound backwardness, just one illustration of an oppressive tradition that held back the vast country of China. In their analysis, the imperial way of life that had formerly animated Beijing was now a ponderous weight holding back the city and its residents. From their perspective, the city required a thorough economic, political, and cultural renovation in order to free itself from the vast, suffocating system that still dominated most of the country and to develop a modern economy and new types of interactions and attitudes. Of course, most of the new intellectuals were highly critical of the modern system as well and believed that only a completely new society headed by a strong state could perform this integration into a new system and protect Beijing’s people from modern exploitation and class violence. Still, in the new intellectuals’ view, Beijing’s promise never lay in the culture of its people; it lay only in a future measured by a different set of values. The Beijing they appreciated was, as already stated, never that of *Beijing ren*.

As Lao She admitted himself in “How I Wrote Zhao Ziyue,” he was not part of the May Fourth generation. “May Fourth separated me from students. I saw the May Fourth Movement, but I was not in it, I was already working by then. Though I have hardly ever worked outside the field of education, I remained, after all, only an onlooker of this big movement; an audience can never really understand the performers.”<sup>69</sup> Lao She was never a destroyer of the culture that was considered by the new intellectuals as passé. Unlike the avant-garde writers of the May Fourth Movement, he could not totally condemn this culture and the people it produced, and if abstraction meant producing a larger social analysis that resulted in such a condemnation, he would instead allow his representations to be metonyms for the “inexpressible,” thereby preserving and celebrating that culture and its people.



# Conclusion

Republican Beijing, despite its imperial structures, was definitively a modern city, especially if modernity is understood, as discussed earlier in the introduction, to be a condition of existence structured by large-scale capitalist industrial production in an integrated world characterized by bureaucratic nation-states and a people's consciousness of and actions to define their position in this integrated world. Beijing underwent fundamental transformations in the early twentieth century in its political system, social structure, economic life, spatial organization, and cultural image. Many aspects of the city that would be considered old by the end of the twentieth century were in fact new phenomena in the Republican period. The new Republic, although not strong enough to unify the country and govern effectively in every realm, nonetheless released some forces that had been suppressed before; its weakness might even have assisted the growth of such forces. It is important to recognize, however, that none of the projects imposed from above were effective in mobilizing a popular concept of modern citizenship in Beijing. Indeed, the opposite was true. In either material or social/cultural ways, all the modernization projects were challenged and modified by specific historical conditions and resistance in various forms. This process of challenge and negotiation among different forces, the very source of energy for Republican Beijing, often converged on the issue of how to treat the city's past. The different opinions and actions toward the city's past sometimes complemented but very often conflicted with

each other, as was expressed in the city's spatial transformation, material life, residents' behavior, and residents' construction of memories of the city's past. The dynamics among these forces kept the past, intentionally or not, at center stage in Republican Beijing.

Modernization projects and the mentalities associated with them in the twentieth century had a great impact on Republican Beijing, as they did on most other urban centers around the world. Beijing's imperial past embodied in its spatial layout became a material barrier and thus the object of modernization projects that focused on upgrading the city's infrastructure. Sources of power for the imperial state—for instance, the city walls and the spatial logic inscribed by them—were now hindrances to the new regime. During this time, the old hierarchies and walls of the imperial capital were steadily dismantled, while new principles of urban planning and social organization became important. In the social realm, the majority of the city's population and their way of life seemed, in the eyes of the government and the sociologists, backward and unsuited to the role of citizens of the new Republic. While the government developed new institutions, such as public parks, exhibition halls, and prisons, to shape the city's residents into new citizens, the sociologists desired new forms of social organization, and their criticisms of the public's weak sense of citizenship led them to demand a stronger state capable of carrying out the modernization projects faster and more thoroughly.

The pre-1928 government focused its effort on removing the remaining imperial obstacles; the Nationalist government, while continuing infrastructure construction, took a different approach to the imperial relics, paying more attention to mining the usefulness of their symbolic meanings for contemporary political purposes, in what essentially amounted to "invention of tradition," a set of historical projects closely identified with the rise of modern urbanism. Invented traditions were modern mechanisms of social mobilization cloaked in historical myth. They organized contemporary social antagonisms (national, ethnic, class) with a zeal that claimed to originate from a primordial prehistoric identity. But in fact they replaced past social structures; they were confirmations that the past was defunct. Beijing was fully participating in a trend that was spreading throughout the world at the time: namely, through the selective mobilization of the past, to reconcile the inherent contradiction between nationalism and tradition by creating a myth of the new birth of an old nation.

This invention of tradition did not stop at the level of rhetoric of the nation-state and erection of national monuments. It trickled down to

businesses such as the antique trade and tourism, both of which relied on highlighting a specific version of linear history that essentialized a culture into items taken out of their contexts and comprehensible at a glance on a superficial level. These two businesses targeted the same customers, very often Westerners and Japanese. Invention of tradition and the commercial activities associated with it were thus a transnational process that played a crucial role in creating an image of a traditional city for Beijing. In other words, part of the very process of modernization purposely created “tradition.” Beijing’s incomparable imperial spaces, which had formerly been defined precisely by being forbidden to the public, were refurbished and packaged for public consumption in order to instill national and urban pride. It is important to recognize, however, that although imperial grounds could be transformed into tourist attractions, they could not become sites for infusing mass politics with nationalist sentiment because the past they represented did not seem conclusively left behind. When Yuan Shikai declared himself emperor in 1916, his performance of ritual ceremonies at the Temple of Heaven and the Confucius Temple aroused serious concerns; and as late as 1926, Zhang Zuolin “marked his tenure in office with sacrifices to Confucius and other gestures hinting at imperial ambitions.”<sup>1</sup> The Nationalists’ rejection of Beijing as a capital was tantamount to seeing it as haunted, and Chiang Kai-shek would never have been able to promote Republican sentiments had he lived in Zhongnanhai, the luxury garden residence in the Forbidden City. Zhongnanhai was then ideally for tourists who wished to masquerade in imperial trappings, not for the Republican Generalissimo. Only in 1949, when Mao Zedong announced the founding of the People’s Republic of China from Tianan Gate, the traditional podium from which the emperor had declaimed his edicts, was the past of imperial spaces dead enough to be revived for a modern nationalist ceremony.

Republican Beijing had little success at inventing traditions because to a large extent economically and socially the past was necessary to people’s livelihoods. In the Republican era, Beijing’s urban and national identity resonated less with the invented-tradition paradigm and more with the myriad activities of recycling and their much more ambivalent relation to the past and historical agency. If invention of tradition demanded fetishization of the past, what entered the recycling process could not be fetishized and drafted into that “tradition.” While the government’s unimpressive small-scale effectiveness contributed to the creation of a traditional image for the city through its “tourist district”

project, its ineffectiveness, in a different way, helped to enhance this illusory image. Wars, political instabilities, and the failure to develop a national economy in general made the majority of Beijing's residents painfully poor. The city's economy was no longer focused on trade in luxury goods, as it had been during imperial times. During the Republican period, it was trade in secondhand goods that most affected the city's daily economic life and was a practice necessary for the survival of the city and its people. Modern urban planning, commerce, and transport radically transformed the city, but the material past, from old books to imperial kiln bricks, was still needed in a declining and war-ravaged economy. Nothing in Republican Beijing surpassed the grandeur of the imperial period. The bricks of the city walls were sold to pay off Republican government employees, were used to repair other imperial architecture, or ended up in people's houses. The imperial gardens were first turned into public parks for citizens without major modification and then used to attract foreign tourists to fill the coffers of the Republican state. The markets of different ranks were brought into one circulation system by the recycling process. The most active and energetic site for commerce and folk culture in the city, Tianqiao, was basically a recycling center. Thus a complex system of recycling penetrated every population in the whole city. The labor-intensive material practice of recycling ranged from the targeting of antiques for sale to wealthy foreigners to the remaking of rags into shoe soles for the poor.

Such recycling should not be characterized as traditional, although the everyday practices of recycling tended to give the city a "traditional" look in that nonindustrial societies, in general, have always made their best efforts to reuse everything. The recycling practiced in Republican Beijing was not only material but also social. Although recycling can be the result of choice—for example, a preference for frugality rather than consumerism—it can also be a result of lack of choice, as was often the case for the poor population of Republican Beijing. The involuntariness, however, could also make recycling function as a form of resistance. Material life could not be separated from social organization; those who had to live from recycling also had to rely on their own established, community-based social organization. The new state based its claims to legitimacy partly on the concept of its own role in securing the people's livelihood. As with other new political vocabularies, the concept of people's livelihood was used by ordinary people, as David Strand insightfully points out in his book *Rickshaw Beijing*. By "livelihood," however, the state and the people meant quite different

things. While the government presented a future in which the state would be the primary controlling force, the city's residents were making a living through various forms of recycling. In the urban context, both the state's ideal and the people's reality of livelihood were necessarily expressed in spatial terms. The state's efforts to foster "people's livelihood" often involved uprooting people from their communities, while the people themselves saw that their livelihood depended crucially on the multiple types of support provided by these same established communities. The people used the new vocabulary of livelihood to demand that the state protect and support them in their established ways of living. In other words, the vocabulary of a new economic ideal was mobilized to preserve the existing community-based social network, which was in turn a spatial continuity from the past. Although the use of broken old goods was involuntary, it also operated as a form of social and cultural resistance by the people to the state's schemes that threatened to erase the communities and the places with which these communities identified.

In contrast, the official version of "people's livelihood" was only an uncertain promise for a future that demonstrated no hopeful evidence in the present but, ironically, was delivered primarily through new forms of stratification. The reactions of the city's ordinary residents can be seen as mechanisms of self-protection, as expressions of their unwillingness to count on and sacrifice for a possible future that was beyond their control. Residents often fought for an existing specific benefit to a community and an individual, but this was sometimes the only way they could have any say about the kind of future they should have. Despite the often involuntary nature of material recycling, the adoption of a social structure and an organization rooted in the community was almost always the result of conscious actions.

This material and social life of recycling was closely tied to the city's representation, the primary trope of which has been characterized as nostalgia. David Der-wei Wang comments, "Beijing is shrouded with a ghostly veil of nostalgia. Just as its euphemism 'Gudu' (old capital)—homonym of 'Gu' du ('dead' capital)—suggests, Beijing is a phantom city thriving only in and for the past. No longer at the political center, the people of Beijing hang on to the past by observing obsolete customs, recalling old glories, and cultivating wistful airs. But no matter how hard they try, there is an artificial quality infiltrating their lives, making everything only 'look' real."<sup>2</sup> I would argue, however, that this nostalgia was directed toward the present instead of the past and that Beijing

was not a phantom city thriving only for the past. As has been demonstrated throughout this book, what was seen as the past in Republican Beijing was in fact the present. The present stood in for the past through two mechanisms: the past was still alive in daily life, and, at the same time, it was viewed from the perspective of an imagined future. Both scholars like Yu Qichang and the sociologists who conducted the survey on the temple fairs reached the same conclusion, that the kind of life Republican Beijing's residents lived would disappear, although the former lamented this change and the latter took it as an inevitable development. In other words, for different reasons and intentions, the present was viewed as if it were the past—a view that led to the mentality that the modern was always in the future—and a nostalgia for the “past” was in fact directed toward the present.

Again, a comparison between Beijing and Paris might help us comprehend the implications of such nostalgia for the present. T.J. Clark notices that Haussmann's work in Paris is usually described as a speedy, large-scale, aggressive and complete elimination of old-style neighborhoods, and he comments that

what was vivid with [Parisians] was the sense of some kind of life which Haussmannization had destroyed. They said they had lost the city, that it had been taken from them. That was their way of saying that capital had invaded and broken the quartier economy; that it had become a separate and insistent force inside the world of work, and that what it destroyed was a form of life which had previously been Paris, for most of the city's inhabitants.<sup>3</sup>

Clark then provides a great deal of evidence to show that, contrary to the perceptions of many Parisians, the “old Paris” was far from gone yet and a new order was far from fully established. As one example, he cites Manet's paintings, which document the pockets of subcultures, fragmentary views, and rough edges that still seemed to be everywhere in Haussmann's Paris. Clark argues that “the circumstances of modernism were not modern, and only became so by being given the forms called ‘spectacle.’”<sup>4</sup> In other words, Paris was not yet fully modernized, but most people felt that the past was gone; the present already was the modern. There was no transition to linger on; the old had been completely replaced by the new—but only in the imagination, not yet in fact. It would take decades before the modernity of which Parisians had such an overwhelming premonition fully dominated the city, and then in a form quite different from that pictured by the Parisians of Haussmann's day.

In comparison, the residents of Beijing lingered over the city's transition. They brought the past into their daily life that was already fragmented by modernity, but they lamented that an uncertain future would erase it all. The modern was both already here and yet to come. The co-existence of the "not yet" mentality and nostalgia for the present can well be argued to be an important paradoxical quality of Chinese modernity, an active force in Chinese experience, interpretation, and attitude toward the modern world. It did not indicate residents' lack of consciousness of changes; rather, it meant that although both the people living in Republican Beijing and the scholars who studied them, by no means all of "traditional" or "Confucian" background, presumed a modern future as inevitable, they saw value in what they feared would be replaced by what was coming. In this sense, the scholars of old Beijing and ordinary people's everyday practice of recycling represented the essence of Chinese modernity. They focused their attention on the elements in Beijing's history that the state worked to dismantle and that the new intellectuals deemed backward. Unlike the new elites, who saw Beijing as being in a state of permanent transition toward a Western version of modernity, these scholars and ordinary people noticed changes in the city's spaces and details of daily life and recognized what they meant to the lifestyle with which they were familiar. To them, Republican Beijing was already a modern city. Despite this clear consciousness of the force of the changes already underway, they insisted on the value of the past, brought the past into the present, and tried to preserve the past for the future. In their vision of an ideal world—which the present was not—there was always room for the past. Beijing's present was usually seen as mired in the past, unable to break free from it, a refracted image of the material practices we here call recycling. But such a conclusion is more a result of defining modernity as a linear process based on the internal experiences of the West that could arrive only when all traces of China's historical past had disappeared. If Republican Beijing is perceived as a moment of transition, then this moment has lingered up to the present. After a century's political, economic, social, and cultural transformations, many people today still believe that China is in a transitional period into the modern. This kind of nostalgia for the present will always exist if modernity is equated with modernization, the standard of which is set by the West.

The history of Republican Beijing may help us to gain some alternative understanding of nostalgia. If, as David Lowenthal observes in his classic book *The Past Is a Foreign Country*, "Nostalgia is today the uni-

versal catchword for looking back,” then this mentality and trope of representation of Republican Beijing might as well be called nostalgia.<sup>5</sup> The conventional meaning of nostalgia is lamenting the loss of an irredeemable past without a sincere will to relive that past. As Lowenthal points out, “Many seem less concerned to find a past than to yearn for it, eager not so much to relive a fancied long-ago as to collect its relics and celebrate its virtue”<sup>6</sup> The logical conclusion to draw about such nostalgia is that “a past nostalgically enjoyed does not need to be taken seriously”<sup>7</sup> and that “we want to relive those thrilling days of yester-year, but only because we are absolutely assured that those days are out of reach.”<sup>8</sup>

The kind of nostalgia seen in Republican Beijing, however, did not fully match this description. Recycling kept the past alive in the present in a concrete material way and thus created a tangible basis for nostalgia. Lévi-Strauss argues in his “New York in 1941” that personal nostalgia centers on objects; obsolete artifacts register time more powerfully than other kinds of images. These relics create an illusion that “for a few brief moments” “one has the power to escape” a society that is becoming increasingly “oppressive and inhuman.”<sup>9</sup> In Lowenthal’s view, “Nostalgia reaffirms identities bruised by recent turmoil when ‘fundamental, taken-for-granted convictions about man, woman, habits, manners, laws, society and God [were] challenged, disrupted and shaken’ as never before, in one sociologist’s view.”<sup>10</sup> Although this might apply to Republican Beijing too, nostalgia there did not comfort. On the contrary, it remained an expression of anxiety. It did not refer to an “exotic antiquity” or inspire a preference “to live in times superior to today.”<sup>11</sup> The past did not distract people from the present and their critical understanding of the future. The relics were not simply a few objects redolent of escapist fantasy; they constituted the reality of everyday life, and living on relics was neither enjoyable nor easy. Nostalgia in this sense involves involuntary memory. These relics were not a means for people to look backward into the past but a foundation for them to work toward the future. Such an attitude toward the relics was nostalgia for the present and an active effort to preserve it for the future. Hence nostalgia was as much about the past as it was about the future: it was the expression of an awareness of alienation from an indistinct future. If this awareness must be called nostalgia, then it was not the empty sentiment that Lowenthal describes but an important part of an active mechanism of self-protection and resistance. The cultural mentality of Republican Beijing should be called nostalgia only if the concept does not automatically

characterize any positive evaluation of the past as an empty and useless sentiment.

What is here termed nostalgia, then, is an active and positive way to deal with the relationship between the past, the present, and the future. This form of nostalgia is more akin to Walter Benjamin's concept of historical redemption. In his "Theses on the Philosophy of History," Benjamin describes an image of the angel of history.

A Klee painting named "Angelus Novus" shows an angel looking as though he is about to move away from something he is fixedly contemplating. His eyes are staring, his mouth is open, his wings are spread. This is how one pictures the angel of history. His face is turned toward the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise; it has got caught in his wings with such violence that the angel can no longer close them. This storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress.<sup>12</sup>

In his criticism of the belief in modern progress, Benjamin points out that a deceptive vision of past and present were created through endless parades of novelties. Capitalism promises continual progress and endless improvement as the myth of the modern. What is missing in this confidence in the natural history of technological progress, however, is human-centered social progress.<sup>13</sup> The notion of progress and the increasing technological control of nature by humankind, in Benjamin's view, form a modern version of mythic domination.

To Benjamin, the historian's task is to locate "a revolutionary chance in the fight for the oppressed past,"<sup>14</sup> to "give voices to the periphery, the experiences of those whom modern forms of order strive to render silent and invisible. Objects that are obsolete, outdated and ridiculous are salvaged and made to tell their tale."<sup>15</sup> To break the new mythic domination, modern society must liberate the lost utopian aspirations of past generations, redeem forgotten sufferings, and realize in the present the utopian dream elements in the past. The historian's task, then, "is to reveal the complex interrelations between the old and the new, the most ancient and the most recent, to articulate the prehistory of modernity."<sup>16</sup>

Rescuing the significance of the past is not nostalgia to Benjamin. Instead, his goal is to reuse and make the past refunction for the needs of current struggles. In this sense, what he advocates is not "the redemp-

tion of a unique past” but “a unique experience with the past.”<sup>17</sup> As Graeme Gilloch argues, “The significance of the past comes to light only in its relation to a particular present.... The half-forgotten past plagues the present, while the unknown...future, murky and indistinct, haunts the past.... Benjamin re-seeks lost time, but this search is oriented and extended toward the future. He redeems the past for the sake of things to come.”<sup>18</sup>

Maybe the same thing can be said about Republican Beijing. The city’s energy did not come from the modernization projects; neither did it come from its efforts to preserve “traditions.” Instead, it came from dynamic and productive interactions between the past and the present, as well as efforts to define a future that would be relevant to, or even based on, these interactions. Such efforts amounted to a direct challenge to the conventional concept of modernity that was in fact a political scheme for global power through universalizing values derived from specific historical experiences of the West. In other words, the struggles among the different histories of Republican Beijing relativized not only the past and the present but also the vision of a future dominated by the West and its values. Republican Beijing demanded a nonhegemonic definition of modernity. The result was the creation of a space for the imagination of a future that was meaningful for the people. In Republican Beijing, “Memory is not closed;...rather, it leads out into the open. Their enterprise is Janus-faced, rather than nostalgia.”<sup>19</sup>

The concept of recycling makes it possible to view the city as a whole. Republican Beijing was, in many ways, fragmented; David Strand’s book *Rickshaw Beijing* reveals some aspects of this fragmentation. Professional associations only served their ministates and resisted integration into a greater public. Beijing was like a body with different circulation systems. Expensive industrial products entered certain homes through certain markets; handicraft articles met the needs of others; recycled goods served the very poor. It was a system of stratification and separation. But these goods at some point all entered the process of recycling, a process that brought together the whole city, from the small alleys to the Legation Quarter. In this sense, there was a community, or “common urban culture,” in Strand’s words, in Republican Beijing, and it was created by recycling with all of its cultural and sentimental implications. This community and culture was what gave Beijing its distinctive identity and what most people directed their sense of nostalgia toward.

In Republican Beijing, the past was not thrown away; it was scrubbed, shredded, renovated, and restitched, its use values were trans-

muted and rediscovered. While invented traditions involve a voluntary extraction of symbolic value from the past, recycling is always partly involuntary in its rescuing of past use values. But to the people of Republican Beijing, tradition was attached to details in life and objects more than to abstract tokens. As the contemporary essayist Wang Anyi writes in an essay about Shanghai,

Come to think of it, the experiences and vicissitudes of many people have vanished from the city. Surely, such hearsay from the alleys is not worth enshrining in history books; yet without it, many matters become inexplicable, colored as they are by legends.... In truth, people live their lives diligently, concerned with food and fuel day after day, unencumbered by ambitions. But in a flash they look back and find that life has become a legend.<sup>20</sup>

People were rarely concerned on a day-to-day basis with the abstract meaning of “tradition”; instead, they focused on the details, life’s myriad little necessities. These details are lost to history, even to this book, which can only attempt to snare the traces of these experiences in the vague web of the abstract term *recycling*. The nostalgia that predominates in Republican era writings on Beijing weaves these countless details and vicissitudes into legends, enshrining them as “tradition.” But this “tradition,” like the “modern” that was so overwhelming to 1870 Paris, was a framework positively constructed to deal with, or perhaps conceal, the confusion of the present in Republican Beijing.

Beijing during the Republican years was poverty-stricken and constantly beset by wars. These difficulties and dilemmas, however, forced the residents of the city to focus on the reality of the present and gave rise to a sense of agency that constantly questioned anything that did not fit the needs or capacity of the city. The need to focus on the present demanded that residents mobilize anything available to them, including what was left from the past. The people of Republican Beijing, instead of rejecting its past, took it as a resource. Their approaches to both the past and the future were marked by a sense of selectivity, which can be seen as an involuntary critical distancing in their view of their own past and models of possible futures. They were actively dealing with and giving meaning to the present in which they were living, believing in its significance for the future, rather than waiting to shed tradition and embrace a future defined in Western terms. By defining the meaning of the present, they were taking control of both the past and the future. In the present of Republican Beijing, they actively participated in, rather than passively followed, the definition of their own identity in the modern world.



# Notes

Materials that have been cited frequently in the notes have been identified by the following abbreviations:

JSH	<i>Jingdu shizheng huilan</i> (Collected reports on city administration in Beijing) (Beijing: Jingdu shizheng gongsuo, 1919).
BMA/GWJDA	Beijing Municipal Archive, Archives of Department of Public Works

## INTRODUCTION

1. Hedda Morrison, *A Photographer in Old Peking* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 100.
2. Ibid., pp. 28, 122, 163.
3. Walter Benjamin, “Theses on the Philosophy of History,” in *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, ed. Hannah Arendt (New York: Shocken Books, 1985), p. 262.
4. Mark Elvin and G. William Skinner, eds., *The Chinese City between Two Worlds* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1974), p. 2.
5. Ibid., p. 3.
6. Ibid.
7. Some examples of the new scholarship are Joseph Esherick, *Remaking the Chinese City: Modernity and National Identity, 1900–1950* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2000); Kristin Stapleton, *Civilizing Chengdu: Chinese Urban Reform, 1895–1937* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2000); Michael Tsin, *Nation, Governance, and Modernity in China: Canton, 1900–1927* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1999); Fred-

eric Wakeman, Jr., *Policing Shanghai, 1927–1937* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995); Wen-hsin Yeh, *The Alienated Academy: Culture and Politics in Republican China, 1919–1937* (Cambridge, Mass.: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1990). Several dissertations have been completed on related topics, including Ruth Rogaski, “From Protecting the Body to Defending the Nation: The Emergence of Public Health in Tianjin, 1859–1953” (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1996); Brett Sheehan, “The Currency of Legitimation: Banks, Bank Money and State-Society Relations in Tianjin, China, 1916–1938” (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1997); Mingzheng Shi, “Beijing Transforms: Urban Infrastructure, Public Works, and Social Change in the Chinese Capital, 1900–1928” (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1993); Timothy Weston, “Beijing University and Chinese Political Culture, 1898–1920 (Beida)” (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1995).

8. See, e.g., Bryna Goodman, *Native Place, City, and Nation: Regional Networks and Identities in Shanghai, 1853–1937* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995); Gail Hershatter, *The Workers of Tianjin, 1900–1949* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1986); Gail Hershatter, *Dangerous Pleasures: Prostitution and Modernity in Twentieth-Century Shanghai* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); Emily Honig, *Sisters and Strangers: Women in the Shanghai Cotton Mills, 1919–1949* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1986); Emily Honig, *Creating Chinese Ethnicity: Subei People in Shanghai, 1850–1980* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1992); Elizabeth Perry, *Shanghai on Strike: The Politics of Chinese Labor* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1993); Elizabeth Perry, *Proletarian Power: Shanghai in the Cultural Revolution* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1997); Frederic Wakeman, Jr., and Weh-hsin Yeh, eds., *Shanghai Sojourners* (Berkeley: University of California, Institute of East Asian Studies, Center for Chinese Studies, 1992); Richard Belsky, “Beijing Scholar-Official Native-Place Lodges: The Social and Political Evolution of Huiguan in China’s Capital City” (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1997); Weikun Cheng, “Nationalists, Feminists, and Petty Urbanites: The Changing Image of Women in Early Twentieth-Century Beijing and Tianjin” (Ph.D. diss., Johns Hopkins University, 1996).

9. The most noticeable works of urban history scholarship on this issue are David Strand, *Rickshaw Beijing: City People and Politics in the 1920s* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), and William Rowe’s two volumes, *Hankow: Commerce and Society in a Chinese City, 1796–1889* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1984) and *Hankow: Conflict and Community in a Chinese City, 1796–1895* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1989). Other important works on this issue are Qin Shao, “Tempest over Teapots: The Vilification of Teahouse Culture in Early Republican China,” *Journal of Asian Studies* 57 (1998): 1009–41; and “Space, Time, and Politics in Early Twentieth Century Nantong,” *Modern China* 23, no. 1 (January 1997): 99–129.

10. Some examples of this scholarship are Leo Ou-fan Lee, *Shanghai Modern: The Flowering of a New Urban Culture in China: 1930–1945* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999); Perry Link, *Mandarin Ducks and Butterflies: Popular Fiction in Early Twentieth-Century Chinese Cities* (Berkeley:

University of California Press, 1981); Wen-hsin Yeh, ed., *Becoming Chinese: Passages to Modernity and Beyond* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000); Yingjin Zhang, *The City in Modern Chinese Literature and Film: Configurations of Space, Time, and Gender* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1996); Yingjin Zhang, ed., *Cinema and Urban Culture in Shanghai, 1922–1943* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1999). Recent dissertations on urban cultures include Carlton Benson, “From Teahouse to Radio: Storytelling and the Commercialization of Culture in 1930s Shanghai” (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1996); Peter Carroll, “Between Heaven and Modernity: The Late Qing and Early Republic (Re)construction of Suzhou Urban Space” (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1998); Joshua L. Goldstein, “Theatrical Imaginations: Peking Opera and China’s Cultural Crisis, 1890–1937” (Ph.D. diss., University of California, San Diego, 2000); Jin Jiang, “Women and Public Culture: Poetics and Politics of Women’s Yue Opera in Republican China, 1930s–1940s” (Ph.D. diss., Stanford University, 1998); Tobie Meyer-Fong, “Site and Sentiment: Building Culture in Seventeenth-Century Yangzhou” (Ph.D. diss., Stanford University, 1998); Liping Wang, “Paradise for Sale: Urban Space and Tourism in the Social Transformation of Hangzhou, 1589–1937” (Ph.D. diss., University of California, San Diego, 1997).

11. There are several other important works on Shanghai urban life in addition to the scholarship mentioned above: Xincun Huang, “Written in the Ruins: War and Domesticity in Shanghai Literature of the 1940s” (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 1998); Hanchao Lu, *Beyond the Neon Lights: Everyday Shanghai in the Early Twentieth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); Weh-hsin Yeh, ed., *Wartime Shanghai* (New York: Routledge, 1998).

12. Past scholarship on Beijing includes Andrew Nathan, *Peking Politics, 1918–1923: Factionalism and the Failure of Constitutionalism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976); Strand, *Rickshaw Beijing*; Shi, “Beijing Transforms”; Weston, “Beijing University”; and Belsky, “Beijing Scholar-Official Native-Place Lodges.” Susan Naquin’s book, *Peking: Temples and City Life, 1400–1900* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), is a new landmark in the study of Beijing history.

13. Shi, “Beijing Transforms.” Also see Mingzheng Shi’s “Rebuilding the Chinese Capital: Beijing in the Early Twentieth Century.” *Urban History* 25, no. 1 (1998): 60–81, and “From Imperial Gardens to Public Parks: The Transformation of Space in Early Twentieth Century Beijing,” *Modern China* 24, no. 3 (1998): 219–54.

14. Yingjin Zhang, *The City in Modern Chinese Literature*, p. 262.

15. Ibid., p. 103.

16. Sidney Gamble, *Peking: A Social Survey* (New York: George H. Doran, 1921), p. 223.

17. Ibid., p. 307.

18. Strand, *Rickshaw Beijing*, p. xi. It should be pointed out that Strand’s book was written before the current wave of nostalgia for old Beijing.

19. Ibid., p. 7.

20. Ibid.

21. Zhu An is the pen name of a famous historian of Beijing, Qu Xuanying.
22. Zhu An, “Beiyou lu hua,” *Yuzhou feng* (Wind of the universe) 26 (October 1, 1936): 107.
23. Prasenjit Duara, *Rescuing History from the Nation: Questioning Narratives of Modern China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), p. 76.
24. Helen Siu, “Recycling Rituals,” in *Unofficial China: Popular Culture and Thought in the People’s Republic*, ed. Perry Link, Richard Madsen, and Paul Pickowicz (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1989), pp. 132–34.
25. Yunxiang Yan, *The Flow of Gifts: Reciprocity and Social Networks in a Chinese Village* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1996), p. 238.
26. *Da ziyou bao* (Great liberty news), November 14, 1912, p. 7.
27. Donald J. Olsen, *The City as a Work of Art: London, Paris, Vienna* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1986), p. ix.
28. Joseph Levenson, *Confucian China and Its Modern Fate* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1958), part III, p. 113.
29. Ibid., part III, p. 114.
30. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 4.
31. Ibid.
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33. Carl E. Schorske, *Fin-de-Siecle Vienna: Politics and Culture* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1980), p. xvii.

## CHAPTER I

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2. See photo in Hedda Morrison, *A Photographer in Old Peking* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 24.
3. Jeffrey Meyer, *The Dragons of Tiananmen: Beijing as a Sacred City* (Columbia: University of South Carolina, 1991), p. 19.
4. Wen Renjun, *Kaogong ji yizhu* (The rites of Zhou: On craftsmanship. An annotated translation) (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1993), p. 130.
5. Wang Gang, *Beijing tongshi*, vol. 5 (A general history of Beijing) (Beijing: Zhongguo shudian, 1994), p. 39.

6. Susan Naquin provides a detailed account of Ming Beijing in her *Peking: Temples and City Life, 1400–1900* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000). For discussions of Chinese cities as ceremonial space, see Meyer, *The Dragons of Tiananmen*; Paul Wheatley, *The Pivot of the Four Quarters: A Preliminary Enquiry into the Origins and Character of the Ancient Chinese City* (Chicago: Aldine, 1971); and Ping-ti Ho, “Lo-yang, A.D. 495–534: A Study of Physical and Socio-Economic Planning of a Metropolitan Area,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 26 (1966): 52–101.

7. Liang Sicheng, “Beijing: Dushi jihua de wubi jiezuo” (Beijing: A peerless masterpiece of urban planning), in *Liang Sicheng wenji* (Collected works of Liang Sicheng), vol. 4 (Beijing: Zhongguo jianzhu gongye chubanshe, 1986), p. 58.

8. Chris Elder, *Old Peking: City of the Ruler of the World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 17.

9. Liang Sicheng, “Beijing,” p. 58.

10. Ibid., p. 59.

11. Ibid., p. 51.

12. Donald J. Olsen, *The City as a Work of Art: London, Paris, Vienna* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1986), p. 9.

13. Juliet Bredon, *Peking: A Historical and Intimate Description of Its Chief Places of Interest* (Shanghai: Kelly and Walsh, 1922), p. 15.

14. Liang Sicheng, “Beijing.”

15. Kinchen Johnson, *Folksongs and Children-Songs from Beiping* (n.p., 1971).

16. Bredon, *Peking*, p. 18.

17. Ibid.

18. Ibid., p. 29.

19. Ibid., p. 36.

20. Ibid., p. 37.

21. Ibid., p. 39.

22. These were the most active shopping areas in the commercial district outside Zhengyang Gate.

23. January 15 in the Chinese lunar calendar, the day of the Lantern Festival and the last day of the Spring Festival celebrations.

24. Li Ruohong, *Chaoshi congzai* (Accounts of markets in the imperial capital) (Beijing: Beijing guji chubanshe, 1995), p. 69.

25. Ibid.

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27. Yang Kuan, *Zhongguo gudai ducheng zhidu shi yanjiu* (A study of capital cities in ancient China) (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1993), p. 559.

28. Xia Renhu, *Jiujing suoji* (Miscellaneous accounts of the old capital) (Taibei: Chun wenxue chubanshe, 1970), p. 72.

29. Xu Ke, *Shiyong Beijing zhinan* (A practical guide to Beijing) (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshu guan, 1920), chap. 5, pp. 1–36.

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31. Ibid.
32. Shen Congwen, “Qie bu zhe biji” (Notes by a timid walker), in Jiang Deming, *Beijing hu*, p. 102.
33. Wei Kaizhao and Zhao Shurong, *Beijing tongshi* (A general history of Beijing), vol. 8 (Beijing: Zhongguo shudian, 1995), p. 321.
34. Ibid., pp. 318–19.
35. Ibid., p. 323.
36. Ibid., p. 328.
37. Wu Tingxie, *Beijingshi zhigao* (Beijing gazetteer), vol. 1 (Beijing: Yanshan chubanshe, 1990), p. 182.
38. Ibid., p. 185.
39. Wei Kaizhao and Zhao Shurong, *Beijing tongshi*, vol. 8, p. 328.
40. Ibid., p. 325.
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43. Wang Shiren and Zhang Fuhe, “Beijing jindai jianzhu gaishuo” (A brief introduction to modern architecture in Beijing), in *Zhongguo jindai jianzhu zonglan: Beijing pian* (A review of modern architecture in China: Beijing) (Beijing: Zhongguo jianzhu gongye chubanshe, 1993), p. 7.
44. Bredon, *Peking*, p. 59.
45. Li Ruohong, *Chaoshi congzai*, p. 150.
46. Shao Jie, “Beijing jixiang huajiu” (Talking about the past of Beijing’s streets and alleyways), in *Beijing jiedao de gushi* (Stories of streets in Beijing) (Beijing: Beijing chubanshe, 1960), p. 154. The original quote is from Qing Quemingshi, *Yanjing zaji*.
47. Bredon, *Peking*, p. 61.
48. Shao Jie, “Beijing jixiang huajiu,” p. 154, quoting from Kang Youwei’s petition to the emperor.
49. Shao Piaoping, “Beijing de jiedao ji gonggong weisheng” (Streets and public hygiene in Beijing), in *Rumengling: Mingren bixia de jiujing* (Rumengling: The old capital described by famous figures), ed. Jiang Deming (Beijing: Beijing chubanshe, 1996), pp. 53–54.
50. *JSH*, p. 102.
51. BMA/GWJDA, J17/1–J17/266, 1914–1927.
52. Xi Wuyi and Deng Yibing, *Beijing tongshi* (A general history of Beijing), vol. 9 (Beijing: Zhongguo shudian, 1995), pp. 170–71.
53. Mingzheng Shi, “Beijing Transforms: Urban Infrastructure, Public Works, and Social Change in the Chinese Capital, 1900–1928” (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1993), p. 103.
54. *JSH*, p. 545.
55. Lanling Youhuan Sheng, *Jinghua bai’er zhuzhi ci* (One hundred and twenty poems on Beijing) (Beijing: Yisen gongsi, 1910), p. 12.
56. *JSH*, p. 103.
57. Ibid., pp. 101–2.
58. Ibid.

59. Ibid., pp. 101–2, 531.
60. Wang Shiren and Zhang Fuhe, “Beijing jindai jianzhu gaishuo,” p. 7.
61. Chen Zongfan, *Yandu congkao* (A study of Beijing) (Beijing: Beijing guji chubanshe, 1991), pp. 18–19.
62. Shou Xi, “Changdian,” in Jiang Deming, *Rumengling*, p. 26.
63. Ibid.
64. Ibid., p.19.
65. Zhou Zuoren, “Heping men” (The Gate of Peace), in Jiang Deming, *Rumengling*, p. 7.
66. Chen Zongfan, *Yandu congkao*, pp. 30–31.
67. Wang Shiren and Zhang Fuhe, “Beijing jindai jianzhu gaishuo,” p. 7.
68. “An Inquiry by the State Department on the Dismantling and Selling of the Walls of the Imperial City; A Reply by the Office of City Wall Dismantling and Sale; Documents Related to the Sale of City Walls Supplied by the Municipal Council (August-September 1927),” BMA/GWJDA, J17/261, August 3, 1927.
69. David Strand, *Rickshaw Beijing: City People and Politics in the 1920s* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), p. 8.
70. Zhong Shi, “Gucheng guxuefu” (Ancient schools in the ancient city), *Yuzhou feng* (Wind of the universe) 20 (July 1, 1936), p. 433.
71. Jingshi jingcha ting, ed., *Jingshi jingcha faling huicuan* (A collection of police orders in Beijing) (Beijing: Jiehua shuju, 1915), Category 2, pp. 311–20.
72. *JSH*, pp. 46–55.
73. Jingshi jingcha ting, *Jingshi jingcha faling huicuan*, Category 2, pp. 229–30.
74. E Yucheng, “Beipingshi chejuan zhengshou shikuang,” *Shizheng pinglun* (Review of city administration) 3, no. 5 (1935): 10–11.
75. The jurisdictional limits of the city extended 2.48 miles to the east, 7.45 miles to the south, 3.73 miles to the north, 11.49 miles to the southeast, 6.21 miles to the southwest, 3.11 miles to the northeast, and 3.73 miles to the northwest.
76. Wu Jianyong, *Beijing tongshi* (A general history of Beijing), vol. 7 (Beijing: Zhongguo shudian, 1995), pp. 102–15.
77. Wu Tingxie, *Beijin shi zhigao*, vol. 2, p. 331.
78. Ibid., p. 328.
79. Some achievements of the New Policy Reform survived: e.g., the redivision of the districts and the establishment of the police.
80. *JSH*, p. 2.
81. *JSH*, preface, p. 1.
82. Ibid., pp. 3, 19.
83. Liu Shoulin et al., eds., *Minguo zhiguan nian biao* (Official ranks and posts of the Republic) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1995), pp. 359–60.
84. Xi Wuyi and Deng Yibing, *Beijing tongshi* (A general history of Beijing), vol. 9 (Beijing: Zhongguo shudian, 1995), p. 445.
85. Ibid., p. 42.
86. “An Examination of the Division of Districts in Beiping (September–November 1928),” BMA/GWJDA, J17/6.

87. Ibid.
88. Ibid.
89. For a detailed discussion of Beijing's taxation system, see Lei Jihui, *Beiping shuijuan kaolue* (A study of taxes in Beiping) (Beiping: Shehui diaocha suo, 1931).
90. Beijing's relationship to its outlying areas will be discussed further in Chapter 4. Due to space limitations, it is not an issue this book can thoroughly address. But "the path between an urban market and the natural systems that supply it" merits future research, like that of William Cronon for Chicago. William Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1991), p. xvii.
91. Beijingshi dangan guan, ed., *Beijing dianche gongsidangan shiliao* (Archives of the trolley company in Beijing) (Beijing: Yanshan chubanshe, 1988), pp. 125–26.
92. Ibid., pp. 126–27.
93. Wu Tingxie, *Beijingshi zhigao*, vol. 2, p. 2.

## CHAPTER 2

1. Jonathan Simon, "The Ideological Effects of Actuarial Practices," *Law and Society Review* 22, no. 4 (1988): 798.
2. *JSH*, Preface, p. 2.
3. Ibid.
4. *JSH*, p. 484.
5. Ibid., p. 60.
6. Ibid., p. 268.
7. Government-owned land was charged a fee of five *yuan*.
8. "Provisional Regulations on Land Registration by the Beiping Municipal Government (November 1928)," BMA/GWJDA, J17/291.
9. *JSH*, p. 366.
10. The following sites were declared government land at the time: the East Vegetable Market (Dong caishi) at the Dongdan Pailou, the houses at the Jade-Emperor (Yuhuang) Temple in Nan Xinhua Street, Haiwang Village Park in Changdian, Renmin Hospital in Xiangchang, the Hospital for Epidemics in Dongsi shitiao, Pingkangli on Huayan Street in the Xiangchang area, South City Park at the Altar of Agriculture, and the exhibition hall of the Association of Progress (Gaijin hui chenlie suo) on South Xinhua Street. See *JSH*, pp. 93–94.
11. Ibid., p. 367.
12. Ibid., pp. 367, 373–434.
13. "The Municipal Council's Regulations on Construction and Method of Application (December 1916)," BMA/GWJDA, J17/15.
14. *JSH*, pp. 454–60.
15. Sidney D. Gamble, *Peking: A Social Survey* (New York: George H. Doran, 1921), p. 84.
16. *JSH*, pp. 463–66.
17. Ibid., p. 367.

18. "The Municipal Council's Plan to Reconstruct the Protective Walls of Xuanwu Gate (May 1918–June 1923)," BMA/GWJDA, J17/47, May 1, 1918.
19. Ibid., May 1, 1918.
20. Ibid., December 8, 1920.
21. "An Order from the Department of Public Works on Dismantling the Protective Walls of Chongwen and Xuanwu Gates and Building the Sewage System between Dongbuya Bridge and the Imperial River (December 1928–June 1929)," BMA/GWJDA, J17/327, December 29, 1928.
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23. Ibid., December 29, 1928.
24. Ibid., December 27, 1929.
25. Ibid., March 15, 1929.
26. "Documents from the Municipal Government on the Dismantling and Sale of Bricks of the Protective Walls of Xuanwu Gate (July–August 1930)," BMA/GWJDA, J17/455.
27. "Letters between the Department of Works, the Bureau of Ping-Han Railway Administration, and Beiping Committee for Ancient Article Preservation Regarding the Discovery of Cannon and Tomb of Five-Tiger under the Protective Walls of Xuanwu Gate (June–July 1930)," BMA/GWJDA, J17/468, June 20, 1930.
28. "The Department of Public Works' Report to the Municipal Government Regarding the Demolishing of Houses in the Bird Market Area Outside Xuanwu Gate (July–December 1930)," BMA/GWJDA, J17/486, October 30, 1930.
29. Ibid., October 30, 1930.
30. Ibid., October 30, 1930.
31. Ibid.
32. "Letters between the Department of Public Works, the Department of Finance, and the Bureau of Ping-Han Railway Administration (June 1933–February 1934)," BMA/GWJDA, J17/896.
33. Ibid., January 31, 1934.
34. "Letters between the Police Department, the Department of Public Works, and the Department of Finance Regarding Supervising Wang Jiaoxu to Demolish His Guandi Temple at Xuanwu Gate (February 1934–February 1935)," BMA/GWJDA, J17/889, February 22, 1934.
35. Ibid., February 24–28, 1934.
36. "Letters between the Department of Public Works, the Department of Finance, and the Bureau of Ping-Han Railway Administration (June 1933–February 1934)," BMA/GWJDA, J17/896, January 17, 1934.
37. Ibid., January 31, 1934.
38. Ibid., February 12, 1934.
39. "Letters between the Police Department, the Department of Public Works, and the Department of Finance Regarding Supervising Wang Jiaoxu to Demolish His Guandi Temple at Xuanwu Gate (February 1934–February 1935)," BMA/GWJDA, J17/889, August 17, 1934.
40. Ibid., August 17, 1934.
41. Ibid., August 24, 1935.

42. Originally published in *Chenbao*, June 1, 1929, and quoted in “An Order from the Department of Public Works on Dismantling the Protective Walls of Chongwen and Xuanwu Gates and Building the Sewage System between Dongbuya Bridge and the Imperial River (December 1928–June 1929),” BMA/GWJDA, J17/327, June 4, 1929.

43. Originally published in *Dagongbao*, June 17, 1930, and quoted in “An Order from the Department of Public Works on Dismantling the Protective Walls of Chongwen and Xuanwu Gates and Building the Sewage System between Dongbuya Bridge and the Imperial River (December 1928–June 1929),” BMA/GWJDA, J17/327, June 20, 1930.

44. For a detailed account of the Beijing streetcar system, see David Strand’s *Rickshaw Beijing: City People and Politics in the 1920s* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989).

45. *Da ziyou bao* (Great liberty news), November 7, 1912, p. 7.

46. Beijingshi dang’an guan, ed., *Beijing dianche gongsi dang'an shiliao* (Historical archives of the Beijing Trolley Company) (Beijing: Yanshan chubanshe, 1988), pp. 1–2.

47. Ibid., p. 17.

48. Ibid., p. 18.

49. Ibid., p. 19.

50. Zhou Zuoren, “Beijing de fengsu shi” (Poems of local customs in Beijing), in *Rumengling: Mingren bixia de jiujing* (Rumengling: The old capital described by famous figures), ed. Jiang Deming (Beijing: Beijing chubanshe, 1997), p. 19.

51. Strand’s *Rickshaw Beijing* offers detailed information on Sun Xueshi and the Beijing Chamber of Commerce.

52. Han Guanghui’s research confirms this number of Beijing’s population. See Han Guanghui, *Beijing lishi renkou dili* (A historical demographic geography of Beijing) (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 1996), p. 134.

53. Beijingshi dang’an guan, *Beijing dianche gongsi dang'an shiliao*, pp. 19–20.

54. This quote comes from the Beijing Chamber of Commerce’s petition to the Police Department on February 12, 1923. See *ibid.*, pp. 104–5.

55. Ibid., pp. 111–12.

56. Ibid., pp. 13–14.

57. Ibid., pp. 118–19.

58. For a more detailed account of the relationship between the rickshaw pullers and the streetcars, see chap. 11 in Strand, *Rickshaw Beijing*.

59. Beijingshi dang’an guan, *Beijing dianche gongsi dang'an shiliao*, pp. 10–11.

60. David Pinkney, *Napoleon III and the Rebuilding of Paris* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1958), pp. 35–36.

61. Wu Tingxie, *Beijingshi zhigao* (Beijing gazetteer), vol. 1 (Beijing: Yanshan chubanshe, 1990), pp. 188–213.

62. *JSH*, pp. 255–62.

63. Ibid., p. 146.

64. "A Map of the Inner and Outer City Printed by the Municipal Council in 1918 (1918)," BMA/GWJDA, J17/53.
65. *JSH*, p. 263.
66. *Ibid.*, p. 247.
67. *Ibid.*, pp. 148–249.
68. Timothy Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), p. xv.
69. *Ibid.*, p. 249.
70. Weng Li, *Beijing de hutong* (Beijing's *hutong*) (Beijing: Beijing Yanshan chubanshe, 1992), p. 99.
71. *Ibid.*, p. 105.
72. *JSH*, p. 485.
73. "A List of the Old and New Names of Streets Provided by the Police Board to the Municipal Council (February 1919)," BMA/GWJDA, J17/67, February 1919.
74. "An Order from the Municipal Government on Naming the Section of Road between Zhonghua Gate and Tianan Gate as Zhongshan Road, the Section between East and West Changan Gates as Zhongyang Road (August 1928–March 1930)," BMA/GWJDA, J17/277.
75. Weng Li, *Beijing de hutong*, p. 105.
76. *JSH*, pp. 485–99.
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79. Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).
80. This was pointed out to me by David Strand.
81. de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. x.

### CHAPTER 3

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2. Zhu An, "Beiping de yunming" (Beiping's fate), *Yuzhou feng* (Wind of the universe) 31 (December 1936): 362.
3. Xi Wuyi and Deng Yibing, *Beijing tongshi* (A general history of Beijing), vol. 9 (Beijing: Zhongguo shudian, 1995), pp. 45–47.
4. Zhu An, "Beiyou lu hua," p. 108.
5. Zhu An, "Wenhua cheng de wenhua," *Yuzhou feng* (Wind of the universe) 29 (November 16, 1936): 282.
6. *Nankai Weekly Stat. Serv.*, January 19, 1931, cited in Herbert Day Lamson, *Social Pathology in China: A Source Book for the Study of Problems of Livelihood, Health, and the Family* (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1935), pp. 120–21.
7. Zhang Youxin, "Gailiang Zhongguo chengshi de yaodian" (Key issues in urban reform in China), *Shizheng pinglun* (Review of city administration) 1 (June 1934): 5–8.

8. Huang Zixian, “Fanrong Pingshi zhi wojian” (My opinions on Beiping’s development), *Shizheng pinglun* (Review of city administration) 1 (June 1934), pp. 9–14.
9. “Recommendations on Beiping’s Development (1929),” BMA/GWJDA, J1/4/1.
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18. Xue Dubi, *Jingzhao gongyuan jishi* (A report on Jingzhao Park) (Unpublished manuscript at Beijing University Library, 1925), unpaginated.
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21. “An Order from the Department of Public Works and Land Bureau on the Allocation of Land, Cost and Satisfaction of the Peng Family’s Demands Regarding the Construction of the Memorial Hall, Temple, Graveyard, and Statue for the Martyr Peng Jiazen (March 1929),” BMA/GWJDA, J17/351.
22. Ibid.
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the Municipal Government Regarding the Building of Monument for Soldiers of the National Revolutionary Army at the Nankou Train Station (February-April 1929)," BMA/GWJDA, J17/353; "An Order from the Municipal Government Regarding Speeding up the Process of Designating a Location for Peng Ji-azhen's Temple and the Replies from the Department of Public Works and Land Bureau (September 1929–March 1930)," BMA/GWJDA, J17/352.

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28. "Proposal on Major Construction Projects by the Municipal Council," BMA/GWJDA, J17/37.

29. Zhu An, "Beiping de yunming," p. 363.

30. For more information on Yuan Liang in Shanghai, see Frederic Wakeman, "Licensing Leisure: The Chinese Nationalists' Attempt to Regulate Shanghai, 1927–49," *Journal of Asian Studies* 54, no. 1 (1995): 52–54.

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40. *Shizheng pinglun* (Review of city administration) 3 (February 16, 1935): 11–25.

41. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 4.

42. "A Plan," p. 3.

43. Zhu An, "Beiyou lu hua," p. 108.

44. Yuan Liang, preface to *Jiudu wenwu lue* (Historical relics in the old capital) by Beipingshi zhengfu mishu chu (Beiping: Beipingshi zhengfu mishu chu, 1935), pp. 1–2.

45. Zhu An, "Beiyou lu hua," p. 108.

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47. *Shizheng pinglun* (Review of city administration) 3 (July 16, 1935): 25. King Leopold III ascended the throne on February 17, 1934, following the

death of his father (r. 1909–34, q. v.), who became the king as the nephew of King Leopold II (1835–1909). In 1865, the future king Leopold II made a journey to China, and the medal that Yuan Liang received was given in his name. Belgium was one of the countries that held concessions in China, and the Beijing–Hankou railway was entrusted to a French-Belgian consortium.

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50. Ibid., p. 363.

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53. Wang Ximeng et al., “Zhongguo benwei de wenhua jianshe” (The building of a China-centered culture), in Luo Rongqu, *Cong “xihua” dao “xiandaihua,”* p. 402.

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55. Ye Qing, “Quanpan xihua? Zhimindi hua?” in Luo Rongqu, *Cong “xihua” dao “xiandaihua,”* p. 557.

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#### CHAPTER 4

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3. According to Han Guanghui’s research, Beijing’s population increased from 1.13 million in 1911 to 1.5 million in 1937. See Han Guanghui, *Beijing lishi renkou dili* (A historical demographic geography of Beijing) (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 1996), p. 134.

4. Gamble, *Peking*, p. 219.

5. The head of the Social Department in the early 1930s, Lou Xuexi, discussed the case of the textile factory in Ji County at the end of the Qing and the beginning of the Republic. According to Lou, the main reason for the failure of the factory was insufficient capital due to embezzlement by officials. See Lou Xuexi, *Beiping shi gongshang ye gaikuang* (A brief introduction to conditions of industry and commerce in Beiping) (Beiping: Beiping shi shehui ju, 1932), p. 201.

6. G. William Skinner, *The City in Late Imperial China* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1977), p. 283.

7. Wang Ling, *Beijing yu zhouwei chengshi guanxi shi* (A history of Beijing's relationship to its surrounding cities) (Beijing: Beijing yanshan chubanshe, 1988), p. 101.
8. Ibid., pp. 109–10.
9. Ibid., pp. 110–11.
10. Lou Xuexi, *Beiping shi gongshang ye gaikuang*, p. 420.
11. Wang Ling, *Beijing yu zhouwei chengshi guanxi shi*, pp. 111–12.
12. Lou Xuexi, *Beiping shi gongshang ye gaikuang*, p. 430.
13. Owen Lattimore, *The Desert Road to Turkestan* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1929), p. 7.
14. Owen Lattimore, *Nationalism and Revolution in Mongolia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1955), p. 17.
15. Ibid., p. 13.
16. Ibid., p. 17.
17. Lattimore, *The Desert Road to Turkestan*, p. 7.
18. Wang Ling, *Beijing yu zhouwei chengshi guanxi shi*, p. 115.
19. Lou Xuexi, *Beiping shi gongshang ye gaikuang*, p. 311.
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23. Lou Xuexi, *Beiping shi gongshang ye gaikuang*, p. 15.
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27. D.K. Lieu, "China's Industrial Development," in *Problems of the Pacific, 1927* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1928), p. 407.
28. Qiao Yingtang, "Tan ye gaikuang" (Conditions of the rug industry), *Shehui diaocha huikan* (Social survey) 1 (September 1930): 1–2.
29. Lou Xuexi, *Beiping shi gongshang ye gaikuang*, p. 1.
30. Ibid., p. 6.
31. Ibid., p. 8.
32. Ibid., pp. 33–37.
33. Ibid., pp. 44–52.
34. Ibid., pp. 119–29.
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39. "Minguo chu nian Beijing shanghui shiliao" (Historical sources on chambers of commerce in Beijing in the early Republic), *Beijing dangan shiliao*, nos. 18 (February 1990) to 24 (April 1991).

40. Lou Xuexi, *Beiping shi gongshang ye gaikuang*, p. 688.
41. Tao Menghe, *Beiping shenghuo fei zhi fenxi* (An analysis of the cost of living in Beiping) (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1930), p. 42.
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48. Ibid., p. 667.
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50. Lou Xuexi, *Beiping shi gongshang ye gaikuang*, p. 688.
51. Ibid., p. 680.
52. Ibid., p. 692.
53. Lien-sheng Yang, *Money and Credit in China: A Short History* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971), p. 73.
54. Ibid., p. 74.
55. Beijing shi renmin yinhang jinrong yanjiu suo, ed., *Beijing jinrong shiliao* (Historical documents on finance in Beijing), unnumbered vol., *Diandang, qianzhuang, piaohao, zhengquan pian* (Pawnshops, money shops, exchange shops, stocks and bonds) (Beijing: Beijing shi renmin yinhang jinrong yanjiu suo, 1994), pp. 3–4.
56. Lou Xuexi, *Beiping shi gongshang ye gaikuang*, p. 576.
57. Lien-sheng Yang, *Money and Credit in China*, pp. 74–75.
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61. Ibid., p. 83.
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63. Beijing shi renmin yinhang jinrong yanjiu suo, *Beijing jinrong shiliao*, unnumbered vol., *Diandang*, pp. 242–44.
64. Money shops were called *yinhang* or *qianzhuang* in Chinese. In the Yangzi River region they were called *qianzhuang*, and in north China, Canton, and Hong Kong, they were called *yinhang*. There was no major difference in their nature. In Beijing, the nationalist government required all of them to change their names to *qianzhuang*.
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83. Ibid., p. 11.
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86. Ibid.
87. Ibid., pp. 593–94.
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89. Wu Enfang et al., *Beijing de Zhongguo yinhang, 1914–1949* (Chinese banks in Beijing, 1914–1949) (Beijing: Zhongguo jinrong chubanshe, 1989), p. 167.
90. For a detailed study of this process, see chap. 4 in Brett Sheehan, “The Currency of Legitimation: Banks, Bank Money and State-Society Relations in Tianjin, China, 1916–1938” (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1997).
91. Beijing shi renmin yinhang jinrong yanjiu suo, *Beijing jinrong shiliao*, vol. 2, p. 464.
92. Ibid., vol. 3, pp. 1–3.
93. Ibid., p. 9.

94. Ibid., vol. 2, p. 414.

95. The following banks were included in this category: Zhejiang xingye yinhang (established in Hangzhou in 1907, opened a branch in Beijing in 1914); the National Industrial Bank of China (established in 1919 in Tianjin, moved to Shanghai in 1932, to Wuhan in 1937, and back to Shanghai in 1945; opened a branch in Beijing in 1919); Zhongfu yinhang (established in 1916 in Tianjin, moved to Shanghai in 1930, opened a branch in Beijing in 1917); Guohua Yinhang (established in 1927 by some Contonese in Shanghai, opened a branch in Beijing in 1935 that was under the charge of the Tianjin branch); Juxingcheng yinhang (Young Brothers' Banking Corporation, established in Chongqing in 1915 by local Sichuan merchants, opened an office in Beijing in 1915 serving the need to Sichuan students in Beijing, changed into a branch in 1925 under the management of the Tianjin branch, and closed in 1928). The above information comes from *ibid.*, vols. 2–4.

96. Ibid., vol. 4, p. 50.

97. Ibid., p. 241.

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99. Ibid., pp. 401–2. For a more detailed discussion of the relationships between warlords and modern banks, see Sheehan, "Warlords, Cadres and Bankers."

100. Beijing shi renmin yinhang jinrong yanjiu suo, *Beijing jinrong shiliao*, vol. 4, p. 411.

101. Ibid.

102. Ibid., pp. 414–15.

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104. Ibid., p. 50.

105. Ibid., p. 3.

106. Ibid., p. 70.

107. Ibid., p. 8.

108. Ibid., p. 280.

109. Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 253–60. It was established jointly by Chinese and American bankers in 1920 in Beijing. Its business focused on the government in the beginning but stopped operation after May 1927 as result of bad loans made by Zhang Bolun in Tianjin. The government confiscated a large deposit at the bank in the notorious Jisitang incident.

110. This bank was established in Shanghai in 1915 by Chen Guangfu. It opened a branch in Beijing in 1924, which was closed in June 1927 and re-opened in 1931. The shareholders of the bank concentrated in industry, banking, or insurance, with some powerful politicians such as Kong Xiangxi and Song Ziwen. See *ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 5.

111. Ibid., p. 37.

112. Ibid., pp. 38–40.

113. Ibid., pp. 41–43.

114. It was established in Tianjin in 1919 and opened a branch in Beijing in the same year. See *ibid.*, vol. 4, p. 241.

115. Ibid., p. 245.

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23. Pierre-Etienne Will and R. Bin Wong, *Nourish the People: The State Civilian Granary System in China, 1650–1850* (Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies Publications, University of Michigan Press, 1991).
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32. Tong, “Poverty in Peking,” p. 5.
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37. Tong, "Poverty in Peking," p. 1.
38. Beipingshi shehui ju (Social Welfare Department of the Beiping Municipal Government), "Beiping qigai tongji" (Statistics on beggars in Beiping), in *Shehui diaocha xuanji* (A collection of social surveys) (Beiping: n.p., September 1930), p. 63.
39. Yan Jingyao, "Beiping fanzui zhi shehui fenxi" (A sociological study of crime in Beiping), *Shehui xuejie* (Sociological world) 2 (June 1928): 33–77, and Zhou Shuzhao, "Beiping yibai ming nufan zhi yanjiu" (A study of 100 female criminals in Beiping), *Shehui xuejie* 6 (1932): 31–86. Both Yan and Zhou based their studies on data provided by the police and interviews with criminals conducted in prisons. The projects were obviously supported by the government.
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43. Ibid., p. 56.
44. Zhou Shuzhao, "Beiping yibai ming nufan zhi yanjiu," p. 48.
45. Ibid., p. 54; Yan Jingyao, "Beiping fanzui zhi shehui fenxi," pp. 57–58.
46. Zhou Shuzhao, "Beiping yibai ming nufan zhi yanjiu," pp. 38–48.
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71. *Da ziyou bao* (Great liberty news), October 4, 1912, p. 11.
72. *Da ziyou bao*, October 18, 1912, p. 7.
73. *Da ziyou bao*, December 10, 1912, p. 7.
74. Gamble, *Peking*, p. 258.
75. Mai Qianzeng, "Beiping changji diaocha," p. 115.
76. Gamble, *Peking*, p. 255.
77. Mai Qianzeng, "Beiping changji diaocha," p. 123.
78. Wang Yuanzeng, *Beijing jianyu jishi* (A report on Beijing Prison) (Beijing jianyu chuban, 1913), p. 1.
79. Zhou Shuzhao, "Beiping yibai ming nufan zhi yanjiu," pp. 76–77.
80. Yan Jingyao, "Beiping fanzui zhi shehui fenxi," p. 66–67.
81. Ibid., p. 58
82. Gamble, *Peking*, pp. 309–10.
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## CHAPTER 8

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13. Song Qifeng, *Bai shuo* (Miscellaneous accounts), printed in the Qing dynasty (n.p., n.d.).
14. Pan Rongbi, *Dijing suishi jisheng*.
15. Zhen Jun, *Tianzhi ou wen*; Zhen Jun, *Jintai zazu*, printed in the Qing dynasty (n.p., n.d.).
16. Shi Xuan, *Jiujing yi shi* (Stories of the old capital) (Beijing: Beijing guji chubanshe, 1986); Sun Chengze, *Chumming meng yu lu* (Remnants of dreams in Beijing) (Beijing: Beijing guji chubanshe, 1992); Sun Chengze, *Tianfu guangji* (A general record of Beijing) (Beijing: Beijing guji chubanshe, 1982).
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30. Joshua L. Goldstein presents a detailed study of Qi Rushan’s role in creating the modern Beijing opera in “Theatrical Imaginations: Peking Opera and China’s Cultural Crisis, 1890–1937” (Ph.D. diss., University of California, San Diego, 1999). Also see Joshua Goldstein, “Mei Lanfang and the Nationalization of Peking Opera, 1912–1930,” *Positions: East Asia Cultures Critique* 7, no. 2 (1999): 377–420.
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## CHAPTER 9

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3. Zhou Zuoren, “Qianmen yu madui ji” (Encountering mounted police at Qian Gate) (1928), in Jiang Deming, *Rumengling*, pp. 5–6.
4. Bing Xin, “Hanzai jinian ri mujuan jishi” (Collecting donations on the anniversary of the famine of drought), in *Beijing hu: Xiandai zuojia bi xia de Beijing*, 1919–1949 (On Beijing: Beijing described by modern writers [1919–1949]), vol. 1, ed. Jiang Deming (Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 1992), pp. 37–41.
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6. Chen Duxiu, “Beijing shida tese” (Ten characteristics of Beijing) (1919), in Jiang Deming, *Rumengling*, p. 3.
7. Shao Piaoping, “Beijing de jiedao ji gonggong weisheng” (Streets and public hygiene in Beijing), in Jiang Deming, *Rumengling*, p. 54.
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9. Qian Xuantong, “Zhongyang gongyuan suojian” (What I saw at Central Park) (1918), in Jiang Deming, *Rumengling*, pp. 1–2.
10. Lu Xun, “Wuti” (No title), in Jiang Deming, *Rumengling*, pp. 27–28.
11. Yu Pingbo, “Taoranting de xue” (Snow of Taoran Pavilion), in Jiang Deming, *Rumengling*, pp. 55–60; Shi Pingmei, “Xue ye” (A snowy night), in Jiang Deming, *Beijing hu*, pp. 183–88; Chen Xuezhuo, “Beihai yuri” (Sunbathing in Beihai) (1925), in Jiang Deming, *Beijing hu*, pp. 143–47; Gao Changhong, “Beihai man xie” (Sketches of Beihai) (1929), in Jiang Deming, *Rumengling*, pp. 149–50; Gao Changhong, “Naihai de yishu hua” (Making Naihai artistic) (1929), in Jiang Deming, *Rumengling*, pp. 147–48; Zhu Xiang, “Beihai jiyou” (A visit to Beihai), in Jiang Deming, *Beijing hu*, pp. 162–77; Ye Lingfeng, “Beiyou man bi” (A visit to the north) (1927), in Jiang Deming, *Beijing hu*, pp. 189–98; Yu Dafu, “Gudu riji” (Diaries in the old capital) (August 15–September 10, 1934), in Jiang Deming, *Beijing hu*, pp. 303–15; Sun Fuxi, “Beijing hu” (On Beijing), in Jiang Deming, *Beijing hu*, pp. 155–57.
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15. Ye Lingfeng, “Beiyou man bi,” p. 194.
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20. Tong Yiping, “Chun chou” (Spring sorrows) (1929), in Jiang Deming, *Rumengling*, p. 65.
21. Ding Xilin, “Beijing de dianche zhen kaile” (Beijing’s streetcars are actually running!) (1925), in Jiang Deming, *Rumengling*, pp. 61–64.
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27. Yu Dafu, “Beiping de siji” (Beijing’s four seasons), in Jiang Deming, *Beijing hu*, vol. 1, p. 329.
28. See, e.g., Chen Xuezha’s comments on Beihai Park in “Beihai yuri”; Sun Fuxi’s admiration of the grandness of imperial structures in his essays “Beijing hu” (On Beijing) and “Jin ye yue” (Tonight’s moon), in Jiang Deming, *Beijing hu*, pp. 158–61; and Shi Pingmei’s feelings toward the Tiananmen in her essay “Xue ye.” In Zheng Zhenduo’s “Beiping” and He Changqun’s “Jiu jing su xie,” as well as Xu Qinwen’s essay “Caishiken,” in Jiang Deming, *Rumengling*, pp. 337–39, we can find the same admiration for imperial architecture.
29. Yu Dafu, “Beiping de siji,” p. 322.
30. Shi Tuo, *Ma Lan* (Shanghai: Wenhua shenghuo chubanshe, 1949), p. i.
31. *Song* (praise) is the original word Lin used in the title in a sarcastic sense.
32. Lin Yutang, “Shanghai song” (Praise for Shanghai), in *Lin Yutang dai-biao zuo* (Selected works of Lin Yutang), ed. Shi Jianwei (Zhengzhou: Huanghe wenyi chubanshe, 1990), pp. 237–39.
33. Leo Ou-fan Lee, *Shanghai Modern: The Flowering of a New Urban Culture in China, 1930–1945* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999).
34. Mao Dun [pseud.], *Midnight* (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1979).
35. Deng’s work is discussed in chap. 7 of David Strand’s book *Rickshaw Beijing: City and Politics in the 1920s* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989).
36. This can be seen in the essays of Xu Qinwen (“Caishikou”), Yu Dafu (“Gudu riji”), Zhou Zuoren (“Changdian,” in Jiang Deming, *Rumengling*, pp. 9–12), and Lao Xiang (“Nan renshi de Beiping” [Incomprehensible Beiping], in Jiang Deming, *Beijing hu*, pp. 294–98).
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38. Ibid.

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40. Yan Chonglou, "Wo meiyou guxiang" (I do not have a hometown), *Luxing zazhi* (China traveler) 12, no. 1 (January 1938): 6.
41. Yingjin Zhang, *The City in Modern Chinese Literature and Film: Configurations of Space, Time, and Gender* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1996).
42. Wang Wenbao, *Zhongguo minsu xue shi* (A history of folklore studies in China) (Chengdu, Sichuan: Bashu chubanshe, 1995), p. 183.
43. Ibid., p. 183.
44. Ibid., pp. 182–219.
45. Gu Jiegang, "Miaofeng shan jinxiang zhuanhao yinyan" (Preface to the special issue on the Miaofeng Mountain pilgrimage), in Jiang Deming, *Rumengling*, pp. 68–73.
46. Gu Jiegang, preface to *Miaofeng shan suoji* (Miscellaneous accounts of Miaofeng Mountain), by Feng Kuan, reprinted in Jiang Deming, *Rumengling*, pp. 75–76.
47. Jiao Juyin, "Er zha yu Gongzhufen zhuanhao yinyan" (Preface to the special issue on the Number Two Dam and the Princess Tomb), in Jiang Deming, *Rumengling*, p. 88.
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49. Li Jiarui, preface to Li Jiarui, *Beiping fengsu leizheng*, p. 1.
50. Sun Fuyuan, "Chao shan ji suo" (Miscellaneous accounts of the Miaofeng Mountain pilgrimage), in Jiang Deming, *Beijing hu*, vol. 1, p. 135.
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## CONCLUSION

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# Index

- accessibility, and spatial change, 22  
Administration, Department of, 150  
advertising: and consumption, 160–61; and tourism, 92  
Agnew, Jean-Christophe, 190–91  
agriculture, and credit system, 124  
Agriculture and Commerce, Department of, 153–54  
amusement parks, 200–205  
An (storyteller), 199  
Ancestral Temple (Taimiao), 270  
Ancient Article Preservation, Committee on, 65  
Anding Gate, 27, 36, 86, 109  
“Angelus Novus” (Klee), 305  
annexation plans, 48–51, 50  
anonymity: and consumption, 156–62; at Tianqiao, 192–93, 206  
antique business, 13, 136–38, 139, 298–99  
architecture: and historical preservation, 99–100; and new intellectuals, 274  
Arkush, R. David, 211, 212  
asphalt paving, 39, 92, 148  
Association for Chinese Local Customs Studies (Zhonghua fengtu xuehui), 248  
Association of Local Customs Studies (Fengsu diaocha hui), 281  
auctions, 137, 184–85  
  
Baita si, 166, 169  
*Ballads Weekly* (Geyao zhoushan; journal), 281  
  
Bank of China (Zhongguo yinhang), 125, 126, 127, 130  
Bank of Communications, 125–26, 127  
banks: Chinese, 125–27; foreign, 124–25, 325n78; headquarters of, 129–30; local, 123–24, 130; and old-style credit institutions, 130–31; private, 128–29, 326n95; provincial, 127; Shanxi, 121, 122–23, 130; state, 127–28, 129  
banner system, 47  
Banque de l’Indochine (Dongfang huili yinhang), 325n78  
Baoding, 110, 132  
Baotou, 134  
bathhouses, and nostalgia, 1  
beggars, 217; and moral meaning of poverty, 216, 218–19; and new intellectuals, 268; work camps for, 244  
Beihai Park: class of visitors to, 204; in literature/art, 4, 270–71, 273, 278, 286; monuments planned for, 88; and transportation projects, 41  
Beijianting, 40  
Beijing: administrative status of, 22–24; districts of, 45, 315n79; layers of history in, 9–10; population of, 318n52, 322n3; as Republican capital, 12; and traditional Chinese culture, 8, 13  
“Beijing’s Streetcars Are Actually Running!” (Ding Xilin), 272  
Beijing Chamber of Commerce, 69, 71, 241

- Beijing Electrical Company, 52  
 Beijing-Fengtian Railway, 36  
*Beijing flavor literature (Jing wei'r wenxue)*, 2  
 Beijing-Hankou Railway: bank loans to, 126; entrusted to French-Belgian consortium, 321–22n47; and spatial change, 36, 41, 49; and Xuanwu Gate project, 60, 62  
 Beijing-Hanyang station, 182  
 Beijing Hotel, 270  
 Beijing Huashang Trolley Company, 67  
 Beijing Library, 108  
*Beijing lishi fengtu congshu* (Series on local customs in Beijing history), 248  
 Beijing-Mukden Railway, 109  
 Beijing Municipal Archives, 47, 60  
 Beijing Opera, 93  
 Beijing Prison, 230  
*Beijing ren* (Beijing people), 280, 284–85, 286–88, 289–95  
 Beijing Streetcar Limited, 67–71  
 Beijing-Suiyuan Railway, 108, 126  
 Beijing-Tianjin Railway, 35, 182  
*Beijing Tourist Guide* (1919), 200  
 Beijing University, 212, 281  
 Beijing-Zhangjiakou Railway, 36  
 Beining Railway, 128  
 Beiping Chamber of Commerce, 151  
 Beiping City (Beiping shi): and city boundaries, 48–51, 50, 315n75; as cultural center, 81–82, 96–97; and historical preservation, 97–101; and loss of political centrality, 78–81; and market system, 150; and tax collection, 51–52; tourism in, 90–97  
 Beiping City Bank, 127–28  
*Beiping fengsu lei zheng* ([Catalogue of Beijing local customs] Li Jiarui), 282  
 Beiping-Hankou Railway: bank loans to, 128; and foreign business, 80, 110; and handicrafts, 132, 133, 134  
 Beiping-Mengtougou Railway, 49  
 Beiping-Mukden Railway, 49, 80  
 Beiping National College, 164  
 Beiping National Research Institute (Beiping guoli yanjiu yuan), 248  
 Beiping-Pukou Railway, 80  
*Beiping ribao* (newspaper), 174  
 Beiping-Suiyuan Railway: bank loans to, 128; and foreign business, 80, 110; and handicrafts, 132, 134; and spatial change, 49  
*Beiping suqu lue* ([Folk songs in Beiping] Li Jiarui), 282  
 Beiyang Baoshang Bank, 125  
 Beiyang government, 126, 127  
 Belgium, 321–22n47  
 Bell Tower, 29, 144, 270, 271, 286  
 Benjamin, Walter, 162, 305–6  
 Big World (*Da shijie*), 175, 201  
 Bing Xin, 268  
 bird cages, 134  
 Bird Market (Niao Shi), 62, 63  
 bone, carved, 134  
*Book of Rites*, 144  
 Boxer Uprising, 31, 47, 182, 254, 255  
 Breton, Juliet, 31–32  
 brothels: classification of, 227; and corruption, 227–28, 243; numbers of, 226; regulation of, 231–33, 234; selling of young women to, 221–22, 235–36  
 brush and ink shops, 134  
 Buddhist temples, 30  
 Bu Hequan, 200  
 Bulmer, Martin, 212  
 Burgess, John Stewart, 212, 213, 224, 226, 226  
 Cairo, Beijing compared to, 73, 77, 175–76  
 Caishikou, 180  
 Cai Yuanpei, 281  
 calendars, and market system, 163, 169  
*Camel Xiangzi* (Lao She), 285, 287, 288, 290, 291–93  
 Cao Kun, 108  
 Caolaogongguan, 164  
 Capital City (Jingshi), 44–46  
 Capital Counties (Jingxian), 44–46  
 Capital District (Jingzhao), 46  
 Capital Exhibit for Industrial Promotion (*Jingshi quangong chenlie suo*), 153  
 capitalism, 167, 169, 294, 297, 305  
 Capital Park. *See* Jingzhao Park  
 Cartesian space, 257–58  
*Cat City* (Lao She), 285  
 central axis, 25, 29  
 Central Park: atmosphere of, 86; and consumption, 204; and imperial past, 89, 100; in Lao She, 286; and new intellectuals, 269–70, 271; opening of, 82–84  
 Chanchen Company, 120  
 Changan Avenue, 41, 148  
 Changdian, 180, 269  
 Changpuhe, 40–41  
 Changqiao, 41  
 Changyi County, 119  
 Chaoqian Market, 144  
 Chaoyang Gate, 27, 36, 41, 222  
 Chekhov, Anton, 202  
 chemical industry, 128

- Chenbao* (newspaper), 64–65, 281  
Chen Duxiu, 268–69  
Chengnan Market, 182  
Chen Guangfu, 326n110  
Chen Shengsun, 201  
Chen Weimo, 272  
Chen Xingfang, 67  
Chen Xuanshu, 67  
Chen Xuezao, 270–71  
Chen Xujing, 97, 98  
Chen Zongfan: descriptions by, 286; on Heping Gate name changes, 42; and nostalgia, 266; and spatial change, 252, 254–56, 258; on temple markets, 167–68  
Chessboard Street (Qipan jie), 41  
Chiang Kai-shek, 48, 78–79, 299  
*China Christian Yearbook, The*, 97  
China Maoye Bank, 129, 326n109  
Chinese Agricultural Bank (Zhongguo nonggong yinhang), 127  
Chinese Architecture, Society for (Zhongguo yingzao xueshe), 93  
*Chinese City between Two Worlds, The* (Elvin and Skinner), 6, 7  
Chinese Eastern Railway, 109  
Chongwen Gate: daily opening and closing of, 33; and Imperial City layout, 27, 32; and market system, 144, 147; tax offices at, 51, 126; and transportation projects, 36  
*Chunming meng yu lu* (Remnants of dreams in Beijing), 250  
“Chuntao” (Xu Dishan), 3–4  
Cihua Textile Factory, 119  
circuses, 202  
“Cities and the Hierarchy of Local System” (Skinner), 107  
*Cities and the Wealth of Nations* (Jacob), 135  
“Citizens’ Congresses,” 52  
City Bank, 151  
city gates: functions of, 30; in Imperial Beijing, 27, 33; tax stations at, 51; and transportation, 28, 34, 36, 41–42, 60–66. *See also specific gates*  
city walls: in Imperial Beijing, 33; and modernization, 298; and recycling, 65; and rural areas, 52; and segregation, 28–29; and tourism, 90–91; and transportation, 34–37, 40–41, 42, 60, 66  
Civil Engineering, Bureau of, 181  
civil service examination, 47, 134  
civil society, as ideal, 213  
Cixi (empress dowager), 4, 35, 43, 150  
Clark, T.J., 243, 264–65, 302  
class. *See social hierarchy*
- cloisonné, 113–14, 115  
clothing, secondhand, 184–85  
coal, 49, 128, 129  
commercial interests: and development, 66–71; and public parks, 84; and spatial organization, 142–43, 144  
commercialization: of folk entertainment, 196; of history, 2–3; of tradition, 207, 262–63  
Commercial Taxation Bureau, 51  
common people: and consumption, 154–55; and Forbidden City, 31; and information access, 56, 64–66, 69–71; and Tianqiao, 172. *See also Beijing ren*  
communications, 105  
communities: vs. centralized control, 238–40; and recycling, 301, 306–7  
compounds, 30, 34  
Coney Island, Tianqiao compared to, 188–89, 192, 201, 203–4  
*Confucian China and Its Modern Fate* (Levenson), 15–16  
Confucian Temple, 271, 299  
Confucius, 197  
conscience (*liangxin*), 238  
constables, 46  
“Construction of a China-Based Culture, The,” 98–99  
consumer democracy, 171  
consumption: of imports, 113, 131; and market system, 144–52, 149; and poverty, 220; and social hierarchy, 156–62, 164–65, 169–71; and spatial organization, 142–43; state encouragement of, 153–56, 169; temple markets, 143, 163–69; and Tianqiao, 184, 193, 204–5  
corruption, and prostitution, 225–27  
cosmopolitanism, 273–75  
court boots (*chaoxue*), 158  
credit system, 121–31; minting shops, 121, 124, 130; money shops, 121, 123–24, 130, 324n64; Shanxi banks, 121, 122–23, 130; and wealthy, 140.  
*See also* banks; pawnshops  
cricket fighting, 262  
crime, 221–23, 335n39, 335n40; and social control, 228–31, 244  
cultural colonization, 99  
cultural preservation, and transportation projects, 64–65, 70  
culture, and urban society, 7  
*Cuogeng lu*, 338n3  
customs taxes, 112–13
- Dacang Company, 120  
Dadu (Mongol capital), 24

- Dagongbao* (Tianjin newspaper), 65  
*dagu* (drum singing), 194, 196, 198, 202  
 Dai Jitao, 88  
 Dalu Bank, 128, 129  
 Dalu Department Store, 129  
*Daming Lake, The* (Lao She), 285  
 Da Qing (Great Qing) Bank, 125, 126  
 Dashalar, 143, 144, 147–48  
 Datong, 132  
 Dawan Agricultural Bank, 127  
 dawn markets (*xiao shi*), 13, 136  
 Daxing County, 44–46, 48, 51  
*Da Zhonghua dili zhi* (Geography of Great China), 252  
*Da ziyou bao* (newspaper), 12, 66–67, 226–27  
 de Certeau, Michel, 76  
 Deli Textile Factory, 119  
 “Dengxia manbi” (Lu Xun), 292–93  
 Deng Zhongxia, 277  
 department stores, 143, 153, 158–59, 192  
 Desheng Gate, 27, 36  
 Deutsch-Asiatische Bank (Dehua yinhang), 325n78  
 Deyishun Coal Shop, 62  
 Di'an Gate, 27, 42, 144, 145–47, 180  
 Dikötter, Frank, 230–31  
 Ding Xilin, 272  
 disaster relief, 217–18  
 “Divorce” (Lao She), 285, 286, 287–88  
 Dongan Gate, 27  
 Dongan Market: clientele of, 159, 164; and crime, 229; goods available at, 167; in Lao She, 286; size and prosperity of, 150–51, 153; and temple fairs, 152; toy shops at, 116–17  
 Dongbian Gate, 27, 35, 36  
 Dongdan, 144, 148, 229, 286  
*Dongfang zazhi*, 281  
 Donghua Gate, 25, 58  
*Dongjing menghua lu* (personal accounts of Bianling), 248–49  
 Dongsi Market, 144, 147, 180, 229, 286  
 Dongzhi Gate, 27, 36  
 draft banks. *See* Shanxi banks (*piaohao*)  
 drum beaters (*dagu de*), 135–36, 137, 139–40, 184  
 Drum Tower, 29, 144, 270, 271  
 Duan Qirui, 41, 74  
 Duara, Prasenjit, 11  
 Durante, R.J., 35  
 economy: and credit system, 121–31; dual system governing, 13, 106, 130–31; and geopolitics, 107–13; and global economy, 140–41; and handicrafts, 131–35; and industrial production, 105–7; and market system, 169; and poverty, 220; of recycling, 106, 135–41; and relocation of capital to Nanjing, 80, 106–7; and trade, 113–21. *See also* consumption; credit system; industry; market system; recycling; trade  
 Education Department, 252–53  
 egg production, 110  
 Eight Allied Forces, 22, 32, 150  
 elite: and consumption, 156, 159, 220; and Tianqiao, 182–83, 205–7  
 Elvin, Mark, 6, 7  
 embroideries, 137, 138  
 eminent domain, right of, 58  
 entertainment: folk, 193–200, 205; and nostalgia, 1; organizations, 197–200; and social hierarchy, 203–5; at temple markets, 165; at Tianqiao, 174–75, 181, 183, 186–90, 191, 195; and trade, 204–5  
 ethnicity, and poverty, 219  
 eunuchs, 145–47  
 Europe: Beijing compared to, 268–69; and trade, 112  
 everyday life: catalogues of, 259–63; and modernity, 302; and nostalgia, 263–64; personal accounts of, 250–51; and recycling, 16–17, 303; and tradition, 307  
 Examination for Prostitutes, Office of, 233  
 exhibition halls, 153–54, 298  
 exports, 113–18  
 expositions, 116  
 Exxon, 151  
 Fangshan, 132  
 fashion, and consumption, 157–58, 160, 170  
 fences, 33  
*Feng Fengxi*, 175  
*Feng Guozhang*, 128  
*Feng Kuan*, 282  
*fengshui*: and railroads, 35; and street construction, 41  
*fengsu* (local customs), 339n17  
*Fengtai*, 49, 80  
*Feng Yuxiang*, 87  
 film, 7, 202  
 Finance Department, 51–52  
 Finance Ministry, 127  
 fireworks shows, 203  
 flagpole balancing (*zhongfan hui*), 283  
 Flaubert, Gustave, 175–76  
 flour, 118

- folk entertainment, 193–200, 205  
folklore: and history, 246; origin of Chinese word for, 281; and street names, 75  
folklorist movement (*minsu xue yundong*), 267, 280–84  
Folksong Collection Society, 281  
food: and annexation plans, 49; import of, 118; and nostalgia, 1, 2, 259–60  
Forbidden City: and common people, 31; and historical preservation, 99; railroad project in, 35; spatial organization of, 25, 30; and tourism, 90–91  
foreign powers: and banks, 124–25; and consumption, 159; legations, 31; and market system, 151, 169; and recycling, 138–39; and Tianjin, 108, 110; and trade, 119–20. *See also* Legation Quarter  
Foucault, Michel, 77  
“four-faced clock” (*Simian zhong*), 201  
Four Treasures (*Siku quanshu*) project, 145  
fragmentation, 263–64, 306  
France, 92, 120. *See also* Paris  
French Oriental Huili Bank, 151  
Fucheng Gate, 27, 41  
Fuliancheng (theater troupe), 201  
Fulong Company, 151  
Fu Zhifang, 202  
Fuzhong Company, 62
- Gamble, Sidney: and Chinese sociology, 212–13, 214; on communities, 238–39, 240; on industry, 105, 112, 131; on land regulation, 59–60; and modernization, 9, 203; 1919 social survey conducted by, 2; on prison reform, 231; and prostitution, 224–28, 233, 234; on Tianqiao, 175, 199–200, 200–201  
Gao Changhong, 270, 271  
Gao Erlu, 181–82  
Gaoyang, 119  
Gate of Heavenly Peace. *See* Tiananmen  
Gate of the Great Qing, 29  
gazetteers: and historical re-presentation, 248–52; reprinting of, 246; and spatial change, 252–58, 263  
Gendarmerie, 46  
gender identity, and urban society, 7  
Gengzhen, 134  
geomancy. *See* *fengshui*  
Germany, 120, 132  
ghost beating (*da gui*) festivals, 145  
gift exchange, 11–12, 134, 197  
Gilloch, Graeme, 306
- Goddess of Mercy (Guanyin), 30  
“Going to the Black Dragon Bridge” (Bing Xin), 268  
Goldstein, Joshua L., 339n30  
Gongmao Company, 120  
Grand Canal, 107, 144, 147  
Great Britain, 108, 110, 120  
Great Wall, 92, 269, 271  
Guandi Temple, 64  
Guang'an Gate, 27, 153  
Guangqu Gate, 27  
Guangxu emperor, 195  
Guan Yu, 30  
Gubeikou, 132  
*Gudu bianqian jilue* ([History of changes in the old capital] Yu Qichang), 254, 255–56  
*Gudu sanbai liushi bang* ([360 professions in the old capital] Qi Rushan), 261  
*Gudu shiyue tukao* ([Music from markets of the old capital] Qi Rushan), 262  
guilds, 114, 237, 241  
Guixiangcun (bakery), 152  
Gu Jiegang, 281–82  
Guohua Bank, 326n95  
guxiang (hometown), Beijing as, 275–80  
“Guxiang” (Lu Xun), 278
- hair styles, 134  
Haiwang Village, 41, 164  
Hall of Great Harmony, 99  
Han, 46, 54, 74–75, 147, 219  
Han Bingqian, 202  
handicrafts: and banks, 131; and consumption, 142–43, 154; and economy, 106; and fragmentation, 306; and modern industry, 140–41; production of, 131–35, 133; at temple markets, 164, 167  
hanging-goods stalls (*guahuo pu*), 137  
Han Guanghui, 318n52, 322n3  
Hangzhou, 116  
Hankou, 214, 237  
Han Langen, 202  
Haussmann, Georges Eugène, 72, 302  
Hebei Bank, 127  
Hebei Province, 47, 48, 49–51, 119–20, 221  
He Changqun, 272–73  
Heji Company, 110  
*Henan zhuizi* singing, 193–94  
Hengdeli Company, 151  
Hengshun Company, 151  
Hengyuan Textile Factory (Tianjin), 108  
Heping Gate, 41–42  
Hershatter, Gail, 224

- He-Umezawa Agreement, 79, 90  
 historical preservation, 93–95, 97–101, 128  
 historical publications, 246–65, 338n3  
 historical redemption, 305  
 history: and authenticity, 251–52; commercialization of, 2–3; and new intellectuals, 274–75; and Republican period, 4–5; and spatial change, 252–58, 263; and tourism, 96–97
- Hobsbawm, Eric, 15, 16, 95–96
- Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation (*Huifeng yinhang*), 325n78
- horse races, 164
- Hotel de Pekin, 151
- hotels, 93, 151, 270
- “How I Wrote Zhao Ziyue” (Lao She), 295
- Huabei Daily*, 259
- Huairentang, 79
- Huangyuan jiandu ji*, 338n3
- Huashi: crime at, 229; and market system, 180; recycling at, 136–37; and spatial change, 57, 147; temple markets at, 166, 169
- Hubu Bank (Bank of the Board of Revenue), 125
- Huguosi, 145, 164, 166, 168–69, 254
- Huiyuan Market, 182
- Hu Laodao, 186
- Husheng Textile Factory, 119
- Hu Shi, 43, 97–98, 99, 238
- butong* (alleyways): in Lao She, 286; naming of, 73–75; and nostalgia, 1; and regulation, 72–73; and transportation projects, 71–72
- “I Do Not Have a Hometown” (Yan Chonglou), 278–79
- Imperial Academy (*Guozijian*), 270, 271
- Imperial Beijing: administrative system, 44; architecture in, 31–32, 274; central axis of, 25, 29; ceremonial sites, 29–30, 31; ethnic segregation in, 144, 145, 147; historical re-presentation of, 248–52; market system of, 145; and modernization, 297–98; and national history, 81–82; and new intellectuals, 269–71, 274–75; order in, 176–77; Republican Beijing as, 301–2; and revolutionary monuments, 86–90; social hierarchy in, 30–31; spatial organization of, 24–33; and tourism, 93–95, 94; transformed into public parks, 82–86; and transportation, 21, 66; and urban society, 32–33. *See also* Ming Beijing; Qing Beijing
- Imperial City (Huang cheng): and common people, 31; spatial organization of, 25, 27; and street construction, 41, 42
- Imperial Household Bank, 123
- Imperial Household Department (*neiwu fu*), 121–22
- imperial palace, 31, 144, 177
- imperial throne, historical re-presentation of, 251
- imports: consumption of, 113, 118–21, 140; and foreign merchants, 151; and social hierarchy, 156; substitution, 135
- incense fairs (*xianghuo*), 163
- indoor markets, 153
- industrialization, lack of, 118
- Industrial Tax Bureau, 51
- industry: and credit system, 124, 128, 129–30; and economy, 105–7; and fragmentation, 306; luxury goods, 113–16; and poverty, 220; prison factories, 229–30; rugs, 111–13, 114, 323n22; sausage casings, 117–18; state encouragement of, 153–56; and temple markets, 167; toys, 116–17; and World War I, 126–27. *See also* handicrafts; textiles
- information access: and public interest, 56, 75–77; and streetcar system, 69–71; and Xuanwu Gate project, 64–66
- inland tax (*nei di shui*), 112
- Inner City (Nei cheng): administrative system, 46; and city gates, 33; and market system, 145, 147–50; police in, 40, 51; spatial organization of, 25, 27; temple markets in, 165–66; and Tianqiao, 180, 204; and traffic congestion, 60
- intellectuals. *See* new intellectuals
- interest rates, 122, 124
- Internal Affairs, Department of, 57, 60, 84; Security Bureau, 181
- Internal Affairs, Ministry of, 82
- intestines, 117–18
- Invention of Tradition* (Hobsbawm and Ranger), 15, 16
- Jacobs, Jane, 135
- jade, 136–37
- Japan: and Tianjin industry, 108, 110; tourism in, 92; and trade, 118, 120, 132, 135
- Japanese invasion: and Old Beijing nostalgia, 14, 266–67, 273, 279–80; and political change, 79–80; and tourism, 91–92, 97
- Jiajing emperor, 24

- Jiang Yulin, 62  
Jiang-Zhe region, 284  
Jiao Dehai, 202  
Jiao Juyin, 282  
Jincheng Bank, 69, 128–29  
Jin dynasty, 24, 107  
Jing-Feng Railway, 36  
Jing-Han Railway. *See* Beijing-Hankou Railway  
*Jingshi jiexiang ji* (Streets and alleys in the capital city), 253  
*Jingshi wucheng fangxiang hutong ji* ([Streets and alleyways in the five districts of the capital city] Zhang Jue), 249  
Jing-Sui Railway. *See* Beijing-Suiyuan Railway  
Jingwei Textile Factory, 119  
Jing-Zhang Railway, 36  
Jingzhao Park, 47, 84–86, 89, 270  
Jin Shoushen, 252, 259–60, 262, 286  
Jin Wanchang, 202  
Jishuitan, 144, 286  
Jisitang incident, 326n109  
*Jiujing suoji* ([Miscellaneous records of the old capital city] Xia Renhu), 260, 261–62  
*Jiujing yi shi* (Remembrances of the old capital), 250  
Jixiang Tea Garden, 151  
*Journey to the West* (An), 199  
Juxingcheng yinhang (Young Brothers' Banking Corporation), 326n95
- Kaiyuan Company, 111  
Kangxi emperor, 46, 145  
Kang Youwei, 3, 37–38  
Kangzhuang, 110  
Kasson, John F., 188, 192, 203–4  
Klee, Paul, 305  
knives, 134  
Kong Xiangxi, 326n110  
*Ku Chieh-kang and China's New History* (Schneider), 284  
Kung (prince), 31
- lacquerware, 113  
lama temples, 145  
Lamson, Herbert, 213  
Land Bureau (*Tudi ju*), 57–58  
lanterns (*gongdeng*), 113, 115–16, 117  
Laoqianggen, 89  
Lao She, 284–95; and changing business practices, 160–61, 162; and consumption, 170; and history, 246, 267; and Old Beijing nostalgia, 2; and Tianqiao, 172–73, 206  
*Lao Zhang's Philosophy* (Lao She), 285
- laozi* (folk song), 194–96  
Lattimore, Owen, 109–10, 111  
leather goods, 133–34, 135  
Left Wing Tax Bureau, 51  
Legation Quarter, 31, 40, 147–48, 159  
Legation Quarter Administration Bureau, 40  
Leopold III (king of Belgium), 97, 321–22n47  
Levenson, Joseph, 15–16  
Lévi-Strauss, Claude, 304  
Liang Qizi, 216  
Liang Sicheng, 25, 29, 30, 93  
Liangxiang, 132  
Li Dazhao, 267–68  
Lieu, D.K., 112–13  
Ligu Company, 151  
Li Hongzhang, 35  
Li Jiarui, 282–83  
Li Jinghan, 215, 244  
Li Mengji, 61  
Lin Chuanjia, 200, 252–54, 258  
Lin Yutang, 276  
Li Ruohong, 32, 37  
Li Shaochun, 162  
literature: Beijing as hometown in, 275–80; Beijing flavor (*Jing wei'r wenxue*), 2; folklorist movement, 280–84; of new intellectuals, 266–80; and Tianqiao, 178–79; travel, 246, 249; and urban society, 7. *See also Lao She; specific authors*  
Liu Bannong, 281  
Liu Baoquan, 197, 202  
Liulichang, 136, 138–39, 145, 270  
Liuli River, 110  
Liu Na'ou, 276  
Liu Xisan, 158  
livelihood. *See* *minsheng* (people's livelihood)  
Li Wanchun, 162  
Liwei Company, 151  
*Liyian bao* (newspaper), 259  
loans, 128–29, 326n109  
local customs: and folklorist movement, 281–84; and gazetteers, 252; in Lao She, 285–87; and place, 339n17  
London, 239  
Longfusi: in Lao She, 286; and recycling, 136; temple market at, 145, 166, 167–68, 169  
Longhai Railway, 128  
Longyu (empress dowager), 82  
Lou Xueyi: on imports, 120–21, 324n42; and luxury good production, 114, 115, 116; and textile industry, 119, 322n5  
Lowenthal, David, 303–4  
Luanzhou shadow shows, 194

- Lu-Han Railway, 36  
*Luxing zazhi* (magazine), 271, 277–78  
 Lu Xun: on *Beijing ren*, 292–93; and folklore, 281; on *hutong* name changes, 74; and poverty, 278; on public parks, 269, 270  
 luxury goods, 113–16
- macadam roads, 39, 148  
 magicians, 186–87  
 Mai Qianzeng, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 235  
 Majiapu, 35, 182  
 Majuyuan (hat shop), 158  
 Manchuria, 109, 140  
 Manchus: banner men, 44–46; vs. Han, 54; and handicrafts, 134; moral deficiency of, 219–20; street naming and, 74–75  
 Manet, Édouard, 302  
 Mao Dun, 276  
 Maoist revolution, 6  
 Mao Zedong, 299  
 maps, 56–57  
 Marco Polo (Luguo) Bridge, 182  
 market system, 144–52, 149; changes in, 147–52, 180; and consumption, 159; goods available in, 142; political factors influencing, 169; during Qing dynasty, 144–47, 146; and street construction, 148–50; temple markets, 163–69; temporal influences on, 170  
 martial arts contests/displays, 164, 186, 189–90  
 Master Lu Temple, 254  
 May Fifth Festival, 179  
 May Fourth Movement, 72, 278, 281, 295  
 May Thirtieth Movement, 72  
 medicine sellers, 189–90, 191  
 Meifeng Company, 120  
 Meifeng Machinery Factory, 108  
 Mei Lanfang, 202  
 Mengtougou, 49  
 Meng Xiaodong, 202  
 Meng Xinbiao, 186  
 metonym, Beijing as, 294–95  
 Miao Feng Mountain, pilgrimages to, 281–82, 283, 284  
 Ming Beijing, 24–25; historical publications in, 246, 249–52; industry in, 113, 114, 115; market system in, 144, 145; poverty in, 216–17; Qing nostalgia for, 264; and Tianqiao, 178–79  
 Minghua Textile Factory, 119  
 Ming Tombs, 269
- minsheng* (people's livelihood), 240–42, 299–301  
 minting shops (*yinlu*), 121, 124, 130  
*Miscellaneous Accounts of Miaofeng Mountain* (Feng Kuan), 282  
 missionary institutions, 212  
 Mitchell, Timothy, 73, 77, 175–76  
 Mitsubishi Corporation, 118  
 Miyun, 132  
 mobility, and spatial change, 22  
 model markets, 155–56  
 model prisons, 84  
 modernity: anticipation of, 264–65, 279, 302–3, 307; definition of, 17; and new intellectuals, 279–80; vs. tradition, 8–9; and urban society, 7; and westernization, 17–18  
 modernization: and local values, 9; vs. modernity, 303; resistance to, 297–98; and tradition, 299  
 “modern taste,” 16, 17  
 money shops (*yinhao; qianzhuang*), 121, 123–24, 130, 324n64  
 Mongolia, 109–10, 111, 133, 140  
 Mongol language, street naming and, 74–75  
 Mongols, 24  
 monuments: key elements of, 89; revolutionary, 86–90; and tradition, 298  
 moon walls (*yué cheng; weng cheng*), 30  
 morality: and poverty, 216–17, 218–19, 223; and prison reform, 231; and proscription, 225–26, 236; and sociology, 236–45  
 Morrison, Hedda, 3, 4; photographs by, 115, 117, 133, 166, 168, 191, 283  
 Mosse, George, 87  
 Mother's Club of Peking, 159  
 “moving electric shadow” houses, 187  
 municipal administration, 44–53; and city boundaries, 48–51, 50; consolidation of, 46–47; districts, 45; in Imperial Beijing, 44–46; and public interest, 55–56; and relocation of capital to Nanjing, 47–48; and rural areas, 52–53; and tax collection, 51–52  
 Municipal Council: and consumption, 153, 155–56; and development, 80–82; establishment of, 46–47; and information access, 63, 64–66, 75–77; and land regulation, 57–60; and mapmaking, 57; and neighborhood access, 72; and poverty, 221; and public interest, 57, 241; and social control, 239–40; and streetcar system, 71; and street construction and maintenance,

- 38, 40; and tax collection, 51, 232; vision of, 12; and Xuanwu Gate project, 60–66
- Municipal Finance, Office of, 51
- museumification, 15
- museums, 270
- Mu Shiying, 276
- musical instruments, 262
- “My Whole Life” (Lao She), 285, 287, 289
- naming rights, 71–75
- Nanchangjie, 41, 58
- Nanchizi, 41, 58
- Nanding, 164
- Nanhai, 271
- Nanjing: and Beiping tourism, 93; Palace Museum collections shipped to, 79; relocation of capital to, 8, 12–13, 24, 48, 78, 220, 227
- Nanshi, 278
- Naquin, Susan, 163
- national citizenship, 294
- National Industrial Bank of China, 326n95
- nationalism: and tradition, 95–97, 298; and urban society, 7
- Nationalist government: and banks, 125–26, 129; and development, 81–82; and location of capital, 12–13, 48, 78–79, 220; and money shops, 324n64; and monuments, 87–88; and pawnshops, 122; and real estate transactions, 57–58; significance of, 8; and social control, 239–40; and tradition, 298; unclear definition of society, 243–44; and westernization, 99; and Xuanwu Gate project, 60
- National Revolutionary Army, 88
- Neiliansheng (shoe store), 158
- New China Bank, 126–27
- new intellectuals: and *Beijing ren*, 295; Southern origin of, 266; and tradition, 275–80; view of Beijing, 266–75
- New Policy Reform, 47, 51, 180, 315n79
- newspapers: and cultural integration, 76; and history, 259; and information access, 64–65; and prostitution, 226–28; and Tianqiao, 196; and urban society, 7
- New World Entertainment Center (*Xin shijie*), 175, 200–201, 203–4
- “New York in 1941” (Lévi-Strauss), 304
- night markets, 13
- 1911 Revolution: and banks, 123, 125; and ethnic discrimination, 219; and prostitution, 227, 255; and spatial change, 257–58; and temple markets, 163
- Niu Maosheng, 189–90, 191
- Niu Nai’e, 218, 219–20
- nonprofessionalism, in commerce, 161
- North China Autonomous Zone, 79
- North City, 187
- Northern Expedition, 47–48, 79, 87, 88
- nostalgia: and fragmentation, 263–64; and new intellectuals, 266–75, 279–80; for Old Beijing, 1–3, 14, 259–60; for the present, 301–2, 303–5; and recycling, 143, 304–5; and Tianqiao, 2, 4
- Observatory, 271
- “Ode to Shanghai, An” (Lin Yutang), 276
- Old Beijing: in art/literature, 2, 14; nostalgia for, 1–3, 14, 259–60; Republican Beijing as, 262–63; Tianqiao as symbol of, 207. *See also* Imperial Beijing; Ming Beijing; nostalgia; Qing Beijing
- “Old Shop, An” ([“Lao zihao”] Lao She), 160–61, 285, 287
- Olsen, Donald J., 14–15, 89
- opera, 261, 339n30
- Opium Wars, 31, 107, 124
- order, at Tianqiao, 173–77
- otherness, and new intellectuals, 277
- Outer City: administrative system, 46; and city gates, 33; criminals in, 222; and market system, 144–45, 147–50; police in, 180; and prostitution, 234; spatial organization of, 25, 27–28, 54; temple markets in, 166–67
- Palace Museum, 79, 251, 270, 271
- Pan Fu, 42
- Paozi River, 254
- paper collectors, 3
- paper crafting, 289
- paper currency, 124, 127
- Paris: and anticipation of modernity, 264–65, 302–3, 307; police force in, 239; spatial change in, 72, 73, 77
- Past Is a Foreign Country, The* (Lowenthal), 303–4
- pawnshops: and modern banks, 130; in old-style credit system, 121–22; petty (*xiao ya*), 136; and recycling, 13; and Tianqiao, 184–85
- Peking: A Historical and Intimate Description* (Bredon), 31–32
- Peking: Temples and City Life* (Naquin), 163

- Peking American College Women's Club, 159  
 Peking Friday Study Club, 159  
 Peking Law School, 230  
*Peking Utility Book*, 159  
 "pen assistants," 185  
 Peng Fangcao, 272  
 Peng Jiazhen, 88  
 Peng Xiukang, 201, 202  
 People's Republic of China, 299  
 Persia, 112  
 pet birds, 262  
 pictorials, and urban society, 7  
 pilgrimages, 281–82, 283, 284  
 Pinde Company, 151  
 Ping-Han Railway. *See* Beiping-Hankou Railway  
*pingshu* (storytelling), 197–99  
 Ping-Sui Railway. *See* Beiping-Suiyuan Railway  
 place, 339n17  
 "Plan for the Beiping Tourist District," 90  
 police: brutality, 268; establishment of, 315n79; and market reform, 151; and prostitution, 232–33, 235; and social control, 239; and transportation projects, 60  
 "pornographic bottle show," 187  
 port cities: and consumption, 159; trade and, 107  
 postal systems, 75  
 poverty: and consumption, 156–57, 163–69, 170–71; and crime, 221–23, 243; and literature, 267–68, 275; moral valuation of, 216–17, 218–19, 223; and prison reform, 231; and prostitution, 220, 224–28; and recycling, 300; sociological study of, 214–28, 242–43; statistics, 214–15; and Tianqiao, 205–7  
 power relations, patterns of, 6  
 Preserving Historical Sites in the Old Capital, Committee for (Gudu wenwu zhengli weiyuanhui), 93  
 Princeton Center, 212, 213  
 Prison Department, 230  
 prisons, 84, 229–31, 244, 298  
 production. *See* industry  
 professional organizations, 142; and fragmentation, 306; guilds, 114, 237, 241; and public interest, 240–41; at temple markets, 167; at Tianqiao, 193–200  
 progress, 305  
 "Proposal for Beiping's Development," 81  
 prostitution: and corruption, 243; and ethnicity, 220; forced, 221–22, 235–36; legalization of, 224, 225–26, 232, 236; regulation of, 231–36; and sociology, 224–28; statistics, 226  
 Protestantism, 212  
 protests: against police brutality, 268; against streetcar system, 69–71; against Xuanwu Gate project, 61–64  
 Public Health, Department of, 52  
 public interest: defining, 55–66; and information access, 75–77; and land regulation, 58–60; and *minsheng*, 240–42; and sociology, 211, 236–45; and streetcar system, 71; and urban space, 55, 65–66; and Xuanwu Gate project, 60–66  
 public opinion (*yulun*), 238  
 public parks, 83; in literature/art, 270; and new intellectuals, 274; social/cultural implications of, 82–86, 298; in Tianqiao, 182. *See also specific parks*  
 Public Security, Department of, 52, 60–64, 235  
 public utilities, 108, 128  
 Public Works, Department of, 38, 52, 60–64, 88  
 Punishment, Board of, 230  
 Purple Forbidden City (*Zi jin cheng*). *See* Forbidden City  
 Puyi (emperor), 280  
 Qian Gate: and crime, 222, 229; daily opening and closing of, 33; entertainment at, 194–95; and industry, 167; and market system, 143, 147–50; police at, 268; and prostitution, 234; and railroads, 21–22, 35–37, 62; reconstruction of, 22, 23, 64; shops at, 115, 136–37, 144, 158, 161, 162; and spatial change, 36, 180; and spatial organization, 27, 32; and temple markets, 169  
 Qianlong emperor, 114, 194  
 Qian Xuantong, 269  
 Qi Dekui, 62–63  
 Qing Beijing, 25, 26; administrative system of, 44–46; and antique business, 138; banks in, 124–25, 128; consumption in, 153, 154–55, 157–58; credit system in, 121–24; and disaster relief, 217–18; entertainment in, 197; hierarchical organization of, 54; historical publications in, 246, 249–52; industry in, 113–14, 115, 140–41, 142; market system in, 144–47, 146; New Policy Reform, 47, 51, 180, 315n79; and

- nostalgia, 262, 264; poverty in, 216–18, 219; prison reform in, 229–30; and railroads, 35; and real estate transactions, 57; recycling in, 137; street conditions in, 37–38; street naming in, 73–74; tax collection in, 51, 52; temple markets in, 169; and Tianqiao, 178–81; and tourism, 95–96; and trade, 109, 140–41
- Qinghe Textile Factory, 119
- Qinghua University, 95
- Qinian Hall, 30
- Qinqiang* dramas, 194
- Qin unification, 338n3
- Qin Zizhuang, 70–71
- Qi Rushan: and Beijing opera, 339n30; and Central Park, 84, 90; and history, 252, 260–61, 262; local customs described by, 286; and nostalgia, 264, 266; and recycling, 140
- Qixin Cement Company (Tianjin), 108
- Quannmin bao* (newspaper), 259
- Quanyechang, 152, 153
- Qu Xuanying, 10–11, 248, 252, 257, 283
- radio, and urban society, 7
- ragpickers, 3–4, 5
- railroads: and architectural harmony, 32; and banks, 128; improvements in, 34–37, 80; and Qian Gate reconstruction, 21–22; and Tianqiao, 180, 182; and trade, 140. *See also specific railroads*
- Ranger, Terence, 15, 16, 95–96
- rae book businesses, 13, 138–39
- real estate transactions, monitoring of, 57–58
- Record of Cultural Treasures of the Old Capital, A (Jiudu wenwu lue)*, 96–97
- recycling: and city walls, 42, 65; and community, 306–7; definition of, 11; economy of, 106, 135–41, 204; and everyday life, 16–17; and fragmentation, 306; and handicrafts, 131; and historical preservation, 93–95; network of, 135–40, 143; and nostalgia, 143, 301–2; by ragpickers, 3–4; as resistance, 300–301, 304–5; significance of, 15; and social cohesion, 141, 171; and Tianqiao, 205–7, 300; and tradition, 299–300, 306–7
- regulations: land, 57–60; of setback lines, 72–73
- Renji Company, 110
- Renli Carpet Company, 111, 151
- Republican Beijing: compared to Western cities, 268–69; and new intellectuals, 266–75
- Republican political ideals: and new intellectuals, 267–68; and public interest, 55–56; and public parks, 82–86; and revolutionary monuments, 86–90; and social hierarchy, 12; and state policies, 75–77
- resources, and annexation plans, 49
- Review of City Administration (Shizheng pinglun)*, 80, 91
- rice, 324n42
- Rickshaw* (Lao She), 172–73, 292. *See also Camel Xiangzi* (Lao She)
- Rickshaw Beijing* (Strand), 7–8, 9–10, 71, 200, 306
- rickshaws: regulation of, 43; and streetcar system, 70, 71, 241
- Right Wing Tax Bureau, 51
- ritual ceremonies, and recycling, 11–12
- Rockefeller, John D., 151
- Rong Jianchen, 202
- Rong Tao, 254
- Rongxian Hutong, 58
- Rong Zhaozu, 281
- Rothkegel, Curt, 22
- Rowe, William, 237
- rug industry, 111–13, 114, 323n22
- runoff flow, 57
- rural areas: annexation plans for, 50; Beijing's relationship with, 52–53; and Maoist revolution, 6; and poverty, 220–21; vs. urban society, 237–38
- Russian entertainers, 202–3
- Russo-Chinese Bank (Daosheng yinhang), 325n78
- Salt Industry (Yanye) Bank, 69, 128
- Sanjing Company, 110, 120
- Sankong xuanmen, 40
- Sanling Company, 120
- sausage casing industry, 117–18
- Scenery Hill (Jingshan; Meishan), 25, 29, 270, 271
- Schneider, Laurence, 284
- scholarship on Beijing, 5–8
- Schorske, Carl, 17
- scissors, 134
- Scott, James, 244
- screen cloth (*leng bu*), 134
- secondhand goods: and consumption, 162; recycling of, 135–40, 300; shops, 13, 137–38; at Tianqiao, 183–86, 189. *See also* recycling
- segregation, and city walls, 28
- sentries, 33

- setback lines, 58, 72–73  
 sewage system, 60  
 Shandong Province, 119  
 Shanghai: auctions in, 138; banks in, 125, 127, 128, 129; Beijing compared to, 272–73, 276–78, 279; exposition in, 116; foreign presence in, 48; and handicrafts, 132; market system in, 152; scholarship on, 7, 8; and sociology, 214; streetcar system in, 70; and trade, 117, 119, 120  
 Shanghai Commercial Savings Bank (Shanghai shangye chuxu yinhang), 129, 326n110  
 Shangyuan Festival, 115  
 Shanxi, 134  
 Shanxi banks (*piaohao*), 121, 122–23, 130  
 Shao Piaoping, 38, 269  
 Shen Aicang, 67  
 Shenchang Company, 120, 151  
 Shen Congwen, 35  
 Shengdong Market, 144  
 Shengxifu (shoe store), 151, 158  
 Shen San, 188  
 Shenwu Gate, 25, 29, 41  
 Shen Yinmo, 281  
 Shi, Mingzheng, 8–9, 82  
 Shi Congyun, 87  
 Shijiazhuang, 79, 132  
 Shi Pingmei, 270  
 Shishahai, 270  
 Shi Tuò, 84, 90, 271, 275–76  
 Shi Zhecun, 276  
 shops: antique, 13, 136–38, 139; brush and ink, 134; and consumption, 157–62; gift box, 134; for imported goods, 119–20; jade, 136–37; management of, 160–61, 162; numbers of, 142; secondhand goods, 13, 137–38; at Tianqiao, 174  
 Shou Xi, 41–42  
 Shuang Houping, 197  
 Shumiyuanjiao Market, 144  
 Shuntian Prefecture (Shuntian fu), 44–46, 51  
 Shunyi County, 110  
 Siberian Railway, 80  
 Siemens Company, 151  
*siheyuan* (residential courtyards), 1, 72, 286  
 silk flowers, 134  
 Simon, Jonathan, 55  
 singsong girls, 175  
 Sinkiang, 111  
 Sino-Russian Daosheng Bank, 151  
 Siu, Helen, 11–12  
 Skinner, G. William, 6, 7, 107  
 soap women, 136  
 social control: and modernization, 298; and sociology, 228–36, 244; spatial reorganization as, 73, 77, 84–86, 155–56; and urban society, 238  
 social engineering, 9  
 social hierarchy: and consumption, 142–43, 156–62, 164–65, 169–71; and entertainment, 203–5; in Imperial Beijing, 30–31; and market system, 144–47; and modernization, 298; and new intellectuals, 277; and poverty, 215; and spatial change, 76–77; and street construction and maintenance, 39–40; and Tianqiao, 192–93, 200, 205–7; and vehicle taxes, 43–44  
 socialist state, and recycling, 11–12  
 social organizations, structure of, 6  
*Social Pathology in China* (Lamson), 213  
 social reform, 231  
 Social Works, Department of, 114  
 sociology: and *Beijing ren*, 295; Chicago school of, 211–12; and crime, 221–23; and new intellectuals, 275; and nostalgia, 302; and poverty, 214–28; and prostitution, 224–28; and public interest, 236–45; and social control, 228–36; study of, 211–14  
 socks, 132–33, 135  
 Song dynasty, 114, 194; historical publications during, 248–49; poverty during, 216  
 “Song of Tianqiao” (Yi Shunding), 175  
 Songzhuemei (toy workshop), 116  
 Song Ziwen, 326n110  
 South City Amusement Park, 174–75, 182, 200, 201–4, 270  
 South City Public Park, 182  
 Southeast Asia, 118  
 Soviet Union, 111  
 spatial change: and history, 252–58, 263; and social hierarchy, 76–77; and transportation projects, 22, 33–44, 80. *See also specific places*  
 sports facilities, 86  
 spring ground fairs (*chunchang*), 163  
 state-society relations, scholarship on, 7–8  
 steamrollers, 39  
 Strand, David: on fragmentation, 306; on layered history, 9–10; on *minsheng*, 240–41, 242, 244, 300; on police, 239; on public space, 72; on recycling, 42; on rickshaw-streetcar conflict, 71; on state-society relations, 7–8  
 streetcar system, 68; and banks, 128; controversy over, 66–71, 241; and cultural integration, 76; in Lao She, 286;

- and new intellectuals, 272; power plant supplying, 49, 52; and Tianqiao, 180, 181, 182–83; and tourism, 98
- streets: budget for maintenance, 269; construction and maintenance, 37–41, 39; elevation of, 57; historical publications on, 249, 253–54; and imperial ceremonial sites, 29–30; maps of, 57; and market system, 148–50; naming of, 71–75, 257; political opposition to, 41–42; and regulation, 43–44; social functions of, 72; and streetcar system, 66; and Tianqiao, 180–81; and tourism, 92
- Stuart, J. Leighton, 162
- summer palaces: and antique business, 138; and new intellectuals, 270, 271; old (Yuanming Yuan), 88, 95; restoration of, 150; and Tianqiao, 178
- Sun Enlin, 277–78
- Sun Fuxi, 21, 270
- Sun Fuyuan, 284
- Sun Guomi, 249
- Sun Shengfu, 201
- Sun Xueshi, 69, 241
- Sun Yat-sen, 56, 88, 240
- Sun Yiqing, 181
- Taihe Hall, 30
- tailor shops, 159
- Taiping Rebellion, 122
- Taisui Hall, 153–54
- Tanggu Agreement, 79
- Tang Jingcheng, 202
- Tang Mountains, 49, 271
- Tan Xinpei, 197
- Taoist temples, 30
- Tao Menghe, 118, 156–57, 215
- Taoran Pavilion, 269, 270
- taxation: collection system, 51–52; and prostitution, 225, 232, 235–36; in Tianjin, 135; and trade, 112–13, 120; vehicle taxes, 40, 43–44
- teahouses, and nostalgia, 1
- television, and nostalgia, 1
- temple markets, 168; atmosphere of, 205; and consumption, 162, 163–69; decline in status of, 143; entertainment at, 165; and market system, 145, 152
- Temple of Agriculture, 29, 91, 182, 200, 270, 271
- Temple of Heaven, 29, 30; industrial exhibition held at, 153–54; preservation of, 94–96; as public park, 101, 180; ritual ceremonies performed at, 299; and Tianqiao, 172; and tourism, 94, 271; and westernization debate, 99
- Temple of the Big Buddha (Dafosi), 187
- Temple of the Earth (Di tan), 47, 84, 85, 164
- Temple of the Earth and Grain, 82
- temples, secularization and commercialization of, 163–64, 169
- “Ten Characteristics of Beijing” (Chen Duxiu), 268–69
- Texaco, 151
- textiles: and banks, 128; foreign ownership of factories, 108; and handicrafts, 132–33; import of, 118, 119; production of, 119, 322n5; and trade, 111
- theaters: and market system, 151; prosperity of, 227; at temple markets, 165; at Tianqiao, 181, 202
- “Theses on the Philosophy of History” (Benjamin), 305
- Thousand Step Way (Qianbu lang), 29, 41
- Tiananmen: in literature/art, 4; and new intellectuals, 270; and spatial change, 41, 70–71; and spatial organization, 27, 29; and tradition, 299
- Tianchengzhai (shoe store), 158
- Tianfeng Market, 182
- Tianfu guangji* (General record of Beijing), 250
- Tianjin: auctions in, 138; banks in, 125, 127, 128, 129–30; and Beijing economy, 107–10, 112–13, 114, 119, 120, 135, 140, 147; and handicrafts, 132; and sociology, 214; streetcar system in, 70
- Tianjin Fujian Company, 108
- Tianqiao district, 172–207; amusement parks at, 200–205; and consumption, 193, 204–5; and crime, 222, 229; development of, 57, 69, 178–83; dishonesty in, 185–86, 190–93; entertainers’ organizations at, 197–200; entertainment at, 174–75, 183, 186–90, 191, 195; folk entertainment at, 193–97; in Lao She, 286; and market system, 148; as microcosm of Beijing, 172–73; and Old Beijing nostalgia, 2, 4; and order, 173–77, 205–6; and recycling, 13–14, 205–6, 300; secondhand goods at, 183–86, 189; shops at, 174; and social hierarchy, 192–93, 200, 205–7
- Tian Yunjin, 175
- Tientsin. *See* Tianjin
- “tiger booths,” 184
- tobacco industry, 108
- Tokyo, 135
- Tong, Y.L., 218–19, 220
- Tong County, 49, 110, 132
- Tonghe Fuel Shop, 64
- Tongshenghe (hat store), 151

- Tongxian, 52  
 Tong Yiping, 271–72  
 Tongzhou, 35  
 tourism: and annexation plans, 49; and new intellectuals, 271; and nostalgia, 1; and railroads, 80; and tradition, 90–97, 298–99; and urban society, 7; and westernization, 97–101  
 towels, 132, 135  
 toy industry, 116–17  
 trade: and entertainment, 204–5; exports, 113–18; and port cities, 107; and Tianjin, 109; and transportation, 140; and world market, 110, 111–13, 115–16, 118, 120–21. *See also* imports  
 tradition: commercialization of, 207, 262–63; invention of, 16, 95–96, 298–300; vs. modern, 10–11; museumification of, 15–16; and new intellectuals, 275–80; and political change, 78–82; and public parks, 82–86; and recycling, 11–12, 15, 16–17, 306–7; and revolutionary monuments, 86–90; scholarship on, 8–9; at Tianqiao, 205; and tourism, 90–97; and westernization, 97–101  
 transportation, 21; and annexation plans, 49; controversies over, 60–66; employment in, 105; improvements in, 33–44, 80; and land regulation, 59–60; and local interests, 66–71; and market system, 147, 169; mass, 12, 66–67; and spatial organization, 28, 33–34; and trade, 107, 109–10, 111, 140, 324n42. *See also* railroads; streetcar system; streets  
 Trans-Siberian Railway, 109  
 Treaty of Beijing, 108  
 Treaty of Tianjin, 107  
 treaty ports, 214  
 trolley system. *See* streetcar system  
 Tudi miao (temple fair), 166, 169  
 Turkey, 112  
 Turksib Railway, 111  
 Union Hospital, 151  
 unions, 240  
 United States: and tourism, 92; and trade, 111, 112, 117, 118, 120  
 universities, bank offices at, 128  
 urban society: contradictions in, 32–33; and crime, 229; vs. rural society, 237–38; scholarship on, 5–7; and sociology, 211–12  
 vaudeville shows, 181  
 venereal disease, 235  
 vernacular language movement, 282–84  
 Wang, David Der-wei, 301  
 Wang Anyi, 307  
 Wang Bolong, 182–83  
 Wangfujing: and consumption, 159–60, 162, 169–70; and market system, 147–48, 150–51, 156; recycling at, 137; and spatial organization, 143  
 Wang Huaiqing, 87  
 Wang Jiaoxu, 64  
 Wang Jinming, 87  
 Wang Yuanzeng, 229  
 Wanping County, 44–46, 48, 51  
 warlords: and banks, 126–27, 128; scholarship on, 7–8; and trade, 110–11  
 Water Center Pavilion (Shuixinting), 182, 200  
 Water Gate, 40  
 water supply, 49, 128  
 Wei Shudong, 99–100  
 Wenchang (sage), 197  
 Wenchang Temple, 164  
 Wenhua Department Store, 153  
 Western Hills, 270, 271  
 westernization: and modernity, 17–18; and tradition, 97–101. *See also* modernization  
 West Tianqiao Market, 182  
 “Where Is My Hometown?” (Sun Enlin), 277–78  
 Will, Pierre-Etienne, 217–18  
 women: and consumption, 165; and crime, 221–22, 223, 235; and folk entertainment, 196; and poverty, 215; and prostitution, 224  
 Wong, R. Bin, 217–18  
 Woods, Robert, 212  
 world expositions, 111, 114, 115, 116, 154  
 World War I: and banks, 126–27; and trade, 112, 324n42  
 wrestling, 187–88  
 Wu Gate, 25  
 Wu Jingchao, 238  
 Wulusheng Company, 151  
 Xi'an Gate, 27, 42, 153  
 Xianfeng emperor, 113  
 Xiangchang Market, 58, 155–56, 180–81  
*xiangtu* (local geography and history), 252, 278  
 Xiannong Market, 182  
*Xiaogong bao* (newspaper), 196  
 Xia Renhu, 252, 260, 261–62  
 Xibian Gate, 27, 62  
 Xidan: and change, 180; and consumption, 153, 156, 159, 161, 170; and

- crime, 229; in Lao She, 286; and market system, 144, 147, 148, 151–52; and spatial organization, 143
- Xidan Department Store, 164–65, 167
- Xihua Gate, 25, 58
- Xijin zhi*, 338n3
- Xing, Wenjun, 212
- xingmu* (storytelling stage prop), 197, 198
- Xinhua Company, 151
- Xinhua Street, 41, 57, 58
- Xinjiang, 80
- Xinmin bao*, 259
- Xinxing News*, 259
- Xisi Market, 144, 229, 286
- Xizhi Gate, 27, 36, 164
- Xuanhua, 134
- Xuanwu Gate: daily opening and closing of, 33; and Imperial City layout, 27, 32; as “real Beijing,” 272; transportation project, 36, 60–66
- Xu Dishan, 3–4
- Xue Dubi, 84–86
- Xu Jie, 292–93
- Xu Shengyu, 201
- Xu Xu, 272
- Xu Zhimo, 272
- Yan (courtesan), 201
- Yan, Yunxiang, 11–12
- Yan Chonglou, 278–79
- Yandu congkao* ([Investigations of the capital city] Chen Zongfan), 254–55, 256
- Yandu youlan zhi* ([Records of a visit to the capital city] Sun Guomi), 249
- Yanfeng bao* (newspaper), 196
- Yang, Lien-sheng, 121, 122–23, 124–25
- Yang Derui, 281
- yanghang* (foreign-owned import shops), 119–20
- yanghuo zhuang* (shops selling industrial products), 119–20
- Yangjiao Market, 144
- Yang Shuang’en, 187–88
- Yan Jingyao: crime data collected by, 335n39; and definition and causes of crime, 221–23, 236, 238; and political crimes, 335n40; on punishment, 242
- Yanqing, 134
- Yan Xishan, 78–79
- Ye Lingfeng, 270, 271
- Yenching University, 212
- Ye Qing, 99
- Ye Shenglan, 162
- Ye Shengzhang, 162
- Yihe Company, 110, 120
- Yin Xiuchen, 202
- Yi Shunding, 175
- Yizhao Department Store, 158–59
- Yizhong Company, 108
- YMCA, 212
- Yokohama Specie Bank (Hengbin zhengjin yinhang), 325n78
- Yongding Gate, 27, 29, 180, 182
- Yongding River, 49
- Yonghe Palace, 145, 271
- Yongle emperor, 24
- Yongzheng emperor, 145
- Youan Gate, 27
- Yu (prince), 151
- Yuan Beijing, 24, 144, 338n3
- Yuan Liang: Belgian medal received by, 321–22n47; and market system, 150; and tourism, 93; and tradition, 90–91, 96–97, 99, 100, 101
- Yuan Shikai: assassination attempt on, 88; and banks, 125, 126–27; investments in Tianjin, 108; and Municipal Council, 47; and prostitution, 225; and ritual ceremonies, 299; and street construction, 41
- Yuanshi yeting ji*, 338n3
- Yu Dafu, 270, 273, 275
- Yuguan, 79
- Yuhua Textile Factory, 119
- Yu Pingbo, 270
- Yu Qiaqing, 67
- Yu Qichang: and nostalgia, 264, 266, 302; and spatial change, 252, 254, 255–56, 258
- Yu Zhenting, 181
- Yuzhou feng* (magazine), 288
- Zaolin huozi (Fuyou Street), 40
- Zhang, Yingjin, 8–9, 279
- Zhang Bolun, 326n109
- Zhang Cixi (Zhang Jiangcai), 175, 182, 197, 248, 252, 283
- zhanggu* (historical anecdotes and legends), 258–59
- Zhangjiakou, 132
- Zhangjiakou-Kulun Railway, 80
- Zhang Jue, 249
- Zhang Weici, 237–38
- Zhang Xiruo, 99
- Zhang Xueliang, 79
- Zhang Xun, 128
- Zhang Youxin, 80
- Zhang Zhenfang, 128
- Zhang Zhidong, 36
- Zhang Zuolin, 42, 299
- Zhao Jin, 226
- Zhao Xianyu, 175
- Zhao Yuan, 161, 291
- Zhao Ziyue* (Lao She), 285, 286

- Zhejiang xingye yinhang, 326n95  
*Zhengbao* (newspaper), 259  
Zhengyang Gate. *See* Qian Gate  
Zhengyang Gate Avenue, 28  
Zheng Zhenduo, 270  
Zhili Province Bank, 127  
Zhili Province Committee, 154  
Zhongding, 164  
Zhongfu yinhang, 326n95  
Zhongnan Bank, 129–30  
Zhongnanhai, 93, 299
- Zhong Ruoxia, 172, 173–74, 175, 177  
*Zhou li: Kaogong ji* (Rites of Zhou: On craftsmanship), 24  
Zhou Shuzhao, 221, 223, 231, 335n39  
Zhou Zuoren, 42, 268, 281  
Zhu An. *See* Qu Xuanying  
Zhuang (Zhou dynasty king), 196, 197  
Zhu Qiqian, 47, 82, 89–90, 93, 100  
Zhushikou, 229  
Zhu Xiang, 270  
Zuoan Gate, 27

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