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Selling Sex in a Culture of Convergence:
Prostitution in the French Concession of Shanghai

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An Honors Thesis Submitted for partial fulfillment of the requirements for graduation with
honors in History from Hamline University

Abstract

From 1849 to 1943, both Chinese and European prostitutes lived and worked in Shanghai's French Concession, catering to all the ethnic groups in the city. After the establishment of foreign concessions placed Shanghai under semi-colonial control, French and Chinese culture combined in this area of the city to create a unique urban landscape that was unlike anywhere else in the world. This differentiated prostitution in the French Concession from prostitution in other parts of Shanghai. Over the years, historians have written extensively on how prostitution changed and flourished in Shanghai as a whole, but few focused on the French concession specifically. While other scholars often made generalizations about prostitution in all parts of the city, as though it was all uniformly similar, they failed to take into account how the sexual commodification of "Frenchness" impacted prostitution in this area specifically. Both the writings of contemporary European scholars who visited Shanghai during this time and legal records related to prostitution reveal that the exchange of French and Chinese culture had an impact on the nature of sex work in the French Concession. With French institutions like the *maison de rendez-vous*, which were secret meeting houses for lovers, becoming an important part of the way that prostitutes sold their services to clients and Russian prostitutes claiming to be French in order to attract more Chinese clients, it is clear that prostitution in the French concession of Shanghai was different from anywhere else in the city. The influence that the French had on sex work in Shanghai illustrates how cultural diffusion can transform people's lives and the communities they live in. By studying the semi-colonial control France exercised over China during this time period, one can also understand the potential impact that globalization could have on East Asian cultures in the future.

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Introduction

When the French Concession of Shanghai was founded in 1849, it was unlikely that anyone involved knew that the small plot of land given to the French as part of the unequal treaties that followed the Opium Wars would become a unique urban landscape, unlike anything else that had ever existed before. While the French had concessions in other Chinese cities, few of them flourished in the same way that the Shanghai Concession did. However, as the city of Shanghai experienced a period of exponential economic growth, it also became a haven for crime and all sorts of vice. Shanghai was both culturally and politically fractured by the presence of the foreign concessions, which created many niches and enclaves for criminals of all sorts to hide in.

One of the most notable types of crimes that took place in Shanghai during this era was prostitution. During the 1930's, estimates state that 100,000 prostitutes were living in the city.¹ While some of them had come to the city willingly and others had been the victims of human trafficking, many of them were motivated by poverty. However, the prostitutes who lived in Shanghai were far from a monolith. There were elite *shuyu* prostitutes, who were viewed by both themselves and their clients as prestigious entertainers. There were the pheasants, or *yeji*, who aggressively solicited their clients as they walked down the street. There were a large number of Russian prostitutes, who would occasionally claim to be Parisian women to appear more desirable to their clients. And these are only a few of the many different types of prostitutes who made their living in and around the French Concession of Shanghai.

¹ Gail Hershatter. "The Hierarchy of Shanghai Prostitution 1870-1949." *Modern China* 15, no. 4 (Oct 1989): 463.

While scholars have already written extensively on the subject of prostitution in Shanghai from the middle of the 19th century up until the middle of the 20th century, most have treated prostitution in all parts of the city as though it was the same thing. However, I chose to focus specifically on how prostitution in the French Concession of Shanghai was different from prostitution in the rest of the city. The study also addresses how the cultural commodification of “Frenchness” had an impact on prostitution in Shanghai and the city’s urban landscape as a whole. In order to do this, the study first provides a historiographical analysis on not only prostitution in the French Concession of Shanghai, but also many of the things that are necessary to understand the cultural context surrounding the topic. Then, it goes in-depth about that cultural context, attempting to paint a cohesive picture of the French Concession, French cultural attitudes towards prostitution, and Chinese cultural attitudes towards prostitution during this time. It will then move onto analysis of the legal documents and academic writing on prostitution and the French Concession of Shanghai.

It is important to note, that since prostitution has long been a taboo topic, most of the primary sources available on this subject do not include the voices of prostitutes. While one source, Henry Champly’s *The Road To Shanghai: White Slave Traffic in Asia*, does include interviews with prostitutes, pimps, and others who are directly involved with prostitution; most of these writings come primarily from outside observers. However, the purpose of this study is not to explore the daily lives of prostitutes, but to understand how French attitudes towards prostitution impacted the urban landscape of Shanghai’s French Concession.

I aim to do that by focusing on the legal regulations and restrictions that were placed on prostitutes in the French Concession during this period. In order to study prostitution in the

French Concession, it is important to understand how the boundaries of the concession itself were established. This involves analyzing how crime and vice were regulated by both the police and the government. It is also closely connected to the mixed court judicial system, which was used to settle both civil and criminal cases that involved foreigners living in China. The final component of this topic is how foreign scholars who visited and lived in Shanghai viewed the prostitutes living there and, by extension, how they viewed the crime of prostitution in general. By using urban history as a way to engage with both comparative history and social history, I aim to understand what happens when differing cultural attitudes of “desirability” converge in a way that has an impact on the daily lives of both prostitutes and their clients.

The Opium Wars & The Establishment of the French Concession

The French Concession of Shanghai would have likely never been established if China had not been opened up to foreign powers after being defeated in the Opium wars. In *China from the Opium Wars to the 1911 Revolution*, Jean Chesneaux, Marianne Bastid, and Marie-Claire Bergere state that “the period of the Opium Wars and the opening of China fundamentally transformed the relations between China and the Western powers” because “the defeats suffered by the Manchu power were the outward expression of its political inability to win support among the most vital elements of the populace.”² The authors also argued that the Opium Wars helped to lay the groundwork for popular resistance movements, like the Taiping, Nian, and Moslem rebellions, because they “helped to discredit the establishment—the Manchu dynasty, the

² Jean Chesneaux, Marianne Bastid, and Marie-Claire Bergere. “China from the Opium Wars to the 1911 Revolution.” Translated by Anne Destenay. (New Delhi: Khosla Publishing House, 1976): 81.

mandarinate, and the army.”³ However, the authors argue that all of these rebellions failed to overthrow the Manchurian dynasty because, despite the fact that all of these movements had moments when they were able to cooperate with each other and work together, they were all fighting for completely different goals. “It was not possible to combine any one of the movements with any other, and a coalition of their military projects, even if they had been better coordinated, could not have produced anything durable.”⁴ The authors used newspaper articles and legal records, written by both European and Chinese people, as evidence for their claims. Large sections from some of the most important sources included after each chapter, in order to give the readers a better understanding of the overarching themes of the chapter.

While Chesneaux, Bastid, and Bergere focused on the impact that the Opium wars had on Chinese people’s perceptions of their government, William Travis Hanes and Frank Sanello focus on the causes of the war in greater detail. In their book *The Opium Wars: The Addiction of One Empire and the Corruption of Another* Hanes and Sanello argue that, “although the first Opium War began in 1839, the ‘first shot’ in the conflict occurred almost half a century earlier, when Britain’s envoy to China refused to bow down, literally ‘kowtow’ in the Mandarin dialect, to the Qianlong emperor, a custom accepted by every other nation doing business with the huge market that was China.”⁵ The authors use the writings of British officials and economic statistics about prices, imports, and exports as evidence for their claims.

³ Jean Chesneaux, Marianne Bastid, and Marie-Claire Bergere. “China from the Opium Wars to the 1911 Revolution.” Translated by Anne Destenay. (New Delhi: Khosla Publishing House, 1976): 89.

⁴ Jean Chesneaux, Marianne Bastid, and Marie-Claire Bergere. “China from the Opium Wars to the 1911 Revolution.” Translated by Anne Destenay. (New Delhi: Khosla Publishing House, 1976): 122.

⁵ William Travis Hanes and Frank Sallerno. *The Opium Wars: The Addiction of One Empire and the Corruption of Another*. (Chicago: Sourcebooks Inc., 2002): 13.

While Hanes and Sanello focused primarily on the causes of the Opium Wars, Julia Lovell focused primarily on their effects in her book *The Opium War: Drugs, Dreams and the Making of Modern China*. Lovell argues that Opium Wars not only had a profound impact on China's economy and its political institutions, but also that it impacted the way that China interacted with foreign powers for centuries to come. "For 170 years, the Opium War and its afterlives have cast a shadow over Sino-Western relations, both sides tampering with the historical record for their own purposes...The reality of the war itself, by contrast, illuminated deep fault lines in the multi-ethnic Qing empire, as China's rulers struggled unsuccessfully to rally its officials, soldiers and subjects against a foreign enemy."⁶ While most of the primary sources she used were written in Chinese, she also consulted British parliamentary documents in order to support her claims.

Modernization & Shanghai's Urban Culture

The changes that took place within the world of prostitution did not happen in isolation. Instead, they were part of a larger shift in Shanghai's changing urban culture that was prompted by China's status as a semi-colonial state that was being influenced by multiple different European powers. Shu-mei Shih's article *Gender, Race, and Semicolonialism: Liu Na-ou's Urban Landscape* discusses how the semi-colonial presence of Western powers in China after the Opium wars impacted both the laws of Shanghai and the constructions of different social categories, like gender and race, within the city. Shih accomplishes this by looking at the literary works of Liu Na-ou, a Taiwanese and Japanese author who studied French in Shanghai, which critique the superficiality and emptiness of urban life in Shanghai during the early 20th century.

⁶ Julia Lovell. *The Opium War: Drugs, Dreams and the Making of Modern China*. (New York: The Overlook Press, 2015): 421.

His work often focuses on prostitution within the city, specifically with regards to how China's semi-colonial status made many people living in Shanghai view European prostitutes as more desirable than Chinese prostitutes.⁷ Two of his works, *The Passionate Man* and *Hygiene and Etiquette*, also critique how French men imposed their own views of how Chinese women were supposed to act onto both average Chinese women and prostitutes. Both of these books portray French men trying to use money and expensive gifts to win the romantic favor of Chinese women in a way that Liu Na-ou parallels with prostitution, which led Shih to infer that Liu Na-Ou believed that many French people viewed all Chinese women as commodities that could be bought or sold.⁸ Shih also used the works of other writers who lived during the same time as Liu Na-ou to put his work into the context of the larger literary tradition of writers who focused on modernity and urban life in Shanghai.

However, the changes in Shanghai's urban culture were obviously not limited to the pages of Liu Na-Ou's works. The increased influence of foreigners on Shanghai impacted every single aspect of daily life in the city, including entertainment industries like prostitution. In the book *Shanghai Modern*, Leo Ou-fan Lee focuses on how urban culture and entertainment industries were influenced by Shanghai's foreign concessions. When he specifically focuses on the French Concession, he states that "whereas the International Settlement seemed to showcase the hustle and bustle of high commerce, the French Concession has always conjured up an aura of culture - both high and low, but definitely French."⁹ He also analyzes the popular conception of Shanghai as the "Paris of the Orient" by comparing Chinese literary depictions of Shanghai

⁷ Shu-Mei Shih. "Gender, Race, and Semi-Colonialism: Liu Na'ou's Urban Shanghai Landscape." *The Journal of Asian Studies* 55, no. 4 (Nov 1996): 946.

⁸ Shih. "Gender, Race, and Semi-Colonialism: Liu Na'ou's Urban Shanghai Landscape." 950-951.

⁹ Leo Ou-fan Lee. *Shanghai Modern: The Flowering of a New Urban Culture in China*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999: 18.

during the 1930's with Baudelairian depictions of Paris.¹⁰ Since his work focuses primarily on aspects of Shanghai's urban culture that were considered modern or foreign, he goes more in depth on the prostitution that took place in dance halls than any other form of prostitution. He argues that the dancehalls became popular because they were accessible to people from every socioeconomic class and they appealed to both Chinese people and foreigners living in the city.¹¹ Lee used "primarily Chinese materials - literary journals, newspapers, as well as works by individual authors and scholars" to conduct his research.¹²

Another very important way that Shanghai's urban landscape changed during this time period was the way that neighborhoods were planned and structured. In his article *Where the Courtyard meets the City*, Samuel Y. Liang focuses on the *Li* housing compounds that most of Chinese people living in the French and International concessions of Shanghai resided in. He argues that the *Li* housing compounds "entailed a radical reconfiguration of traditional residential and commercial spaces in which visibility and openness replaced walls and containment, the traditional spatial order and hierarchy were subverted, and the borderline between the elite and the lower class was transgressed as well as redefined."¹³ He also claims that the status of a prostitute impacted what part of the city she lived in. "Most of the first-class courtesans (*shuyu* and *changsang*) resided in the *li* near the middle section of *Simalu*, while many second-class *yao'er* establishments were large Western-style mansions on Qipan Street near the border of the French Concession. Lower-class sex workers also gathered around those areas,

¹⁰ Lee. *Shanghai Modern: The Flowering of a New Urban Culture in China*. 37.

¹¹ Lee. *Shanghai Modern: The Flowering of a New Urban Culture in China*. 23-27.

¹² Lee. *Shanghai Modern: The Flowering of a New Urban Culture in China*. xi.

¹³ Samuel Y. Liang. "Where the Courtyard Meets the Street: Spatial Culture of the Li Neighborhoods, Shanghai, 1870-1900." *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 67, no. 4 (Berkeley: University of California Press on behalf of the Society of Architectural Historians, Dec 2008): 482.

although in more obscure neighborhoods consisting of houses different from the typical unit, which consisted of three jian and a small courtyard.”¹⁴ Liang used illustrations of buildings that existed from 1870-1900 to understand what Shanghai’s architecture looked like during that time period. He also went to Shanghai in the summer of 2007 to “collect more visual evidences”¹⁵ for his article, but he does not specify what sort of visual evidence he collected.

However, cultural change is not the only measure of modernity. Economic historian Debin Ma analyzes modernity in Shanghai through the lenses of industrialization and economic growth in his paper “Shanghai-based industrialization in the early 20th century.” Ma argues “that economic growth during this period was closely associated with the rise and expansion of major treaty ports designated under the Western imperialist framework.”¹⁶ He also claims that the presence of imperialist foreign powers in China caused its economy to develop independently from the rest of China, which is part of the reason why Shanghai experienced so much economic growth in comparison with the country as a whole. He uses government records and economic statistics, such as National Domestic Product, in his research. He also compares his own conclusions to economist Thomas G. Rawski’s claim of a sustained rise in per capita consumption across the whole of China.¹⁷

Shanghai was not the only Chinese city to undergo the transformation into a modern city during this time period. In “Modernity and Nation in the Chinese City,” Joseph W. Esherick

¹⁴ Liang. “Where the Courtyard Meets the Street: Spatial Culture of the Li Neighborhoods, Shanghai, 1870-1900.” 497.

¹⁵ Liang. “Where the Courtyard Meets the Street: Spatial Culture of the Li Neighborhoods, Shanghai, 1870-1900.” 501.

¹⁶ Debin Ma. “Shanghai-based industrialization in the early 20th century: a quantitative and institutional analysis.” Working Papers of the Global Economic History Network (GEHN) 18, no. 6 (Sep 2005): 1.

¹⁷ Debin Ma. “Shanghai-based industrialization in the early 20th century: a quantitative and institutional analysis.” 19.

claims that during the first 50 years of the twentieth century both the Qing Dynasty and the Nationalist regime attempted “to construct cities that were both modern and Chinese.”¹⁸ Esherick created seven¹⁹ different types of cities to categorize urban development in China. He categorized Shanghai as a “treaty port” because it was one of many “commercial entrepôts opened to foreign trade by treaty with the Western Powers in Japan, and usually including concession areas governed under foreign consular authority where Chinese sovereignty was severely constrained.”²⁰ Esherick argued that while these cities were important trade centers for China, they also were also places where foreign culture often overshadowed traditional Chinese culture. Additionally, Esherick’s decision to categorize Shanghai as one of multiple “treaty cities” suggests that there were many other cities that experienced urban growth and development in a way that was similar to Shanghai. Esherick also argues that “despite the underlying tensions between modernity and national identity, the two were inextricably linked, and that linkage was fundamental to the structure of modern Chinese urbanism.”²¹ Esherick claims that urban reformers in all Chinese cities, not just the treaty cities, attempted to modernize the nation by combining elements of traditional Chinese culture with the technologies, ideas, and forms of entertainment that were introduced by Western and Japanese imperial powers. He conducted his research by analyzing government records on both a national level and a city level. He also uses the works of writer Lu Xun to understand the urban culture of Shanghai specifically.

¹⁸ 1. Esherick, Joseph W. “Modernity and Nation in the Chinese City.” In *Remaking the Chinese City: Modernity and National Identity, 1900 to 1950*, ed. Joseph W. Esherick, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii, 2002), 1-16.

¹⁹ *The other types not referenced in this paper include Capital Cities, Interior Cities, Tourist Cities, Railway Cities, Industrial Cities, and Frontier Cities.* 2-6. Esherick. “Modernity and Nation in the Chinese City.”

²⁰ 2. Esherick. “Modernity and Nation in the Chinese City.”

²¹ 7. Esherick. “Modernity and Nation in the Chinese City.”

Categorizing Shanghai's Prostitutes

One of the most important things to understand about the nature of prostitution in Shanghai's French Concession is who the prostitutes themselves were and how the Chinese people categorized different types of prostitution. In "The Hierarchy of Shanghai Prostitution 1870- 1949," Gail Hershatter states that the shuyu, who sold their services to the elite, were commonly considered to be artists instead of only sex workers, while the prostitutes who catered to the rest of the city's population did not have the same amount of prestige as the shuyu did.²² Additionally, she claims that beautiful women from Suzhou that had been raised as "foster daughters" by madams in the brothels were the most desirable type of prostitute.²³ She did her research by looking at government records and population statistics taken from Shanghai at the time. She also used case studies that focused on individual prostitutes, such as the story of "Qiaonan, a young prostitute in Daqing Li"²⁴ who was sold to her lover as a concubine after she became pregnant with his child and refused to get an abortion.

Hershatter also wrote a book called *Dangerous Pleasures: Prostitution and Modernity in Twentieth Century Shanghai* that expands on many of the same concepts that she touched on in "The Hierarchy of Shanghai Prostitution." In this book, Hershatter argues that despite the fact the majority of narratives about prostitutes were written by scholars and reformers "who wanted to appreciate, castigulate, count, regulate, cure, pathologize, warn about, rescue, or deploy them as a symbol in a larger social panorama" instead of by the prostitutes themselves, it is still possible

²² Gail Hershatter. "The Hierarchy of Shanghai Prostitution 1870-1949." 467.

²³ Hershatter. "The Hierarchy of Shanghai Prostitution 1870-1949." 474.

²⁴ Hershatter. "The Hierarchy of Shanghai Prostitution 1870-1949." 489.

for historians to recreate a representation of the conditions that they lived in and worked under.²⁵

While she does use population statistics and other legal records as well, Hershatter chooses to focus more heavily on both fictional and nonfictional depictions of prostitutes in literature and art instead.

Hershatter also wrote another article on the subject of prostitution called *Prostitution and the Market in Women*. In this article, she argues that prostitution in Shanghai often fell into a gray area between slavery and free work because the level of autonomy that prostitutes had often varied greatly from individual to individual. Specifically, while many women were sold into prostitution by family members or human traffickers, others chose to become prostitutes out of their own accord. Overall, Hershatter claims that when academics categorize the experience of being a prostitute as one of being commodified, it “obscures status differences among the women themselves and imposes a false uniformity on their experiences.”²⁶ Hershatter based her claims on nonfiction narratives of how multiple different individual prostitutes entered, lived in, and exited the world of prostitution.

While a large portion of Hershatter’s work focuses on how different sorts of prostitutes were categorized into different groups, these groups were not always rigid and easy to distinguish from each other. In *“From a Throne of Glory to a Seat of Ignominy”: Shanghai Prostitution Revisited (1849-1949)*, Christian Henriot claims that while “sex continued to be a marketable commodity under other forms, the kind of female companionship courtesans once

²⁵ Gail Hershatter. *Dangerous Pleasures: Prostitution and Modernity in Twentieth Century Shanghai*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997. 3.

²⁶ Gail Hershatter. “Prostitution and the Market in Women” in *Marriage and Inequality in Chinese Society*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991. 280.

provided did not.”²⁷ He argues that while there were once a large number of distinct groups of prostitutes in Shanghai, they merged together as customers lost interest in the artistic services that courtesans offered. He based his research primarily on the writings of the reformer Wang Tao. He also analyzed arrest records for prostitutes and statistics about the number of prostitutes living in Shanghai in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

In his book, *Prostitution and Sexuality in Shanghai*, Henriot focuses on what the changing roles of female Chinese prostitutes from 1849-1949 says about the role of women in Chinese society at large. Henriot argues that courtesans, “more closely than any other group, represent an essential dimension of Chinese sexual culture and its development,” but that their eventual “assimilation into the ranks of ordinary prostitutes” was the result of Shanghai’s elite placing less value on the artistic services and more value on their sexual services as Shanghai’s leisure industry became more modernized.²⁸ He uses records from government institutions like police and hospital records, records from aid programs attempting to help prevent women being sold into prostitution spearheaded by both the League of Nations and an organization called *Zhongguo furu jiuji zhonghui* (Chinese Anti-Kidnapping Society), and fictional works written by Chinese authors that depict prostitution in Shanghai.

Prostitution in France

In *Women for Hire: Prostitution and Sexuality in France after 1850*, Alain Corbin analyzes how prostitution was regulated by the French government. He argued that, during the

²⁷ Christian Henriot. “From a Throne of Glory to a Seat of Ignominy: Shanghai Prostitution Revisited (1849-1949).” *Modern China* 22, no. 2 (Apr 1996): 157-158.

²⁸ Christian Henriot. *Prostitution and Sexuality in Shanghai: A Social History, 1849-1949*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996: 21.

second half of the 19th century, the French believed that it was “essential to know who the prostitutes [were] in order to prevent them, as far as possible, from acquiring vices that they may pass on after they have abandoned their ‘career.’”²⁹ This led the French government to be more concerned with regulating prostitution than trying to eradicate it with harsh punishments. He uses the works of physician AJB Parent-Duchatelet to establish a historical context for what prostitution was like in the decades that led up to the time period he is studying. He also uses arrest records and legal records of prostitutes that registered with the French government to support his claims.

Charles Bernheimer’s book *Figures of Ill Repute* deals with artistic depictions of prostitutes more than legal data about prostitution in France. He argues that “the figure of the prostitute is ubiquitous...not only because of her prominence as a social phenomenon but, more important, because of her function in stimulating artistic strategies to control and dispel her fantasmic threat to male mastery.”³⁰ He uses both works of art, like paintings, and literary works to inform his perspective on how the French viewed prostitutes and prostitution during the 19th century. Like Corbin, he also uses the works of Parent-Duchatelet in his research. However, Bernheimer primarily uses Parent-Duchatelet’s work as a comparison point to judge the accuracy of the depictions of prostitution present in the other works that he analyzes.

Jann Matlock’s book *Scenes of Seduction: Prostitution, Hysteria, and Reading Difference in Nineteenth-century France* explores the connection between prostitution and how doctors treated the now antiquated condition called hysteria. She claims that “the hysteric and the

²⁹ Alain Corbin. *Women for Hire: Prostitution and Sexuality in France After 1850*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996: 5.

³⁰ Charles Bernheimer. *Figures of Ill Repute: Representing Prostitution in Nineteenth-century France*. Durham: Duke University, 1997: 2.

prostitute provided opposite models against which an orderly body could be measured - the one tormented by desires welling up from the inside, the other transformed into a holding tank for desires that might contaminate society from the outside.”³¹ Her argument is heavily informed by the works of French philosopher Michel Foucault, particularly his study of the *History of Sexuality*. Like both Bernheimer and Corbin, she also uses the works Parent-Duchatelet in her research, but she is much more critical of the way that he does not take the prostitutes’ thoughts and feelings into account in his work than either of the other two authors are.

Regulating Prostitution & Policing The City

It is no surprise that the changes in Shanghai’s urban culture led to a change in the way that the city was policed. Frederick Wakeman Jr. argues that the Chinese Nationalist government placed great importance on policing entertainment industries, including prostitution, in Shanghai in his article *Licensing Leisure: The Chinese Nationalists' Attempt to Regulate Shanghai, 1927-49*. He claims that the government’s goals were “both to raise revenue and to prove to the imperialists who controlled the French, international, and Japanese sectors of the city-each patrolled by separate semi-colonial police forces-that the Chinese were perfectly capable of maintaining "order" (zhixu) themselves.”³² He also argues that the Shanghai police force’s policies were heavily influenced by both the growing influence of foreign culture in the city and the threat of political opposition to Chiang Kai-shek’s nationalist regime. “The distinction between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ leisure, between entertainment such as modern films and storytelling

³¹ Jann Matlock. *Scenes of Seduction: Prostitution, Hysteria, and Reading Difference in Nineteenth-century France*. New York City: Columbia University Press, 1994: 4.

³² Wakeman, Jr., Frederick. “Licensing Leisure: The Chinese Nationalists' Attempt to Regulate Shanghai, 1927-49.” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 54, no. 1 (Feb., 1995): 19-20.

and vices such as gambling and prostitution, was never clearly drawn in Republican Shanghai.”³³ According to Wakeman, these distinctions were difficult for the government to make because the political and cultural views of the people of Shanghai varied greatly throughout the different concessions of the city. This meant that it was nearly impossible to create a definition of right and wrong that satisfied everyone, which was one of the many reasons why prostitution and other entertainment industries thrived from 1927 to 1949. In order to understand the character of entertainment industries in Shanghai, Wakeman analyzed contemporary art and literature containing depictions of these industries. He also looked at government reports to understand the impact that the work done by the police and the policies made by the Nationalist government had on the city.

Wakeman also focuses on police work and regulation in Shanghai again in his book *Policing Shanghai, 1927-1937*. He claims that “during the civil wars of the 1920’s, a new form of nightlife appeared under the curfew imposed by warlords’ police forces: ‘Cabarets, nightclubs, Chinese sing-song houses [where story-telling prostitutes entertained], Japanese Geisha houses, gambling houses and brothels were packed with polyglot pleasure-seekers who, locked in by the curfew, caroused all night and struggled home at dawn, when the ban lifted.”³⁴ He also states that many of the Chinese detectives that were hired by French authorities to police the French concession were actually organized crime bosses themselves, which allowed criminal activity to flourish there.³⁵ Wakeman based his research for this book on police records and the narratives

³³ Wakeman. “Licensing Leisure: The Chinese Nationalists’ Attempt to Regulate Shanghai, 1927-49.” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 54, no. 1 (Feb., 1995): 20.

³⁴ Frederick Wakeman Jr. *Policing Shanghai, 1927-1937*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995: 10.

³⁵ Wakeman. *Policing Shanghai, 1927-1937*. 29-30.

about individual criminals and police officers, which often overlap when he focuses on corrupt policemen and criminals who became police officers in order to gain power and influence.

While the way that prostitution was policed often shared many similarities with the way that vice in general was policed, there was a specific gendered element to the way that prostitution was policed since the overwhelming majority of prostitutes in Shanghai were women. Elizabeth J. Remick analyzes the legal regulations imposed on prostitution during the first three decades of the 20th century in her book, *Regulating Prostitution in China*. She states that while Chinese lawmakers were influenced by European policies regulating prostitution when making their own, “regulating prostitution in Europe began as an attempt to control the spread of venereal disease as well as a means to exert social control over unruly public women. However, by the time the model arrived in China, the public health justification had dropped out almost entirely, and the social control aspect was by far the most important.”³⁶ Remick primarily uses legal records and case studies from Hangzhou, Guangzhou, and Kunming in her research. However, she does use both Hersatter and Henriot’s works on Shanghai in order to inform her conclusions on how the regulations imposed by the Chinese government impacted China as a whole. She also uses their work as part of the basis for her portrayal of European regulations on prostitution China’s foreign concessions, which includes the foreign concessions of Shanghai.

Opium & Opportunism

Between 1839 and 1860, China was engaged in a series of conflicts called the Opium Wars. These wars began because European powers wanted to increase their economic access to

³⁶ Remick. *Regulating Prostitution in China: Gender and Local Statebuilding, 1900-1937*. 17.

China's trade ports, both so that they could profit from exporting Chinese goods and importing their own goods into China. "In the years before 1850 the Chinese imperial authorities practiced a strict closed-door policy toward the West, particularly in the fields of trade and religion."³⁷

China was not completely isolated from trade with European powers during this time period. For example, a "special district of the city, the 'Thirteen Factories,' was reserved for the English and American traders who came to buy products like silks, nankeens, and tea, which in the eighteenth century had become the national drink of their countries."³⁸ In spite of the Chinese government's best efforts to prevent it, the country had become an important location for producing commodities that Europeans had turned into symbols of their own culture, like tea, even though the Europeans were unable to produce those goods themselves.

Even though they did have access to trade with China, most Western powers were not satisfied with this situation. The British, in particular, tried to use diplomacy to convince China to open itself up to more extensive trade. "British traders had to find something China wanted as much as the British wanted tea, and would be willing to pay for in silver. The solution to this predicament lay in Opium."³⁹ British traders started to import Opium from India into China so that its people would get addicted to it, which would increase the market for the drug. The Chinese tried to place regulations on Opium imports, but the British found a way to keep importing Opium into China in spite of them. While the East India company made superficial efforts to make it seem like they supported the Opium ban, they still contributed to China's opium problem by selling the drug to British and Indian smugglers in India.⁴⁰ This created a

³⁷ Chesneaux. *China from the Opium Wars to the 1911 Revolution*. 49.

³⁸ Chesneaux. *China from the Opium Wars to the 1911 Revolution*. 51.

³⁹ Hanes. *The Opium Wars: The Addiction of One Empire and the Corruption of Another*. 20.

⁴⁰ Hanes. *The Opium Wars: The Addiction of One Empire and the Corruption of Another*. 21.

nearly unmanageable drug problem in China that even the government couldn't control, which benefitted British trade interests at the cost of China's public health.

In 1840, the British began to put pressure on the Chinese government by blockading a large number of Chinese cities. The British blockaded Shanghai, to hurt China's economy and, as a result, give them more power over the Chinese government in Beijing because Shanghai was an important city for China's rice market.⁴¹ This frustrated the Chinese government and increased tensions between the two nations, which manifested as a strong anti-foreigner sentiment in China. To counteract this, the Chinese government put a bounty on British military personnel that gradually increased in accordance with who or what was being turned in. The lowest bounty was \$20 for an enlisted British man's corpse and the highest bounty was \$10,000 for commandeering a British ship.⁴² In spite of these bounties and other similar regulations intended to decrease the influence of foreign Opium smugglers in China, it was too late for the Chinese government to end the epidemic of widespread Opium addiction that had already infected the nation.

Eventually, the tensions between China and Britain became insurmountable, and the war broke out between the two nations. Due to the distance between China and Great Britain, the Opium wars were waged on the seas. Steamships played an important role in combat when they made their global debut in the Opium Wars because steam power was cleaner, cheaper, and more efficient than ships powered by wind or oars.⁴³ Although the British did not formally declare war on the Chinese, they spent the early years of the 1840's mounting naval attacks on them. Another important reason that the Chinese were defeated by the British is because their troops had little

⁴¹ Hanes. *The Opium Wars: The Addiction of One Empire and the Corruption of Another*. 105.

⁴² Hanes. *The Opium Wars: The Addiction of One Empire and the Corruption of Another*. 124.

⁴³ Hanes. *The Opium Wars: The Addiction of One Empire and the Corruption of Another*. 133.

motivation to fight. Most of their soldiers were stationed far from their homes in regions that they did not have a strong personal connection to, and as a result of that, low motivation to defend. Both soldiers, who were both tired and unruly from having to travel as far as hundreds of miles, “and the local populations...who were expected to supply the troops as they passed through” were at a disadvantage against the British because of their low morale.⁴⁴ Eventually, the conflict came to an end with 1842’s Treaty of Nanking, which only led to a temporary truce between the two nations, instead of completely resolving the conflict.⁴⁵ The Treaty did not address the primary cause of the war, the opium trade in China. So, a second Opium War broke out between the two nations in 1856.

During the years between the two Opium Wars, the opium trade continued to run rampant in China. Shanghai specifically was also an important location for another illegal activity that was often referred to as “The Pig Trade,” which was the human trafficking of forced laborers who were derogatorily called “coolies.” These people were often drugged and forced onto ships so crowded and unsanitary that almost half of the passengers died before they reached their destination. This practice was so common in the city that it became the inspiration for the common turn of phrase “Shanghaied.”⁴⁶ Unlike the Opium trade, which the Chinese wanted to end but the British had few qualms about profiting from, both the Chinese and British governments made an active effort to stop the “Pig Trade.” 1855’s Chinese Passenger Act, did not make the human trafficking illegal but it did, codify and improve “the conditions in which they were transported to their place of labor.”⁴⁷ During the time period between the Opium Wars

⁴⁴ Lovell. *The Opium War: Drugs, Dreams and the Making of Modern China*. 239.

⁴⁵ Hanes. *The Opium Wars: The Addiction of One Empire and the Corruption of Another*. 184.

⁴⁶ Hanes. *The Opium Wars: The Addiction of One Empire and the Corruption of Another*. 185.

⁴⁷ Hanes. *The Opium Wars: The Addiction of One Empire and the Corruption of Another*. 187.

the British were willing to work alongside China in order to maintain peaceful relations with them, but that they were still willing to exploit the Chinese people if it meant that they could benefit economically.

In 1856, the Taiping Rebellion, which erupted as a result of the peasant mobilization against the Manchurian Qing dynasty, along with anti-foreigner sentiments caused by the Opium Wars;⁴⁸ caused tension throughout China. In February of that year, a group of Taiping rebels in Guanxi killed a French priest named Abbé Auguste Chapdelaine. The Chinese believed that the French were not going to take military action in response, so they dealt with this issue by sending a letter in which they claimed that Chapdelaine was killed because he “spoke and dressed like a Chinese; nobody thought him to be French.”⁴⁹ While this did not immediately lead to war between China and France, it did sow the seeds of resentment that would lead to the French giving the British military assistance during the Second Opium War. China ended up losing the second Opium war after only two years of fighting, in part because of the combined force of the British and French navies.

Founding The French Concession

After the Opium Wars ended, the British and the French entered into unequal treaties with China, which put China in a semicolonial state under the control of European powers. One of the biggest issues addressed in these treaties was how the drug that caused the Opium Wars in the first place would be regulated. While the British wanted to continue profiting from the opium trade, the French wanted to regulate the opium trade because they were concerned about the

⁴⁸ Chesneaux. *China from the Opium Wars to the 1911 Revolution*. 93.

⁴⁹ Hanes. *The Opium Wars: The Addiction of One Empire and the Corruption of Another*. 198.

negative impacts that opium had on people's health.⁵⁰ France and Britain were not the only two nations that entered unequal treaties with China. The Russians and the Americans received "most-favored-nation" status from the Chinese, which meant that they also received many of the same concessions that the French and British did.⁵¹ While the Opium Wars were primarily caused by tensions between Britain and China, other Western nations did not hesitate to benefit from the unequal treaties that resulted from this conflict.

It is important to note that even though the French navy fought alongside the British in the second Opium wars, they did not ask for as much as the British did during treaty negotiations. The French treaty was much closer to the treaties of the Americans and the Chinese than it was to the British treaty. Additionally, the French did not have any interest in establishing a permanent embassy in the capitol.⁵² The French were well-aware that the Opium wars had primarily been Britain's wars, even though they still played a significant role in helping the British win the Second Opium War. Overall, the French believed that this involvement had a positive impact on the world, with one French newspaper reporting that it was "equally beneficial to the subjects interests of both England and China," opening 'a new continent to the increasing activity of all Europeans.'⁵³ Shanghai was one of the ports that the French, and other European powers, were specifically interested in because of its important role as a trade center for China. Long before the establishment of the foreign concessions, Shanghai's elite class was

⁵⁰ Hanes. *The Opium Wars: The Addiction of One Empire and the Corruption of Another*. 244.

⁵¹ Hanes. *The Opium Wars: The Addiction of One Empire and the Corruption of Another*. 246.

⁵² Hanes. *The Opium Wars: The Addiction of One Empire and the Corruption of Another*. 246.

⁵³ Lovell. *The Opium War: Drugs, Dreams and the Making of Modern China*. 291.

primarily made up of merchants.⁵⁴ However, from Shanghai's initial designation as a treaty port to the beginning of the 20th century, Shanghai started to take on more cosmopolitan characteristics, which caused many foreigners to start viewing it as a more modern city than it had been before.⁵⁵ So, while Shanghai had always been important to China's economy, the modernization that took place in the city after the establishment of the foreign concessions made the rest of the world realize the significance this city could hold for the global economy.

The French Concession of Shanghai was established in 1845, when the French wanted a place in Shanghai for their merchants to do business, just like the concession that the British had already established.⁵⁶ The French concession in Shanghai was not the only French concession in China, much less the only foreign concession. The French also had concessions in Hankou, Guangzhou, and Tianjin. The Chinese government had little say in how the French ran their concessions because "the provisional institutions that the foreigners created to run them at the time of the Opium Wars had developed and gained strength over the years."⁵⁷ This left China in a semicolonial state where, while it was still its own autonomous nation, foreign powers were able to exercise a great deal of political control over the country. Along with Shanghai, Canton, Ningbo, Amoy, and Fuzhou were also made into "Treaty Ports," where foreigners could permanently live and work. This greatly increased the cultural, political, and economic influence that Westerners had over not just these cities, but China as a whole.

⁵⁴ Henriot. *Prostitution and Sexuality in Shanghai*. 22.

⁵⁵ Liang. "Where the Courtyard Meets the Street: Spatial Culture of the Li Neighborhoods, Shanghai, 1870-1900." *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 67, no. 4 (2008): 482.

⁵⁶ *The Taotai was the title of a local governing body that worked closely with foreign officials.* John T. Pratt. "The International Settlement and the French Concession at Shanghai," *British Year Book of International Law* 19 (1938): 4.

⁵⁷ Chesneaux. *China from the Opium Wars to the 1911 Revolution*. 64.

The French concession of Shanghai was a very important part of the city. In 1938 it was reported that almost half of Shanghai's population lived in the French Concession and the international settlement. This trend continued into the 1850's, during which there were more than a thousand foreigners living in the city.⁵⁸ The population of the city, and in turn the French Concession, continued to grow as time went on. Between 1910 and 1930, the population of the entire city almost tripled.⁵⁹ The French concession was governed exclusively by the French, and the Chinese people who lived in it were denied the right to have control over their own government. Even though there were about 40,000 Chinese people living in the concession in 1885, they could not vote or hold office. The French had the power to dictate how laws were made in the concession and also how to enforce them. The municipal council of Frenchmen that governed the concession also selected the police force.⁶⁰ This gave the French a great deal of political control over both their own communities and the Chinese people living within the French concession, but this foreign control over a large part of the city was not a completely negative situation. The political and fiscal autonomy the foreign concessions have, outside of the Chinese government's control encouraged "a great deal of Chinese economic, political, journalistic, and cultural activity."

This change in the political aspects of life in Shanghai also led to changes in the way new parts of the city were planned, built, and renovated. "Walls were torn down; streets were straightened, widened, and paved; first rickshaws and then tramways and buses speeded transport; public utilities provided water, electricity, and telephone service; new regulations promoted public health and safety, and newly organized police took to the streets to enforce

⁵⁸ Chesneaux. *China from the Opium Wars to the 1911 Revolution*. 69.

⁵⁹ Hershatter. "Dangerous Pleasures: Prostitution and Modernity in 20th Century Shanghai." 40.

⁶⁰ Chesneaux. *China from the Opium Wars to the 1911 Revolution*. 175.

them.”⁶¹ The French did not build their concession as a copy of French cities, instead they worked with the Chinese to create a new form of neighborhood, called the “*li*” neighborhood. These neighborhoods were unique to semi-colonial China because they combined both Chinese and foreign architectural elements, along with drawing on both Chinese and foreign cities for inspiration when planning out how cities would be structured.⁶²

Before the establishment of the foreign concessions, Chinese cities had been built very differently than that, though. Many classical Chinese cities were based on the rectangular structure of the royal city, “and successive dynasties built their capitals and regional administrative cities with ever closer attention to the classical models.”⁶³ However, as Shanghai’s urban culture began to change, so did the way that the Chinese government planned their cities. Specifically, the shift from the Qing Dynasty to the Republican period of China caused a large change in how the Chinese government conducted city planning.⁶⁴ These changes often combined with the semi-colonial status of Shanghai led to Chinese and French culture intermingling to create new aesthetics and ways of life. This led to the French Concession becoming an important location for arts and culture in China. This was closely connected to Shanghai’s entertainment district, located near the French Concession, in the middle section of Simalu.⁶⁵ The introduction of Western forms of leisure and entertainment had an impact on the way that many of the Chinese people perceived what leisure was supposed to be. Before the establishment of the foreign concession, going to tea shops and visiting courtesans were two of

⁶¹ Esherick. “Modernity and Nation in the Chinese City.” 2.

⁶² Liang. “Where the Courtyard Meets the Street: Spatial Culture of the Li Neighborhoods, Shanghai, 1870-1900.” 501.

⁶³ Esherick. “Modernity and Nation in the Chinese City.” 1.

⁶⁴ Esherick. “Modernity and Nation in the Chinese City.” 2.

⁶⁵ Liang. “Where the Courtyard Meets the Street: Spatial Culture of the Li Neighborhoods, Shanghai, 1870-1900.” 482.

the most popular forms of entertainment; but afterwards cabarets, dance halls, and bordellos started to become more popular.⁶⁶

The French concession was not just a hotspot for nightlife, but also a place where many forms of leisure that were popular in France were exposed to the Chinese public in a way that they never experienced so directly before. One example of this was the coffee house, which was particularly popular with writers, artists, and anyone who considered him or herself to be “modern.”⁶⁷ As Chinese writers and artists began incorporating these aspects of French culture into their own works, new art and literary movements that drew inspiration from all over the world were formed. One of these movements, Shanghai modernism, used experimental writing styles while taking inspiration from the French and Japanese literary traditions in order to tell stories about city life in Shanghai in new and intriguing ways.⁶⁸

The cultural exchange between European powers and China that was taking place in the city’s foreign concessions also led to more superficial changes to Chinese literature being written at the time. In the 1920’s and 30’s, authors started to use foreign words and phrases like “‘chicken a la king’; ‘charming, Dear!’; (and) ‘kiss-proof’” in their books.⁶⁹ These artistic movements led to a thriving entertainment industry in Shanghai that attracted both authors and filmmakers alike. Shanghai was an important source for all of China’s information industries; including newspapers, publishing houses, movie studios, and advertising agencies.⁷⁰ The French Concession also served as a haven for many writers and artists to express non-mainstream views in their art.

⁶⁶ Wakeman. *Licensing Leisure: The Chinese Nationalist’s Attempts to Regulate Shanghai*. 19.

⁶⁷ Lee. *Shanghai Modern: The Flowering of a New Urban Culture in China*. 18.

⁶⁸ Shih. “Gender, Race, and Semi-Colonialism: Liu Na’ou’s Urban Shanghai Landscape.” 942.

⁶⁹ Lovell. *The Opium War: Drugs, Dreams and the Making of Modern China*. 239.

⁷⁰ Esherick. “Modernity and Nation in the Chinese City.” 12.

This was something that became extremely difficult after Nationalist government took power in 1927 and tried to suppress any voices that were critical of their regime.

“Westernization, in this extreme form, represented the debasement of Shanghai's Chinese population, which was assailed on all sides by the temptations of gambling, narcotics, and prostitution. Therefore the Nationalists thought it was absolutely essential for Shanghai's future to establish a new civic culture that would inoculate its inhabitants against the vices of modernity.”⁷¹ For example, when the bookstore where Shanghai Modernist author Liu Na’Ou, published his books was shut down by the Nationalists for promoting left wing ideas, Liu started publishing his works with a publisher in the French concession.⁷² It is important to note that, while many writers were influenced by the influx of French culture in Shanghai, they were also critical of it as well. For example, Liu Na’Ou’s story *The Passionate Man* tells the story of how “a Frenchman named Pierre comes to the Orient in search of exotica” in a way that condemns the titular character’s search for a Chinese “chrysanthemum” as fetishistic and imperialistic.⁷³ So, while many Chinese authors were enamoured with the aesthetic qualities of French culture, that did not necessarily mean that all of them were.

Additionally, even those that were did not necessarily endorse the semicolonial conditions that had brought the Western literary phrases and styles they had incorporated into their own works to China. Chinese creatives were often not allowed to express views that were too critical of the foreign presence in China, especially in the realm of film. “Filmmakers also had to cope with the censors of the International Settlement and French Concession with seventeen and eight cinemas, respectively. In 1937 the SMP and French police censored 451

⁷¹ Wakeman. *Licensing Leisure: The Chinese Nationalist's Attempts to Regulate Shanghai*. 23.

⁷² Shih. “Gender, Race, and Semi-Colonialism: Liu Na’ou’s Urban Shanghai Landscape.” 942.

⁷³ Shih. “Gender, Race, and Semi-Colonialism: Liu Na’ou’s Urban Shanghai Landscape.” 950.

feature films, 932 shorts, and 269 newsreels.”⁷⁴ While the foreign presence in China did undeniably give Chinese artists new works, styles and ideas to draw inspiration from; it also limited their freedom of expression in many ways. This did not mean that Chinese people living in the French concession had completely lost all ties to their culture. Chinese people held onto the ways that their families were structured, their cuisine, and their local history, even when living in a semi-colonial state.⁷⁵ So, while there was a large influx of French influences in the French Concession, these were taken as additions to Chinese culture, not as a replacement for it.

Along with leading to the development of new artistic and literary movements, the establishment of the French Concession in Shanghai also coincided with a period of economic growth for the city. Due to its strategic location next to the Yangzi basin, Shanghai’s economy increased drastically, despite the fact that, before the Opium Wars, it was smaller than the other four treaty ports.⁷⁶ Opening Shanghai up to foreign trade also caused the silk and tea industries in the city to grow. “Between 1845 and 1858 exports of silk from Shanghai rose from 6,000 to 85,000 bales and tea exports from 3,800,000 to 51,-300,000 pounds.”⁷⁷ This growth continued into the 20th century, as the city began to become more industrialized. From 1900 to the 1930’s, both manufacturing and industry were concentrated in Shanghai, to the point that the city's electricity output nearly doubled that of British industrial cities like Glasgow and Manchester.⁷⁸

This pattern of industrial growth continued until Shanghai became one of the most important cities in all of China economically. In 1927, the Nationalist government relocated the

⁷⁴ Wakeman. *Licensing Leisure: The Chinese Nationalists' Attempt to Regulate Shanghai, 1927*. 33.

⁷⁵ Esherick. “Modernity and Nation in the Chinese City.” *Remaking the Chinese City: Modernity and National Identity, 1900 to 1950*. 2.

⁷⁶ Chesneaux. *China from the Opium Wars to the 1911 Revolution*. 69.

⁷⁷ Chesneaux. *China from the Opium Wars to the 1911 Revolution*. 73.

⁷⁸ Debin Ma. “Shanghai-based industrialization in the early 20th century: a quantitative and institutional analysis.” 6-7.

capital from Beijing to Nanjing, largely in part so that it would be closer to Shanghai.⁷⁹ This proved to be an intelligent decision because Shanghai's industrial growth only continued after the relocation of the capital. 43% of China's workers had jobs in Shanghai during the 1930's which led the city to produce 51 percent of the country's industrial production during that decade.⁸⁰ Since industry was flourishing in this area, it was no surprise that Shanghai also became an important hub for banking and other economic activities. Out of the 23 largest banks in China in 1935, the ones located in Shanghai controlled 97.9% of the nation's capital.⁸¹

All of this led a disproportionate amount of Shanghai's manufacturing to be concentrated in Shanghai. "In 1937, 31% of China's factories were located in Shanghai."⁸² All of these impressive statistics make it unsurprising that Shanghai became the economic powerhouse of China during this era. However, it is important to note that money became a more important status symbol than education was as a result of Shanghai's urban development.⁸³ As Shanghai became a more modernized city and the people living in it became richer, that came at the expense of a more traditional sense of what made someone influential.

The increased foreign presence in Shanghai also led to a cross cultural exchange of scientific information that benefitted both China and the West. One prominent example of this is the collaborative translation work done by mathematicians Alexander Wylie and Li Shan-ian.

⁷⁹ Esherick. "Modernity and Nation in the Chinese City." *Remaking the Chinese City: Modernity and National Identity, 1900 to 1950*. 7.

⁸⁰ Esherick. "Modernity and Nation in the Chinese City." *Remaking the Chinese City: Modernity and National Identity, 1900 to 1950*. 12.

⁸¹ Esherick. "Modernity and Nation in the Chinese City." *Remaking the Chinese City: Modernity and National Identity, 1900 to 1950*. 12.

⁸² Esherick. "Modernity and Nation in the Chinese City." *Remaking the Chinese City: Modernity and National Identity, 1900 to 1950*. 6.

⁸³ Henriot. "From a Throne of Glory to a Seat of Ignominy." 134-135.

The two worked together to translate many important scientific and mathematical works, including those of Euclid and Herschel, into Chinese.⁸⁴

Joint scientific projects such as that one, along with Shanghai's booming economy, helped Shanghai become a city where a great deal of scientific progress took place. People started to call Shanghai "the city without night" because its well lit streets allowed its entertainment district to flourish and grow.⁸⁵ While this is not the direct result of the cultural exchange between Shanghai and France that took place in the French Concession, it does directly correlate with the concept of cultural exchange between China and the West. Even many of the Chinese municipal government officials who ran the city had gone to university in the west and received their degrees there.⁸⁶ People living in China had started to find ways to benefit from the increased contact between their nation and Europe, even if the semicolonial state that they had been placed under was unfair and limiting.

Not all of the interactions that took place between France and China after the establishment of the French concession were peaceful. In fact, China and France clashed militarily in an undeclared war that spanned from the summer of 1884 to the spring of 1885, called the Sino-French war. While the conflict began when the French invaded Tongking, tensions over the unequal treaties between France and China had been increasing since 1860 because France, along with other foreign powers, had rejected the majority of the revisions that China had proposed to the treaties.⁸⁷ The French chose to invade Vietnam because it was an

⁸⁴ Chesneaux. *China from the Opium Wars to the 1911 Revolution*. 77.

⁸⁵ Esherick. *Modernity and Nation in the Chinese City: Remaking the Chinese City: Modernity and National Identity, 1900 to 1950*. 10.

⁸⁶ Esherick. *Modernity and Nation in the Chinese City: Remaking the Chinese City: Modernity and National Identity, 1900 to 1950*. 2.

⁸⁷ Chesneaux. "China from the Opium Wars to the 1911 Revolution." 192.

important strategic location in East Asia, which is also why China did not want the French to invade. Before China lost the Sino-French war, “Vietnam had belonged to China's system of ‘tributary countries,’ along with Nepal, Burma, Siam, Laos, and Korea.”⁸⁸ China’s defeat in the Sino-French war led to China losing any political claims that it once had over Vietnam through a series of unequal treaties, that were added onto the unequal treaties signed after the Opium Wars. These treaties also increased France’s access to China’s trade ports.⁸⁹

The French Regulatory Model:

In order to understand how the French viewed prostitution in Shanghai, it is necessary to understand how they viewed prostitution at home in France. Before the 1850’s, most French men did not approve of prostitution, but they accepted it because it contributed “to the maintenance of social order and harmony” by giving men alternatives to having affairs with women that were part of their daily lives, such as their servants.⁹⁰ Many French people also believed that prostitutes were morally inferior to other women, so it was better for men to have sex outside of wedlock with them instead of more virtuous women. The belief that “if men knew *who was appropriate* to their needs, other girls might be spared” was widely held throughout France during the 19th century.⁹¹ Instead of trying to eradicate prostitution completely, the French wanted to try and minimize its impact on society. In order to try and limit prostitution from influencing daily life in Paris, certain parts of the city were declared to be *quartiers réservés* where prostitutes were allowed to live and work.⁹²

⁸⁸ Chesneaux. “China from the Opium Wars to the 1911 Revolution.” 249.

⁸⁹ Chesneaux. “China from the Opium Wars to the 1911 Revolution.” 251.

⁹⁰ Alain Corbin. *Women for Hire: Prostitution and Sexuality in France After 1850*. 4.

⁹¹ Matlock. *Scenes of Seduction: Prostitution, Hysteria, and Reading Difference in Nineteenth-century France*. 8.

⁹² Corbin. *Women for Hire: Prostitution and Sexuality in France After 1850*. 10.

The brothels in this area, called *maisons de tolerance*, were owned and managed by women, called *dames de maison*. Most of the prostitutes who lived and worked in these areas during the 1880's were young women. "Among the 5,440 prostitutes registered in Paris between 1880 and 1886, 73.91 percent were over 21 at the time of their registration, 23.73 percent between 18 and 21, and only 2.35 percent were between 16 and 18."⁹³ Most of the *maison de tolerances* were operated by *madames*, instead of by male landlords. In order to maintain their own independence, *madames* had to make sure that their businesses were profitable enough to stay afloat.⁹⁴ This prevented male pimps from outside the *quartiers réservés* from abusing and taking advantage of prostitutes, but it did little to prevent the spread of venereal disease.⁹⁵ The prevalence of sexual disease within these communities was used by male authors to demonize prostitutes in works of fiction and the media. In the 19th century, French authors started to portray venereal disease as one of the many evils of prostitution, alongside the emasculation of men and the sexual corruption of women.⁹⁶ Even though many French people acknowledged that prostitutes played an important role in society, they still viewed them as impure and morally deficient people.

The main concern of the French police force was not to punish prostitutes for selling their services, as much as it was to make sure that they restricted their work to the *quartiers réservés*. Most of the tactics used to limit prostitution to these areas were based off of two municipal orders from 1871 and 1873 that had, for the most part, limited prostitution to the *maisons de tolerance* in Marseilles.⁹⁷ Prostitutes that got arrested were often housed in separate prisons from

⁹³ Corbin. *Women for Hire: Prostitution and Sexuality in France After 1850*. 42.

⁹⁴ Corbin. *Women for Hire: Prostitution and Sexuality in France After 1850*. 11.

⁹⁵ Corbin. *Women for Hire: Prostitution and Sexuality in France After 1850*. 11-12.

⁹⁶ Bernheimer. *Figures of Ill Repute: Representing Prostitution in Nineteenth-century France*. 4.

⁹⁷ Corbin. *Women for Hire: Prostitution and Sexuality in France After 1850*. 26.

other prisoners, but these prisons shared the same “functions then assigned to prisons in general.”

⁹⁸ The French police did not need a warrant to investigate a woman that was suspected to be an unregistered prostitute. This often led to many women getting unfairly searched and even imprisoned because any man who could come up with minimal evidence that a woman might have possibly been a prostitute could gain access to their police records or send the police to investigate them.⁹⁹

The French government was concerned with more than just keeping prostitutes off the streets, though. The impact that prostitution had on the general health and hygiene in French cities was another important concern that the government had. Sometimes, the government would even order that unhygienic brothels be shut down if they released too much “stench” into the city.¹⁰⁰ Beginning in 1836, prostitutes were sent to prison hospitals when “they started showing *visible* signs of venereal infection.”¹⁰¹ While some French doctors believed that many working class women in this era became prostitutes because of conditions like hysteria or nymphomania, others did not believe that the majority of prostitutes were mentally ill, instead believing that most mentally ill women were young unmarried girls or neglected spouses within the bourgeoisie.¹⁰²

Overall, the French’s policies towards dealing with prostitution were reflective of the social attitudes towards gender that were prevalent in France at the time. The European regulatory model caused many people to assume that men were sexually incontinent while women were not, prostitutes spread disease and posed a threat to public health but their

⁹⁸ Corbin. *Women for Hire: Prostitution and Sexuality in France After 1850*. 14.

⁹⁹ Matlock. *Scenes of Seduction: Prostitution, Hysteria, and Reading Difference in Nineteenth-century France*. 22.

¹⁰⁰ Bernheimer. *Figures of Ill Repute: Representing Prostitution in Nineteenth-century France*. 9.

¹⁰¹ Matlock. *Scenes of Seduction: Prostitution, Hysteria, and Reading Difference in Nineteenth-century France*. 21.

¹⁰² Matlock. *Scenes of Seduction: Prostitution, Hysteria, and Reading Difference in Nineteenth-century France*. 5.

customers did not, and that the role of the state in regulating prostitution was to keep people safe instead of trying to control their behavior.¹⁰³ Although the regulatory model was much more progressive than punishing prostitutes harshly with long prison sentences or extreme forms of corporal punishment would have been, it was still rooted in misogynistic assumptions about the roles men and women were supposed to play in society.

Prostitution in China

For centuries, prostitution in China, though not actively condoned, was not harshly punished or even restricted. The Chinese government did not make very many efforts to control or regulate prostitution before the middle of the 18th century.¹⁰⁴ This is perhaps because the scope of prostitution was limited to a very small area of the country. Before 1821, most prostitutes worked in boats on the Huangpu river, but eventually the most elite class of prostitutes, called courtesans or *shuyu*, were able to move into the walled cities because of the status that they held over the other prostitutes.¹⁰⁵ Additionally, during the 1700's, the government itself even used prostitution for political gain. The Chinese government controlled a small group of prostitutes, called the Bureau of Instruction, who were primarily female family members of men who had been punished for political crimes. The women's debasement was intended to be a punishment for the men, without regard for whether or not the women had been involved in the political crimes themselves.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ Remick. *Regulating Prostitution in China: Gender and Local Statebuilding, 1900-1937*. 24.

¹⁰⁴ Remick. *Regulating Prostitution in China: Gender and Local Statebuilding, 1900-1937*. 24.

¹⁰⁵ Henriot. "Prostitution and Sexuality in Shanghai." 22.

¹⁰⁶ Remick. *Regulating Prostitution in China: Gender and Local Statebuilding, 1900-1937*. 24-25.

By the time that Shanghai was opened up to European powers, the city had already had sex workers living and working there. Shanghai's nightlife scene and entertainment industries were already active and profitable before the city was opened up to foreign trade.¹⁰⁷ Shanghai garnered a reputation as a place where a man could go if he wanted to spend the night with a prostitute because of this. This reputation actually helped contribute to Shanghai having such a high number of prostitutes living in it. Women from the entire lower Yangzi area came to China in search of work as prostitutes because of the city's reputation.¹⁰⁸ It is important to note that prostitution was not the only job that visiting women were able to get in Shanghai. Many women also found work in factories, "as household servants or wetnurses; as itinerant peddlers; and as entertainers."¹⁰⁹

Only some of the women who came to Shanghai to become prostitutes came willingly. While many prostitutes either controlled their own labor or split their earnings with their madame, others were sold to a brothel by their families.¹¹⁰ Additionally, women who chose to become prostitutes often found that they did not have as much control over the money they made as they thought that they would. While free prostitutes did have control over their own earnings, they often "had to give half or more of her income to the madam in return for use of the brothel facilities."¹¹¹ This limited the independence of many of the prostitutes and made it difficult for them to earn their own money. Sometimes, upper class prostitutes received gifts from their patrons that increased their income, but most prostitutes had no way of earning an income

¹⁰⁷ Henriot. "From a Throne of Glory to a Seat of Ignominy." 139.

¹⁰⁸ Henriot. "From a Throne of Glory to a Seat of Ignominy." 149.

¹⁰⁹ Hershatter. "Dangerous Pleasures: Prostitution and Modernity in 20th Century Shanghai." 40.

¹¹⁰ Hershatter. "Dangerous Pleasures: Prostitution and Modernity in 20th Century Shanghai." 34.

¹¹¹ Hershatter. "The Hierarchy of Shanghai Prostitution 1870-1949." 476-477.

independently from their madam¹¹² It was difficult for many women to escape prostitution, since very few of them were ever able to make enough money of their own to break free from their madames. Most prostitutes were reliant on their madams in order to provide them with things that they needed to survive, like food and shelter. Almost every prostitute made the decision to become one because of poverty. Sometimes, poverty made them choose to become prostitutes willingly, but other times it forced their families to sell them or made them susceptible to being manipulated by sex traffickers.¹¹³

Political unrest and turmoil often increased poverty in China, which led to an increased number of prostitutes entering Shanghai. The Taiping Rebellion “pushed many women from good families (*lianglia*) into houses of courtesans and prostitutes.”¹¹⁴ The Taiping Rebellion also had a significant impact on life in the French concession when the Taiping army entered the Chinese parts of the city. “In 1860, when the environs of Shanghai were occupied by the Taiping army, many courtesans moved from the area of the walled Chinese city into the foreign concessions.”¹¹⁵ This caused the number of prostitutes that were working in the French Concession specifically to increase. Many prostitutes were taken to Shanghai against their will, which was another common way for prostitutes to end up in the city. Both men and women became sex traffickers in Shanghai. Often, they would target poor families living in “rural districts that suffered from flood or famine.”¹¹⁶ This allowed them to purchase young women and girls for extremely low prices.

¹¹² Hershatter. “Prostitution and the Market in Women.” 271.

¹¹³ Hershatter. “Prostitution and the Market in Women.” 266.

¹¹⁴ Henriot. “From a Throne of Glory to a Seat of Ignominy” 138.

¹¹⁵ Hershatter. “Dangerous Pleasures: Prostitution and Modernity in 20th Century Shanghai.” 36.

¹¹⁶ Hershatter. “The Hierarchy of Shanghai Prostitution 1870-1949.” 477.

However, not every woman who was a victim of sex trafficking during this era had been sold off by a family member. Many traffickers would pretend to be labor recruiters, and offer young women jobs working in factories in Shanghai, only for the girls to later discover that they were actually being forced into prostitution.¹¹⁷ Many male traffickers also used sex as a manipulation or intimidation tactic against their victims, regardless of how they had abducted the women. Many male traffickers would rape or seduce the young woman he was trafficking before selling her off to a madame or a brothel. That way she would be too ashamed to return home to her husband or her family.¹¹⁸ This did not always happen, and when it did men often lied and claimed the women were still virgins, because that made them more valuable. Many customers were willing to pay a much higher price for the chance to deflower a young girl, so madames were willing to pay higher prices for young women who were still virgins.¹¹⁹

The sex trafficking that brought many women into Shanghai did not just impact Chinese women, but European women as well. In the 1930's, approximately 8,000 Russian prostitutes lived in Shanghai. Most of these women came to Shanghai from Harbin and worked in Hongkou and the French Concessions' "Russian Houses."¹²⁰ The trafficking of Russian prostitutes made prostitution in Shanghai almost as ethnically diverse as the cosmopolita city itself. While foreign prostitutes primarily catered to foreign customers and sailors, many of them also had Chinese customers as well.¹²¹ While both foreign and Chinese men seemed to prefer prostitutes from the same groups that they were part of, this was not a hard and fast rule.

¹¹⁷ Hershatter. "Prostitution and the Market in Women." 268.

¹¹⁸ Hershatter. "The Hierarchy of Shanghai Prostitution 1870-1949." 478.

¹¹⁹ Hershatter. "Prostitution and the Market in Women." 267.

¹²⁰ Hershatter. "The Hierarchy of Shanghai Prostitution 1870-1949." 473.

¹²¹ Hershatter. "The Hierarchy of Shanghai Prostitution 1870-1949." 473.

prostitution in Shanghai was divided by different categories of prostitute, each with a different level of prestige that directly correlated to how sexually available the prostitute was, more so than ethnicity. The most prestigious class of prostitutes in Shanghai during this time period was called the *shuyu*. The *shuyu*'s total number was "estimated to be around 200 to 300 at most in the late 19th century and 400 around 1896."¹²² Not any woman could become part of the *shuyu*, she had to prove that she had exceptional musical talent, along with beauty. The number of *shuyu* was limited by singing competitions, where only the most talented were accepted into the group's ranks. As was customary for prostitutes in China at the time, many of the girls who were part of this group were still teenagers. Courtesans began working when they were young as 13 years old, and they usually ended up leaving somewhere in between five to ten years if they were able to find husbands.¹²³ While the conditions that the *shuyu* lived in were much better than the conditions other less prestigious prostitutes lived under, *shuyu* did not all come from wealthy families. Despite the popular conception of courtesans as coming from elite backgrounds most of them actually came from "a generally modest social background."¹²⁴

One of the things that gave these courtesans their elite status was their sexual exclusivity. When Europeans and Americans visited Shanghai, many of them were surprised by the fact that *shuyu* did not present themselves in a sexually promiscuous way in the same way that prostitutes back in Europe and the United States did.¹²⁵ This was also something that Chinese people felt was a significant part of how the identity of the *shuyu* was crafted, but obviously they did not view it as something perplexing and foreign like the Westerners did. Chinese writers also noted

¹²² Henriot. "Prostitution and Sexuality in Shanghai." 24.

¹²³ Henriot. "Prostitution and Sexuality in Shanghai." 28.

¹²⁴ Henriot. "Prostitution and Sexuality in Shanghai." 29.

¹²⁵ Hershtatter. "Dangerous Pleasures: Prostitution and Modernity in 20th Century Shanghai." 103.

that the “sexual exclusivity” of the courtesans, but they did not treat it as something that was bizarre and exotic in the same way that European and American authors did.¹²⁶ In fact, this was such a natural part of spending time with courtesans, that many men visited the *shuyu* houses entirely to have conversations with the women who lived there and listen to them sing. Courtesans houses were visited by both “dry” customers, who did not have sex with the courtesans, and “wet” customers who did.¹²⁷

The madames and brothel owners maintained the purity of the courtesans by strict rules placed on both them and the male servants that worked at the brothels. Madames and brothel owners enforced a rule called the “Family Law of Brothels” that forbade male brothel servant from having any sort of sexual relations with the courtesans.¹²⁸ This system was further enforced by structuring the brothel like a nuclear family. The owner of the brothel was considered the “father,” the madame was “the mother,” and they typically had five or six courtesans under their care who they treated as adopted daughters, along with servants to help the “family” with their housework.¹²⁹ This helped reduce conflict within the brothels and encouraged the prostitutes to remain loyal to their madams.

Many prostitutes had life much easier than others did because, unlike in France where the most people viewed the majority of prostitutes on the same level with each other, there were many different categories within the realm of Chinese prostitution. Neither Shanghai’s courtesans or their elite customers had any contact with prostitutes who worked in opium dens or brothels that were less prestigious.¹³⁰ The *shuyu* cultivated their elite reputation by distancing

¹²⁶ Hershatter. “Dangerous Pleasures: Prostitution and Modernity in 20th Century Shanghai.” 104.

¹²⁷ Hershatter. “Dangerous Pleasures: Prostitution and Modernity in 20th Century Shanghai.” 104

¹²⁸ Hershatter. “Dangerous Pleasures: Prostitution and Modernity in 20th Century Shanghai.” 106.

¹²⁹ Hershatter. “Prostitution and the Market in Women.” 269.

¹³⁰ Henriot. “From a Throne of Glory to a Seat of Ignominy.” 134.

themselves from other types of prostitutes. For example, if a customer invited lower ranking prostitutes to come sit down with himself and a group of *shuyu* prostitutes, the *shuyu* would go sit somewhere else.¹³¹

The second most prestigious group of prostitutes, after the *shuyu* was called the *changsans*. “The term *changsans* (long three) is derived from a domino with two groups of three dots each. Traditionally, *changsans* prostitutes charged three yuan for drinking with guests and three more for spending the night with them; the name remained long after the fee structure was changed.”¹³² Eventually, people stopped making these decisions as both Chinese and foreign clients became less concerned with the artistic value of spending time with Courtesans and more concerned with sexual satisfaction. In the 1920’s, the *shuyu* and the *changsans* merged into one group, but people continued to use the term *shuyu* intermittently until 1948.¹³³ The categories that divided separate classes of prostitutes from each other eventually broke down and merged, but this does not minimize the divide that did exist between the two groups prior to the 20th century.

There were more distinct groups than just the *shuyu* and the *changsans*. In fact, there were many other lower ranking groups of prostitutes beneath both of them. Like the *shuyu*, the *changsans* viewed themselves superior to other lower-ranking groups of prostitutes.¹³⁴ One of these groups was called the *yao’er*, who did not make as many efforts to present themselves as artists as *shuyu* and the *changsans*. Unlike the more prestigious categories of prostitutes, the *yao-er* were willing to accept anyone, and did not care whether or not their customers were

¹³¹ Henriot. “Prostitution and Sexuality in Shanghai.” 23.

¹³² Hershatter. “Dangerous Pleasures: Prostitution and Modernity in 20th Century Shanghai.” 43.

¹³³ Hershatter. “The Hierarchy of Shanghai Prostitution 1870-1949.” 468.

¹³⁴ Henriot. “From a Throne of Glory to a Seat of Ignominy.” 136.

regulars or not.¹³⁵ This lack of exclusivity led to a lack of prestige, which made it easier for madames to abuse or take advantage of the *yao 'er*.

In lower class brothels, “madams beat their prostitutes for failing to bring customers home, for refusing to receive customers, for infractions of brothel rules, for stealing or being careless enough to let their customers steal from them.”¹³⁶ This group of prostitutes was particularly common in the French concession, particularly in “western-style mansions” on Qipan street. Other lower-class sex workers lived near this area in three room houses with small courtyards outside of them.¹³⁷ It is interesting that these prostitutes lived in the French concession, since the type of the sex work they engaged in resembled the sort of prostitution that took place in France more closely than that of the *shuyu* and the *changsan*.

As the city of Shanghai began to modernize, so did the realm of prostitution. The economic changes that took place in Shanghai during the late 19th and early 20th centuries led to the emergence of a new middle class of “urbanites” who did not value the role and status of courtesans as much as previous generations had.¹³⁸ As hotels began to become more popular in Shanghai, many courtesans ended up becoming “high class call girls” who did serve clients in hotel rooms instead of more traditional locations.¹³⁹ These changes were brought about by shifting cultural attitudes towards what made someone a part of the elite, which itself had been caused by the increased influence of foreign culture and media in China. It is impossible to pinpoint an exact time in which prostitutes in Shanghai became more sexualized than they had

¹³⁵ Hershatter. “Dangerous Pleasures: Prostitution and Modernity in 20th Century Shanghai.” 44.

¹³⁶ Hershatter. “Prostitution and the Market in Women.” 273.

¹³⁷ Liang. “Where the Courtyard Meets the Street: Spatial Culture of the Li Neighborhoods, Shanghai, 1870-1900.” 497.

¹³⁸ Henriot. “From a Throne of Glory to a Seat of Ignominy” 134.

¹³⁹ Henriot. “Prostitution and Sexuality in Shanghai.” 38.

been before, but most historians agree that it happened sometime between the 1920's and World War II.¹⁴⁰

As Shanghai's urban culture and the role that courtesans played in society changed, so did the spaces where they lived and worked. In the past, the places where courtesans lived and worked had been difficult for people to see into from the street. However, as Shanghai began to change, this "secluded female quarter now proudly looked out to the *long(tang)*, and in some houses directly to the street." This made it much easier for courtesans to interact with their customers.¹⁴¹ This mirrors the changes in city planning that were going on all throughout Shanghai during this time period. However, not all of the prostitutes who sold their services in Shanghai fell into one of these groups. During the 19th century, most prostitutes living in Shanghai belonged to a large group called clandestine prostitutes or "popular prostitutes."

This group's numbers only increased after Shanghai opened up to foreign trade because people from all over China started coming to the city, which increased the market for this sort of prostitution.¹⁴² The majority of women who fell under this category were streetwalkers, who were often colloquially referred to by a variety of different nicknames. "By far the largest group of prostitutes in Republican Shanghai were the 'pheasants' (*yeji* or *zhiji*)."¹⁴³ These prostitutes did not work in brothels like *shuyu*, *changsan*, and *yao'er* did. Instead they solicited customers on the street, which was also common form of prostitution in the Europe and the United States. Another important characteristic of the *yeji* is that many of them were much older than the higher

¹⁴⁰ Henriot. "From a Throne of Glory to a Seat of Ignominy" 138.

¹⁴¹ *The long and the longtang were alleyways that separated the house from the street.* Liang. "Where the Courtyard Meets the Street: Spatial Culture of the Li Neighborhoods, Shanghai, 1870-1900." *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 67, no. 4 (2008): 482.

¹⁴² Henriot. "From a Throne of Glory to a Seat of Ignominy" 141.

¹⁴³ Hershatter. "The Hierarchy of Shanghai Prostitution 1870-1949." 470.

class prostitutes. Most madames did not want to take in young women who had gone through puberty because they believed that they were difficult to train and would not be able to attract very many clients for very long.¹⁴⁴ It is important to note that not every single *yeji* was necessarily older, there were also many young women and teenagers in this group as well.

Interestingly enough, this sort of prostitution first began in China around the time that the foreign concessions were established. Even though prostitutes first began soliciting customers in the street during the middle of the 19th century, “the *yeji* phenomenon took off only in the 1890s.”¹⁴⁵ However, just because this type of prostitution was more ‘modern’ than the more traditional forms of prostitution, it did not provide the prostitutes with any more freedom than the more ‘traditional’ forms of prostitution. In fact, the opposite was often true. Madames were able to exercise a great deal of control over the *yeji* because the *yeji* were not completely independent from the brothel system, even though they worked on the streets.¹⁴⁶ Madames often exerted a great amount of control over this group of prostitutes because they were one of the least prestigious classes of sex-workers. Maidservants or even the madame themselves would often chaperone streetwalkers to make sure that they did not run away.¹⁴⁷ Many streetwalkers were often forced to be prostitutes, just like the prostitutes who did not have to leave their brothels to find clients.

Although, not every lower class prostitute exclusively solicited customers in the streets. Prostitutes would also solicit customers directly outside of, and sometimes even inside of, teahouses.¹⁴⁸ Another type of low class brothel, called the Flower-smoke room, combined two

¹⁴⁴ Hershatter. “The Hierarchy of Shanghai Prostitution 1870-1949.” 474.

¹⁴⁵ Henriot. “From a Throne of Glory to a Seat of Ignominy.” 144.

¹⁴⁶ Hershatter. “Prostitution and the Market in Women.” 262.

¹⁴⁷ Henriot. “Prostitution and Sexuality in Shanghai.” 94.

¹⁴⁸ Henriot. “Prostitution and Sexuality in Shanghai.” 93.

forms of forbidden entertainment: prostitution and illegal drug use. These places were called “Flower Smoke Rooms” because customers could smoke opium and visit prostitutes, who were often colloquially called “flowers.”¹⁴⁹ One of the quickest and easiest places where men could pay prostitutes to have sex with them were called nailsheds. These rudimentary brothels primarily serviced rickshaw pullers and other laborers. The prices were extremely low at the nailsheds, charging only two chiao for “quick sex” and only one yuan to spend the night with a prostitute.¹⁵⁰ There were a large variety of different types of prostitution that women who were unable to enter into the highest classes of prostitution in Shanghai could participate in.

Another one of these institutions that was particularly relevant to the subject of French cultural influences in China was the *Xianrouzhuang*. These brothels “developed from the former *taiji* (maison de rendez-vous) of the late nineteenth century.” Instead of soliciting for customers in the streets like the *yeji* did, they claimed to have come from “good families” in order to attract clients. Typically, this was not the case, and the prostitutes who worked there were no different from most of the other prostitutes in the city in terms of socioeconomic class. In spite of this false status, Madames often treated them as interchangeable, going so far as to exchange an overworked prostitute for another when it seemed profitable to do so.¹⁵¹ This is a clear example of how a French cultural institution, the *maison de rendez-vous*, was reincorporated into the pre-existing system of Chinese prostitution. In the 1920’s, many of these brothels actually moved to the French Concession.¹⁵² These brothels were able to sustain themselves in the French

¹⁴⁹ Hershatter. “Dangerous Pleasures: Prostitution and Modernity in 20th Century Shanghai.” 49.

¹⁵⁰ Hershatter. “Prostitution and the Market in Women.” 262.

¹⁵¹ Henriot. “From a Throne of Glory to a Seat of Ignominy.” 144.

¹⁵² Henriot. “From a Throne of Glory to a Seat of Ignominy.” 144.

Concession at least partly because they were able to fit into the cultural landscape that combined French culture with Chinese culture there.

In the cheapest brothels in Shanghai, sexually transmitted diseases were a big problem for both prostitutes and their customers. Most of these brothels, which were located near the French Concession's eight immortals bridge (*baxian qiao*), were called Salt Pork Houses.¹⁵³ These were also the least some of the least prestigious brothels and made no effort to present themselves as anything but selling sex. Unlike the high class brothels which used banqueting and entertainment to draw in customers, the Salt Pork Houses only appealed to customers with the promise of cheap, casual sex.¹⁵⁴ While the French Concession created an environment where French cultural institutions like the *maison de rendez-vous* were marketable, a brothel did not necessarily have to adorn itself with the trappings of French culture in order to make money.

Just like in France, many brothels were owned and managed by women, instead of men. However, many madames also worked alongside or under the direction of a male boss. Some Chinese madames owned their own businesses like many of the French madames did, while other madames only trained and managed the prostitutes while reporting to a male boss (*laoban*).¹⁵⁵ Another similarity between French and Chinese madames was that they both had to forge alliances with the local police if they wanted to ensure that their businesses were not shut down, even if their brothels had been licensed by the French Concessional government. "After they opened their brothels, madames had to cultivate connections with the local police, usually through the payment of quasi-legal taxes like the 'street standing tax' (*chan-chieh chuan*) and the 'friendliness tax' (*ho-ch'i chuan*)."¹⁵⁶ If a madame paid these "taxes," then she could ensure that

¹⁵³ Hershatter. "Dangerous Pleasures: Prostitution and Modernity in 20th Century Shanghai." 46.

¹⁵⁴ Hershatter. "The Hierarchy of Shanghai Prostitution 1870-1949." 467.

¹⁵⁵ Hershatter. "The Hierarchy of Shanghai Prostitution 1870-1949." 479.

she would not be targeted by the police and that they would come to her defense if she ever ended up getting in trouble.¹⁵⁶ As stated before, madames in *shuyu* houses often took on a maternal role in order to ensure that their prostitutes maintained loyalty to them.

This was also something that the madams of lower class prostitutes did in order to maintain the prostitutes' loyalty, even when they treated them abusively. Madames were able to use the maternal role that they played in their prostitutes' lives to keep them under their control, even though they were often abusive towards those same prostitutes.¹⁵⁷ Many madames replicated the family dynamics that many of the young girls that were forced into prostitution had been taken out of before they were fully mature in order to control them. This led many Chinese people to view madames as tyrannical people who took advantage of other women and girls for their own benefit. As Communist sentiments increased in China near the end of the Republican period, people started to view brothel madams as a symbol of capitalist "cruelty and exploitation."¹⁵⁸

While there is no denying the horrible ways that many madames treated their prostitutes, they did not become successful through cruelty alone. Madames often had complete control over the brothels that their prostitutes operated out of. Not only did they select and rent the building, they were also in charge of choosing its furnishings and decorations. They also had to either hire or purchase their prostitutes, and obtain licenses for both the prostitutes and the brothel itself. Then, once all of that had been done, they had to attract customers to the business by putting up a sign and answering client requests.¹⁵⁹ Overall, Chinese brothel madams had to be resourceful and

¹⁵⁶ Hershatler. "Prostitution and the Market in Women." 269.

¹⁵⁷ Hershatler. "Prostitution and the Market in Women." 274.

¹⁵⁸ Hershatler. "Dangerous Pleasures: Prostitution and Modernity in 20th Century Shanghai." 70.

¹⁵⁹ Hershatler. "Dangerous Pleasures: Prostitution and Modernity in 20th Century Shanghai." 71.

intelligent in order to succeed, and often that intelligence and resourcefulness led them to exploit their fellow women in order to improve the quality of their own lives.

The French Concession was much more tolerant towards prostitution than the International Settlement, which was the merger of the British and American settlements in Shanghai. This is largely because it used the same regulationist policies that the French had used in the 19th century in order to try and contain prostitution. In the International Settlement, prostitution went from being completely outlawed to being permitted multiple time, while the French Concession allowed brothels to operate as long as they were licensed. “The inconsistent attitude of multiple municipal governments meant that no systematic statistics were collected.”¹⁶⁰ This did not mean that there is not any data at all on the number of registered prostitutes living there. In 1869, Massais, the health officer of the French Concession “counted 250 brothels with 2,600 women” in them.¹⁶¹ A few years later, the International Concession also counted the number of Chinese prostitutes there, which revealed that there were more prostitutes in the French Concession at that time than in the International Settlement. In 1871, the International Settlements foreign health official counted 1,632 Chinese prostitutes living there.¹⁶²

Decades later, statistics suggested that the number of registered brothels and prostitutes had dropped, but not significantly. In 1920, the French reported that there were 222 brothels in the French Concession, with approximately seven prostitutes living in each house.¹⁶³ It is worth noting that this drop in licensed brothels does not necessarily mean that there was a decrease in the number of prostitutes living there, since the count did not measure the number of

¹⁶⁰ Hershatter. “The Hierarchy of Shanghai Prostitution 1870-1949.” 465.

¹⁶¹ Henriot. “From a Throne of Glory to a Seat of Ignominy.” 152.

¹⁶² Hershatter. “Dangerous Pleasures: Prostitution and Modernity in 20th Century Shanghai.” 38.

¹⁶³ Henriot. “From a Throne of Glory to a Seat of Ignominy.” 152.

streetwalkers or unlicensed brothels in the concession. From the 1890's to the 1920's the police force was able to use arrest records to keep track of how many prostitutes and brothels there were in the concession, they had more difficulties keeping accurate records when the number of prostitutes in the city increased dramatically in the 1930's.¹⁶⁴

Another count taken in 1930 highlights just how many unregistered prostitutes were living in the area. In 1931 there were about 1,200 licensed prostitutes in the French Concession. By 1937, arrest records showed 2,000 prostitutes living there, which included 437 licensed prostitutes and approximately 1,370 clandestine prostitutes. However, this data was most likely a gross underestimation of the number of prostitutes in the concession, because the police force made about 5,000 arrests of prostitutes each year. This would mean that each prostitute got arrested 2-3 times each year, which the police did not have the resources or the manpower to do.

¹⁶⁵ The arrest records prove that it was impossible for the licensed prostitutes to be the only prostitutes in the French Concession, since it would be extremely unrealistic that each prostitute had been arrested so many times over the course of a year.

The way that prostitution in the French concession was regulated in the French Concession was so similar to the way that it had once been regulated in France was so similar that many of the brothels in the French Concession were *maisons de tolerance*, just like the ones that existed in 19th century France. When the police needed to open the roads prostitutes worked on up to traffic, they often suspended the licenses of the *maisons de tolerance* on that road in order to make the brothels relocate to another part of the concession.¹⁶⁶ A specific example of this happened in 1914, when the police were worried about prostitutes blocking traffic flow and

¹⁶⁴ Henriot. "From a Throne of Glory to a Seat of Ignominy." 152.

¹⁶⁵ Henriot. "From a Throne of Glory to a Seat of Ignominy." 153.

¹⁶⁶ Henriot. "Prostitution and Sexuality in Shanghai." 95-96.

“harassing passersby” on the boulevard des Deux Republiques.¹⁶⁷ This is a specific example of how the primary concern of the police was ensuring that prostitution interfered with the lives of ‘average people’ as little as possible. However, sometimes even the requests of civilians were ignored so that the police could maintain the concession’s *quartiers réservés*. Just like in France, the primary concern of the French Concession’s police force was to maintain order, instead of trying to end prostitution altogether. The police even prioritized maintaining the “reserved districts” on the Rue des Pères, the Rue de Hué, and the Rue de Moulin over the comfort of the citizens living there when the citizens came to them with complaints.¹⁶⁸ The French government’s attitudes towards prostitution were reflected in the way the French Concession was governed.

Prostitution Solution?

As stated earlier, the way that the French chose to make and enforce laws on prostitution in the French concession was heavily influenced by the way that they had regulated prostitution back at home in France during the 19th century. However, it is important to note that by the time that it became popular in China, many “anti-prostitution social reformers,” called abolitionists, were beginning to raise criticisms of this model back in France.¹⁶⁹ So, while the French were in fact using a model to regulate prostitution in the French Concession that they had used in France in the past, it was not exactly the same as the one that was being used in France at the time.

This approach to dealing with prostitution was notably different from, but not completely incompatible with the way that the Chinese had regulated prostitution up until the establishment

¹⁶⁷ Henriot. “Prostitution and Sexuality in Shanghai.” 95.

¹⁶⁸ Henriot. “Prostitution and Sexuality in Shanghai.” 96.

¹⁶⁹ Remick. *Regulating Prostitution in China: Gender and Local Statebuilding, 1900-1937*. 23.

of the foreign concessions. Instead of trying to outlaw prostitution, the Qing dynasty government tried to outlaw “the conditions that led to prostitution.”¹⁷⁰ These policies eventually began to change as the way that the Chinese government wanted other nations to perceive them changed. Many late Qing and republican period government officials, on both a local and national level, viewed a regulationist approach to controlling prostitution as something that would help them create a “rational and modern state.”¹⁷¹ The result of this was a plan that closely resembled, but was not identical to, European regulationist plans for dealing with prostitution.

In the 20th century, the Chinese government’s approach to dealing with prostitution “consisted of a regime of licensing, light taxation, regulation, and health inspection, as well as the establishment of ‘rescue’ institutions called *jiliangsuos*, for women who wished to leave prostitution.”¹⁷² The *jiliangsuos* were one of the most progressive aspects of this approach. The *jiliangsuos* were “industrial schools” where women could learn skills like needlework and weaving that could help them find employment outside of the realm of prostitution.¹⁷³ However, the *jiliangsuos* were not the only options available to women who wanted to escape prostitution. Shanghai also had the Doors of Hope Initiative, which was “an Anglo-American Christian rescue mission” dedicated to helping women get out of prostitution.¹⁷⁴ Unlike the *jiliangsuos*, the Doors of Hope Initiative was faith-based, which made it less accessible to Chinese women who were not Christian.

Just like the French, the Chinese government tried to restrict prostitution to certain areas of certain cities. “Cities attempted to confine brothels to particular locations and to regulate the

¹⁷⁰ Hershatler. “Dangerous Pleasures: Prostitution and Modernity in 20th Century Shanghai.” 204.

¹⁷¹ Remick. *Regulating Prostitution in China: Gender and Local Statebuilding, 1900-1937*. 23.

¹⁷² Remick. *Regulating Prostitution in China: Gender and Local Statebuilding, 1900-1937*. 26.

¹⁷³ Remick. *Regulating Prostitution in China: Gender and Local Statebuilding, 1900-1937*. 28.

¹⁷⁴ Remick. *Regulating Prostitution in China: Gender and Local Statebuilding, 1900-1937*. 189.

behaviors of the prostitutes, brothel owners and employees, and clients inside of them.”¹⁷⁵ The Chinese government also attempted to keep track of and control the number of prostitutes in the country by making them register with the government. In many parts of China, both the brothels and the prostitutes themselves had to register with the government. However, it is important to note that only female prostitutes were counted, because male prostitution was not permitted during this time period. While there were still many male prostitutes throughout the country, there were many more male prostitutes in Beijing and Guangzhou than there were in Shanghai. While it is clear that the Chinese government was able to keep track of and regulate many forms of prostitution that took place in China, the government was not able to control or monitor all of them.

The Chinese government completely outlawed all forms of prostitution that did not take place in brothels, which were called “clandestine prostitution.”¹⁷⁶ The Chinese government was not just concerned with keeping track of the number of prostitutes in the country, but also with preventing the spread of venereal diseases. Prostitutes were often subjected to invasive genital inspections that prioritized the welfare of their customers over their own health in order to ensure that they did not give their customers venereal diseases. Instead of making the prostitutes get a blood test, the police simply checked for visual signs of sexually transmitted diseases on their genitals. Any woman who refused these inspections lost their licenses and were no longer able to be prostitutes.¹⁷⁷ While the Chinese government was very serious about preventing the spread of venereal diseases, the methods that they used to this were extremely invasive and not as effective as they could have been.

¹⁷⁵ Remick. *Regulating Prostitution in China: Gender and Local Statebuilding, 1900-1937*. 27.

¹⁷⁶ Remick. *Regulating Prostitution in China: Gender and Local Statebuilding, 1900-1937*. 26.

¹⁷⁷ Remick. *Regulating Prostitution in China: Gender and Local Statebuilding, 1900-1937*. 27.

The existence of multiple foreign concessions in one city presented a unique set of challenges when it came to the issue of policing prostitution. Since each concession was run by a completely different government body, each with their own police force, the existence of the foreign concessions made it difficult to police forms of illegal vice, like gambling and prostitution, in Shanghai.¹⁷⁸ The Chinese government attempted to combat this by placing laws and regulations on where prostitutes could go and how they could present themselves. The Chinese government tried to control when and why prostitutes could leave their brothels. They also forced prostitutes to distinguish themselves from the general population by controlling which clothes, colors, or hairstyles they could wear.¹⁷⁹

However, this did not completely eradicate the complications that the presence of multiple foreign concessions caused for the police. So, each concessional government eventually came up with their own different strategies for dealing with prostitution. In the International concession, the municipal council used a rule called “Bylaw 34.” This law allowed the government of the International Settlement to license all commercial establishments, including brothels. This caused the settlement’s “moral welfare league” to oppose the bylaw because they worried that it would encourage more people to go to brothels since it was now deemed legal and, since the licensing process required the prostitutes to submit themselves to medical examinations, safe.¹⁸⁰ This was similar to the methods that the French used to limit prostitution in the French concession, but the English eventually shifted their priorities from a regulatory strategy to a more abolitionist one. In 1919, an organization called the “Special Vice Committee

¹⁷⁸ Esherick. “Modernity and Nation in the Chinese City.” 4.

¹⁷⁹ Remick. *Regulating Prostitution in China: Gender and Local Statebuilding, 1900-1937*. 27.

¹⁸⁰ Wakeman. *Policing Shanghai 1927-1937*. 114.

" was established. In March of 1920, this committee outlined a gradualist plan to completely eradicate prostitution in the International Settlement over the course of five years. "First, Bylaw 34 would be enforced strictly so that every brothel had a municipal license with an assigned number; second, every year one-fifth of the numbers would be drawn at random and those licenses would then be canceled."¹⁸¹ This is very different from the regulatory approach that the French took with their foreign concession in Shanghai.

This was not only the case for prostitution, but all forms of illegal vice. When Nationalist Government tried to crack down on gambling by shutting down illegal casinos and racetracks in 1928 and 1929, they saw much more success in the International Settlement than they did in the French Concession.¹⁸² This, coupled with how both foreign concessions had policies towards prostitution, suggests that while neither Concession was completely able to eradicate vice, the International Concession took a much more hardline stance against it than the French Concession did.

The differences between the French Concession and the International Settlement were not just differences of how they chose to police prostitution, but also the ideologies that motivated that policing. The French, British, and the Americans governing the foreign concessions of Shanghai used the regulations they made on prostitution in that area to make statements about how they thought that prostitution should be policed back in Europe and the United States. "This was impossible elsewhere where foreign settlements were tiny and colonial authority minimal."

¹⁸³ However, every single part of Shanghai still agreed that prostitution was something that needed to be regulated. Every law enforcement agency in Shanghai, including the Japanese

¹⁸¹ Wakeman. *Policing Shanghai 1927-1937*. 114.

¹⁸² Wakeman. *Licensing Leisure: The Chinese Nationalists' Attempt to Regulate Shanghai, 1927*. 21

¹⁸³ Remick. *Regulating Prostitution in China: Gender and Local Statebuilding, 1900-1937*. 16.

consular police, tried to limit prostitution, along with other forms of vice, in Shanghai at one point in time.¹⁸⁴

Policing prostitution was often a difficult task in a city where crime ran rampant. Even though Shanghai's "enormous urban underclass" led the city to have high crime rates before the 1920's, crime rates surged during that decade when organized crime surrounding vices, like prostitution and gambling, was particularly common.¹⁸⁵ Overall, trying to eradicate crime completely was an impossible task. So, it was no surprise that French tried to contain it instead of trying to completely stop it altogether. However, this strategy eventually shifted from trying to contain crime to permitting crime to happen. During the 1930's, the French police force in Shanghai was rife with corruption and often enabled organized crime. For example, journalist B.L. Simpson did an investigative report on the Shanghai Opium trust, where he discovered that the trust was headquartered in the French Concession where their Opium could be "safely stored under police immunity."¹⁸⁶ Another example of this is the way that Du Yuesheng, a notorious gangster during the 1920's and 1930's, was able to get a high ranking position within the French concession's police force and use it to his own advantage. The Police Chief Ettierne Fiori and Consul General Cochelin both gave Du Yuesheng the protection that he needed to make money through narcotics and illegal gambling rackets.¹⁸⁷

Along with allowing gangsters and other members of organized crime organizations to corrupt their police force, the French police also often refused to do what the community asked of them by taking a harder stance against institutions of vice. The French Concession refused to

¹⁸⁴ Wakeman. *Policing Shanghai 1927-1937*. 97.

¹⁸⁵ Wakeman. *Policing Shanghai 1927-1937*. 78.

¹⁸⁶ Wakeman. *Policing Shanghai 1927-1937*. 116.

¹⁸⁷ Wakeman. *Policing Shanghai 1927-1937*. 201.

shut down any of its “vice establishments,” like brothels, casinos, and their dog track “The Canidrome.” This happened because the French did not care very much about the impact that any of these things had on the Chinese people and because the police were willing to take bribes and accept favors in exchange for letting people break the law.¹⁸⁸

Another thing that led to the large amount of prostitution that took place in the French Concession was the fact that Shanghai had become a haven for illegal activity. In 1928, Chiang Kai-shek's government outlawed prostitution in Jiangsu, Zhejiang, and Anhui. Many of the prostitutes who were no longer allowed to work in these cities relocated to Shanghai, which caused the British and Chinese governments in Shanghai to take a contradictory stance on prostitution. “While they ostensibly opposed prostitution, they continued to license brothels.”¹⁸⁹ The Nationalist government was also very harsh on people who were vocally critical of their regime. From 1927-37, the Nationalist government’s policies banning prostitution and gambling were an extension of their desire to suppress the common people’s freedom to live their lives how they chose to and, consequently, their ability to express dissenting political opinions. The way that prostitution was policed in Shanghai was impacted by political changes that took place during this era.

Even though there was a large amount of crime in Shanghai, there were still many prostitutes who got arrested for breaking the law. The most common reason that prostitutes ended up getting arrested by the police is because they were caught “trying to pull a client by the arm” on the street.¹⁹⁰ This happened because the police tried to crack down on street walkers, one of the largest groups of unregistered prostitutes, by trying to put an end to soliciting. While there

¹⁸⁸ Wakeman. *Licensing Leisure: The Chinese Nationalists' Attempt to Regulate Shanghai, 1927-49*. 26.

¹⁸⁹ Wakeman. *Licensing Leisure: The Chinese Nationalists' Attempt to Regulate Shanghai, 1927-49*. 29.

¹⁹⁰ Henriot. “Prostitution and Sexuality in Shanghai.” 93.

were harsh punishments for soliciting at the turn of the century, the intensity of the punishments decreased significantly as “as western law became commonplace.”

In the 19th century many prostitutes that were arrested were faced with corporal punishment, such as lashings. After the abolishment of physical punishment in the 20th century, prostitutes started getting charged fines that were all relatively similar amounts. “It was generally 5 yuan in 1909 as well as in 1919. This was also the case in the 1930’s.” The punishments were even harsher for madams, because stopping one of them from participating in prostitution had the potential to stop multiple prostitutes as well. While Madames were not caught in the act of soliciting clients as often as prostitutes were, “their punishment, which consisted of fines or imprisonment, was usually twice that meted out to the prostitutes.”¹⁹¹ However, all of these arrests did little to prevent illegal prostitution. There were many more unlicensed prostitutes and brothels than licensed ones.¹⁹² The fact that the majority of prostitution in the city was taking place in unlicensed brothels meant that there was less oversight to prevent the spread of sexually transmitted diseases. In the 1920’s, most Chinese reformers had decided that venereal disease was an extremely important issue to take into account when dealing with prostitutes.¹⁹³ While venereal disease was a very large problem in Shanghai, many people did want to make efforts to stop it.

¹⁹¹ Henriot. “Prostitution and Sexuality in Shanghai.” 95.

¹⁹² Hershatter. “Dangerous Pleasures: Prostitution and Modernity in 20th Century Shanghai.” 39.

¹⁹³ Hershatter. “Dangerous Pleasures: Prostitution and Modernity in 20th Century Shanghai.” 239.

Reports, Records, and Treaties

The French Concession's municipal council management reports from 1902 to 1919 all included statistics about the licenses given out to *maisons de tolérance* for every year except for 1903. These reports span throughout the later years of China's final imperial dynasty, the Qing dynasty, and the first seven years of the Republic of China. In 1902, 4,060.26 *taels* was made from license fee collections carried out for *maisons de tolérance*, which was 560.26 *taels* more than had been expected in the provisions of the budget¹⁹⁴ Then, in 1904, the provisions of the budget expected were raised to 4,300 *taels*, but that estimate was still too small since the license fees added up 4,754.49 *taels*.¹⁹⁵ From 1905 to 1912, the estimate from the provisions of the budget were set at 4,500 *taels*.¹⁹⁶ The amount of surplus money made from licensing brothels steadily increased until 1913, when the provisional estimate was increased to 5,000 *taels*.¹⁹⁷ In 1914, the provisional estimate increased to 7,500 *taels* which was much lower than the 9,616.50 *taels* that were actually made off of licenses for *maisons de tolérance* that year.¹⁹⁸ This continued to be the provisional estimate up until 1918, when the steady decline in the amount of revenue

¹⁹⁴ Conseil D'Administration Municipale de la Concession française. *Compte rendu de la gestion pour l'exercice 1902 - Budget 1903*. 6.

¹⁹⁵ Conseil D'Administration Municipale de la Concession française. *Compte rendu de la gestion pour l'exercice 1904 - Budget 1905*. 12.

¹⁹⁶ Conseil D'Administration Municipale de la Concession française. *Compte rendu de la gestion pour l'exercice 1905 - Budget 1906*. 4; Conseil D'Administration Municipale de la Concession française. *Compte rendu de la gestion pour l'exercice 1906 - Budget 1907*. 6; Shanghai: Imprimerie de la Presse Orientale: 1906. Conseil D'Administration Municipale de la Concession française. *Compte rendu de la gestion pour l'exercice 1907 - Budget 1908*. 12; Conseil D'Administration Municipale de la Concession française. *Compte rendu de la gestion pour l'exercice 1908 - Budget 1909*. 4; Conseil D'Administration Municipale de la Concession française. *Compte rendu de la gestion pour l'exercice 1909 - Budget 1910*. 4; Conseil D'Administration Municipale de la Concession française. *Compte rendu de la gestion pour l'exercice 1911 - Budget 1912*. 5; Conseil D'Administration Municipale de la Concession française. *Compte rendu de la gestion pour l'exercice 1912 - Budget 1913*. 6.

¹⁹⁷ Conseil D'Administration Municipale de la Concession française. *Compte rendu de la gestion pour l'exercice 1913 - Budget 1914*. 5.

¹⁹⁸ Conseil D'Administration Municipale de la Concession française. *Compte rendu de la gestion pour l'exercice 1914 - Budget 1915*. 5.

collected from *maisons de tolérance* caused the municipal council to reduce the estimate to 7,200.00 *taels*.¹⁹⁹ In 1919, this was reduced to 7,000 *taels*, only for the actual revenue from the licenses to be 10,538.50 *taels*.²⁰⁰

After 1919, the French Concession's municipal council management reports stopped including statistics on the money that was made from licensing *maisons de tolérance* without explanation. However, this did not mean that the municipal government stopped issuing licenses to *maisons de tolérance* during this time period. The reports from 1936 and 1935 show that licenses for *maisons de tolérances* cost 56 *taels* per month.²⁰¹ Then, in 1939 and 1940, the licensing fees were changed to a system with three classes; with 1st class licenses costing 112 *taels*, 2nd class licenses costing 84 *taels*, 3rd class licenses costing 56 *taels*.²⁰² The report does not specify what these classes indicate.

In *Treaties and Agreements with and Concerning China, 1894-1919*, Treaty Number 5 from 1914 describes a proposed extension to the French concession. The purpose of the extension was to “mutually strengthen the friendly relations between France and China by the regularization of the police administration in the region situated to the west of the French concession of Shanghai.”²⁰³ The treaty also explained how the new boundaries would impact the

¹⁹⁹ Conseil D'Administration Municipale de la Concession française. *Compte rendu de la gestion pour l'exercice 1916 - Budget 1917*. 5; Conseil D'Administration Municipale de la Concession française. *Compte rendu de la gestion pour l'exercice 1917 - Budget 1918*. 5; Conseil D'Administration Municipale de la Concession française. *Compte rendu de la gestion pour l'exercice 1918 - Budget 1919*. 5.

²⁰⁰ Conseil D'Administration Municipale de la Concession française. *Compte rendu de la gestion pour l'exercice 1919 - Budget 1920*. 5.

²⁰¹ Conseil D'Administration Municipale de la Concession française. *Compte rendu de la gestion pour l'exercice 1935 - Budget 1936*. 99; Conseil D'Administration Municipale de la Concession française. *Compte rendu de la gestion pour l'exercice 1936 - Budget 1937*. 128.

²⁰² Conseil D'Administration Municipale de la Concession française. *Compte rendu de la gestion pour l'exercice 1939 - Budget 1940*. 136; Conseil D'Administration Municipale de la Concession française. *Compte rendu de la gestion pour l'exercice 1940 - Budget 1941*. 121.

²⁰³ John Van Antwerp MacMurray. *Treaties and Agreements with and Concerning China, 1894-1919: Republican period (1912-1919)*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1921: 1123.

way that French and Chinese police forces did their jobs. Both the French Police and the Chinese police would have authority over Rue Millot and Chaochow Road. However, each police force only functioned on one side of the road.²⁰⁴

While the French and Chinese police forces were willing to work alongside each other, they preferred to work separately instead of working collaboratively with each other. This extension of the Concession was also directly related to the relationship between the French concession and the International Settlement. The treaty stated that the French concession was going to need to discuss how the extension would impact the British people living along Great Western Road and Siccawei Road with the International Settlement's municipal council.²⁰⁵

The Mixed Court

In his 1911 paper "De l'Administration de la Justice Française en Chine," R. D'Auxion de Ruffe analyzes how the French deal with the complexities of trying to administer justice in a foreign country with different legal systems. This paper was published one year before the nationalists established the Republic of China, so it focused on the sort of justice administered in the later years of the Qing dynasty. D'Auxion de Ruffe himself is very critical of the Chinese justice system, calling it "*fantomique et arbitraire*," which translates to "ghostly and arbitrary."

²⁰⁶ This bias against the Chinese legal system is representative of how the French found it difficult to work with the Chinese justice system, largely because their prejudice made them view it as inferior to their own legal system. One of D'Auxion de Ruffe's primary criticisms of

²⁰⁴ Van Antwerp MacMurray. *Treaties and Agreements with and Concerning China, 1894-1919: Republican period (1912-1919)*. 1124.

²⁰⁵ Van Antwerp MacMurray. *Treaties and Agreements with and Concerning China, 1894-1919: Republican period (1912-1919)*. 1125.

²⁰⁶ R. D'Auxion de Ruffe. "De l'Administration de la Justice Française en Chine," *Journal du Droit International Privé et de la Jurisprudence Comparée* 38, no. 1-2 (1911): 24.

Chinese judges is the fact that many of them received their appointments by winning competitions that demonstrated their knowledge of classic literature, and that their pay reflects the importance of the position instead of how hard they worked.²⁰⁷

Interestingly enough, this selection process shares some similarities to the selection process for how a girl became part of the *shuyu* because admission into a prestigious job was determined by a knowledge of traditional art and culture. Obviously, these two processes were not exactly the same, but to the French it is likely that these processes seemed similar. So, when both D'Auxion de Ruffe's disrespect for the process used to select judges and the fact that the *shuyu* started to lose their influence and prestige as Shanghai's urban landscape changed are taken into account, one can assume that many French people did not hold the same respect for a knowledge of Chinese art and culture that Chinese people did.

D'Auxion de Ruffe also explains the role that the Chinese judges play in the mixed court. When a Chinese judge is presiding over a case in the mixed court, it is not uncommon for him to have a European assessor.²⁰⁸ However, D'Auxion de Ruffe does not think that these assessors do enough to prevent the Chinese judges from having too much power over the cases. His bias against the Chinese judges makes it difficult to tell how much power these European assessors had, since it seems like D'Auxion de Ruffe thinks that any amount of power is too much for the Chinese judges to have. D'Auxion de Ruffe also describes how the French Consul attempted to make it so that mixed court disputes had to be judged "*en équité*," or "in equity."²⁰⁹ D'Auxion de Ruffe claims that the French did this because they wanted to protect their citizens from the Chinese judges, who they viewed as irrational and too harsh on French citizens. It is difficult to

²⁰⁷ D'Auxion de Ruffe. "De l'Administration de la Justice Française en Chine," 26.

²⁰⁸ D'Auxion de Ruffe. "De l'Administration de la Justice Française en Chine." 27.

²⁰⁹ D'Auxion de Ruffe. "De l'Administration de la Justice Française en Chine," 28.

tell whether or not this is an accurate assessment of how the Chinese judges administered punishment or not because he does not provide specific cases as examples of their harshness. So, while it is possible that this is true, it is also that the French could have simply an attempt to exercise more power over the Chinese.

D'Auxion de Ruffe also takes issue with the lack of separation between the court and the state in China. He believes it is impossible for a magistrate to administer justice impartially in a place that he has legal jurisdiction over.²¹⁰ This difference between the French and Chinese legal systems is an understandable source of conflict between the French and Chinese when dealing with the administration of justice in the mixed courts. D'Auxion de Ruffe suggests fixing the problem by appointing officials with no connection to the local government to preside over the court of France in Shanghai.²¹¹ It makes sense that D'Auxion de Ruffe would think this system is better because it mirrors the separation between the administration and the courts that existed in many Western countries at the time.

D'Auxion de Ruffe also makes it clear that his priority is to change the legal system so that it is more favorable to the French. His proposed solution is to appoint "a justice of the peace with wide jurisdiction who knows how to apply French law by disengaging from local interests to which the consul is necessarily bound."²¹² While this would benefit the French citizens of the Concession, it could potentially be harmful to the Chinese people living there and would do little to benefit the non-French foreigners living there as well.

The 1925 document "*La Cour Mixte de la Concession Internationale de Shanghai*" comes from the Republican period of Chinese history. This document specifies which groups of

²¹⁰ D'Auxion de Ruffe. "De l'Administration de la Justice Française en Chine," 39.

²¹¹ D'Auxion de Ruffe. "De l'Administration de la Justice Française en Chine," 40.

²¹² D'Auxion de Ruffe. "De l'Administration de la Justice Française en Chine," 41.

people fall under what sort of jurisdiction in the French Concession. The first group includes Germans, Austrians, Russians, Hungarians, Chileans, Bolivians, and Persians. All of the people in this group living in Shanghai are “subject to Chinese jurisdiction (*soumis à la juridictions chinoise*).”²¹³ Under these regulations, a Russian prostitute and a Chinese prostitute who were arrested in the French concession and had to go to trial would both be tried by the Chinese government. The second group includes Japanese, Mexican, and Brazilian people. If people in this second group are involved in civil or criminal cases that do not involve Chinese people, they are under the jurisdiction of their consular government. However, if they are involved in a civil or criminal case that does involve Chinese people, they are under Chinese jurisdiction.

The third group includes British and American people, who are treated the same way as the people in the second group, but with a few special privileges that allow the British and United States governments more influence over court cases. The final group includes all other “*Puissances à traités*,” or treaty powers.²¹⁴ In criminal court cases, the case would be under the jurisdiction of whatever nationality the accused person is. Civil court cases fall under the joint jurisdiction and the consular jurisdiction of whatever the person in the fourth group is.

The separation between judicial powers and administrative powers in the mixed court is a complex issue because from 1842 until 1903, when the treaties that contained the clauses of jurisdiction were being written, there was no separation between the two in China.²¹⁵

The establishment of the mixed court caused a significant restructuring of the legal systems in Shanghai. French Minister Plenipotentiary and Adviser to the Chinese Government G.

²¹³ G. Padoux, "Cour Mixte de la Concession Internationale de Shanghai, La," *Journal du Droit International* 52, no. 4 (1925): 898.

²¹⁴ Padoux, "Cour Mixte de la Concession Internationale de Shanghai, La," 899.

²¹⁵ Padoux, "Cour Mixte de la Concession Internationale de Shanghai, La," 901.

Padoux also highlights how each French concession in China required a different sort of legal system. For example, the legal systems in the French Concessions in Fuzhou and Ningbo never required the same amount of precise delimitation as Shanghai's French Concession did because they did not experience the same sort of growth and expansion the Shanghai Concession did.²¹⁶ Padoux attributes the concession's growth to the Taiping rebellion because he believes that the inhabitants of neighboring regions believed that foreign authority could help protect their families and belongings from the Taipings.²¹⁷

Public Health & Safety in Shanghai

Edward Henderson M.D. provided medical information about prostitution in Shanghai in "A report on prostitution in Shanghai : drawn up for the Council for the Foreign Community of Shanghai." This report was written in 1871, when the Qing dynasty was still in power. Early on in the report, Henderson cites "the native women who infest the settlement" as the primary threat to the health of foreigners in Shanghai because they primarily go to Chinese doctors, whom he believes are unqualified.²¹⁸ Since Shanghai is a coastal city that is visited by a large number of sailors, there is a very large market for prostitution there. Henderson is primarily concerned with the health and safety of the "young unmarried men" who visit prostitutes and not the prostitutes themselves.²¹⁹ He believes that most of the problems with prostitution can be solved by new

²¹⁶ Padoux, "Cour Mixte de la Concession Internationale de Shanghai, La," 905.

²¹⁷ Padoux, "Cour Mixte de la Concession Internationale de Shanghai, La," 908.

²¹⁸ Edward Henderson M.D., *A report on prostitution in Shanghai : drawn up for the Council for the Foreign Community of Shanghai*. Shanghai: North China Herald Office, 1871: 3.

²¹⁹ Henderson M.D., *A report on prostitution in Shanghai : drawn up for the Council for the Foreign Community of Shanghai*. 4.

legislation. One example of this is the sale of young women and children into prostitution, which he criticizes for being a “common and lawful” practice in China.²²⁰

Henderson explains the way that prostitutes make their money and the relationships that they have with their madams. He estimates the average selling price of a young woman to be 200 dollars, and he estimates her average earning potential to be 20 dollars a month.²²¹ Additionally, the madams have their prostitutes call them “mother” and take on a maternal role in their life by providing them with clothes and housing. Not only did the prostitutes have close relationships with their madams, they also had close relationships with many of their clients. There does not seem to be very much social stigma attached towards a Chinese man going to parties or the theatre with a prostitute. For many prostitutes, their prospects of marriage are more likely to be “more seriously affected by their large feet, than by any fact of their lives as prostitutes.”²²²

He also focuses on prostitution in the French Concession specifically. According to 1869 statistics gathered by a man named Dr. Massais, there are 250 brothels in the French Concession and 2,600 prostitutes working there. Only 24 out of the 250 brothels are visited by foreigners. 54 cantonese prostitutes and 39 prostitutes from Shanghai, Ningbo, and Fuzhou work there, which makes for a total of 90 prostitutes.²²³ Henderson makes note of the distinction between the higher class brothels, where the women working there are viewed as performers and both opium and

²²⁰ Henderson M.D.. *A report on prostitution in Shanghai : drawn up for the Council for the Foreign Community of Shanghai*. 5.

²²¹ Henderson M.D.. *A report on prostitution in Shanghai : drawn up for the Council for the Foreign Community of Shanghai*. 7.

²²² Henderson M.D.. *A report on prostitution in Shanghai : drawn up for the Council for the Foreign Community of Shanghai*. 10.

²²³ Henderson M.D.. *A report on prostitution in Shanghai : drawn up for the Council for the Foreign Community of Shanghai*. 12.

refreshments are provided to the patrons “without any distinct charge,” and the lower class brothels where there is more of a focus on selling opium to the patrons.²²⁴

He claims that the majority of prostitutes do not smoke opium themselves, regardless of what sort of prostitute they are. The way that he simplifies the multiple different categories of prostitute that existed in China during this time into “lower class” and “higher class” shows how the increased presence of foreigners helped contribute to the blurring of the lines between those categories. While the distinction between *shuyu* and *changsang* was typically clear to the Chinese people living in Shanghai, most Europeans and Americans were unable to make these distinctions. However, as foreigners and sailors became a larger part of the prostitutes’ clientele, it’s easy to see how this became one of the contributing factors that caused the lines to blur between the different categories.

Henderson also focuses on Chinese prostitutes who exclusively cater to Chinese clients. The thing that he finds most notable about their appearance is the fact that they have “the small feet so highly esteemed as female beauty” in China.²²⁵ Even though the increased number of foreigners changed the landscape of prostitution in Shanghai, it did not completely eradicate the influence of Chinese cultural attitudes on beauty and how a prostitute was supposed to present herself. While new attitudes towards prostitution were developing in the French Concession and the International Settlement, which would sometimes spread to the parts of Shanghai that were outside of foreign control, forms of prostitution that aligned more closely with Chinese tradition were still taking place throughout the city.

²²⁴ Henderson M.D.. *A report on prostitution in Shanghai : drawn up for the Council for the Foreign Community of Shanghai*. 13.

²²⁵ Henderson M.D.. *A report on prostitution in Shanghai : drawn up for the Council for the Foreign Community of Shanghai*. 14.

Interestingly enough, Henderson is much more critical of the brothels with both foreign and Chinese customers than he is with brothels that only receive Chinese customers. He claims that this sort of brothel is “the most disreputable of all the brothels in the settlement” and that no Chinese person of “any pretension to respectability visits such houses.”²²⁶ Most of these brothels are located in Hongkew and Henderson’s primary issue with them seems to be the clientele. He takes issue with the fact that sailors, black people, and austronesian people visit these establishments. However, he also has problems with the cleanliness of the brothels and the fact that opium is being smoked there.

The 1937 League of Nations Report on the traffic of women and children in East Asia shows how the French and the Chinese worked together to try and reduce the amount of women sold into prostitution in Shanghai. This report was written during the Republican period, so the representatives that China sent were affiliated with nationalist government. China’s delegate, Consul-General M. Fartsan T. Sung had 7 secretaries, advisers and experts.²²⁷ Three national, regional, and local organizations from China were also present. These include The World Red Swastika Society of China; The Children’s Home, Hsiang-Shan, Peiping; and The China Child Welfare Association.²²⁸ France’s delegate, Professor A.P.E. Labrouquère, was a professor of law at the University of Hanoi. He had been chosen to speak on behalf of both “the Indo-Chinese Union and the French Concession of Shanghai.”²²⁹ Many other nations were also present, aside from just France and China.

²²⁶ Henderson M.D.. *A report on prostitution in Shanghai : drawn up for the Council for the Foreign Community of Shanghai*. 16.

²²⁷ Ekstrang, E.E.; A.T. Baud, & S.C. Mukerjee. “Traffic in Women and Children: Conference Of Central Authorities In Eastern Countries.” League of Nations, Bandoeng, February 13th 1937: 1.

²²⁸ Ekstrang. “Traffic in Women and Children: Conference Of Central Authorities In Eastern Countries,” 3.

²²⁹ Ekstrang. “Traffic in Women and Children: Conference Of Central Authorities In Eastern Countries,” 2.

These nations intended to accomplish six different goals. They wanted to encourage collaboration between all of the nations present, work together to protect migrants who are women and children, discuss whether or not it would be possible to abolish licensed and tolerant brothels in Asia, encourage collaboration between the police and private trafficking organizations, and discuss the possibility of employing more female officials to deal with the issue of women and children's welfare, and to help prevent female Russian refugees from becoming victims of human trafficking.²³⁰ This sixth point is particularly relevant to prostitution in the French Concession since there were a large number of Russian prostitutes living and working there.

The conference also addressed "the lack of co-operation between the police authorities of China and the police authorities of the foreign concessions and settlements on the coast of China in the fight against traffic in women and children, and that the Chinese delegation and the French delegation desire that closer collaboration should be brought about between their respective police authorities"²³¹ The amount of prostitution that was taking place in the French Concession was something that both the Chinese and French government were worried about. It is also important to note that the International Settlement was not specified to have the same problem.

Scholars on Shanghai

In the 1899 paper "*La Concession Française de Changhai*," which was written during the Qing dynasty, A.A. Fauvel provides a French perspective on the establishment of the French Concession. He discusses how when the British and American enclaves merged together to form

²³⁰ Ekstrang. "Traffic in Women and Children: Conference Of Central Authorities In Eastern Countries," 4.

²³¹ Ekstrang. "Traffic in Women and Children: Conference Of Central Authorities In Eastern Countries," 5.

the International Settlement in 1863, the French Concession chose not to do the merger with them. One reason for this could be that during the 1850's the primary reason that Britain and France had acted as allies in East Asia was because they wanted to prevent Russia from gaining too much power in that region.²³² Since this alliance was motivated by a common rival, it makes sense that the French would not want to merge with the British after they had already secured Concessions in Shanghai. However, Fauvel cites French superiority over the "jealous" English and American settlements as the reason for this.²³³ This is difficult to believe because all of Shanghai was experiencing growth and success during this time period, not just the French Concession. However, this comment does show how the French living in Shanghai had a strong sense of pride and national identity that caused them to hold onto their own, individual concession in a way that the English and Americans did not. The language barrier between French people and the English speaking British and Americans may have also contributed to the two Concessions remaining separate, but Fauvel does not analyze this in his writing.

Fauvel also discussed the process the French needed to take to make improvements to their concession. The French needed to receive approval from both the Emperor and the French government in order to build new buildings in the Concession. This included houses, factories, churches, hospitals, free clinics, colleges, cemeteries, and other things that were necessary for the French to live their daily lives in China.²³⁴ Another important priority of the French was maintaining positive French relationships between France and China. Fauvel draws attention to the French government's concern that the establishment of the French Concession would make

²³² J. P. Parry "THE IMPACT OF NAPOLEON III ON BRITISH POLITICS, 1851-1880." *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 11 (2001): 148-149.

²³³ A.A. Fauvel. *Histoire de la Concession française de Shanghai*. Paris: L. de Soye et fils, 1899: 8.

²³⁴ Fauvel. *Histoire de la Concession française de Shanghai*. 15.

Chinese people living there “unhappy.”²³⁵ However, he does not elaborate on anything that French government tried to do to prevent this. While the French government did seem to be considerate with how the Chinese people reacted to their presence in China, that concern was largely superficial and their primary concern was the comfort of the French people living there.

In the 1900 article *Au pays de pagodes*, which also comes from the Qing dynasty, author A. Raquez intends to inform his fellow Frenchmen about daily life in China. While the book details his travels throughout all of China, chapters eight through eleven focus specifically on his travels in Shanghai. In chapter 8, Raquez visits a cabaret where he observes how the singers working there solicit customers. Raquez states that each girl makes a “modest sum” of 60 sapèques each night for singing at the cabaret. The customers can also pay the singers a dollar to request a song. While he does not directly state that the singers working at the cabarets are prostitutes, he does discuss the “indirect profits” that the singers make in a way that heavily implies that they are prostitutes.²³⁶ If a singer spots a regular customer, she offers him a pipe holder in order to get his attention. Later in the night, clients write down the names of the singers that they want to spend time alone with on a small piece of paper and give it to the servers. After that, the singers leave with the client who requested them for a fee that Raquez did not know the specific amount of.

Despite the fact that he is aware that the singers are prostitutes, Raquez still respects their talent and the artistic value of their performances. He refers to them exclusively as “artists” and “singers” even as he describes the ways that they engage in prostitution. He admires how the singers sing about a variety of different topics ranging from heroic feats from Chinese history to

²³⁵ Fauvel. *Histoire de la Concession française de Shanghai*. 19.

²³⁶ A. Raquez. *Au pays des pagodes: notes de voyage: Hongkong, Macao, Shanghai, Le Houpe, Le Hounan, Le Kouei-Tcheou*. Shanghai: La Presse Orientale, 1900: 115.

more risque topics. However, it is clear that the main reason he values their work is because it is exotic to him. At the end of his description of the cabaret, he marvels that this “cette délicieuse poésie n’a jamais paru dans votre langue,”²³⁷ which roughly translates to “this delicious poetry has never been published in our language.” While he does genuinely enjoy the songs that he heard, a large part of the reason he enjoyed them is because they were foreign to him. This mirrors the way that he was intrigued by the singers working at the cabaret because they were different from the entertainers and sex workers he was familiar with.

Raquez was not only concerned with leisure and entertainment in Shanghai. He was also interested in learning about how French government was running the concession. This provides insight into how prostitutes were punished after they were arrested because Raquez visited the prison in the French concession. His observations revealed that there was a significant difference in the way that male and female prisoners were treated. One of the first things he notices is that the prison resembles the London Zoological Gardens but with humans instead of animals’ cages. He saw that there were two cells for men, but only one cell for women, which implies that there were more male criminals than female criminals. He counts approximately a dozen unchained male prisoners in the right cell, while the prisoners in the left cell were all restrained by a device on their necks that resembles a stockade, called a *cangue* in French or a *jia* (枷) in Chinese. The female prisoners are all being held in a semi-circular cage and Raquez does not state that any of them are wearing *cangues*. The most intense corporal punishment he personally witnesses the female prisoners enduring is being hit with rods on their shoulders through the sleeves of their

²³⁷ Raquez. *Au pays des pagodes: notes de voyage: Hongkong, Macao, Shanghai, Le Houpe, Le Hounan, Le Kouei-Tcheou*. 116.

canvas clothing.²³⁸ Not only were there fewer female prisoners in the French concession of Shanghai, but they were also punished less harshly than the male prisoners were.

In 1916, Mary Ninde Gamewell gave readers insight into what Shanghai was like during the Republican period. She describes daily life in Shanghai in her book *The Gateway to China: Pictures of Shanghai*. She describes how French culture has incorporated itself into the cosmopolitan urban landscape of the city. Gamewell mentions several “Parisian shops,” where people can buy fashionable gowns, hats, and lingerie as part of the international character of the shopping district on Nanking Road.²³⁹ Gamewell references the French presence in Shanghai when she cites France as one of the six nations that has a foreign post office in Shanghai.²⁴⁰ Gamewell portrays some of the minor inconveniences that foreigners living in the concessions of Shanghai experienced in their day to day lives. For example, Gamewell shared an anecdote about her friends, a couple called the Dunlaps, discussing their day out on the town. Mrs. Dunlap tells her husband to remind the driver to bring his French driver’s license because they were worried about “getting held up” by the police like friends of theirs had once been if they drove into the French Concession.²⁴¹

Gamewell also shares her opinions on prostitution in Shanghai in this book:

“No other city in this country contains as many brothels as Shanghai. It is often called the Sodom of China, and is known to many of the native Christians away from the coast only as

²³⁸ Raquez. *Au pays des pagodes: notes de voyage: Hongkong, Macao, Shanghai, Le Houpé, Le Hounan, Le Kouei-Tcheou*. 125.

²³⁹ Mary Ninde Gamewell. *The Gateway to China: Pictures of Shanghai*. New York : Fleming H. Revell Company, 1916: 58.

²⁴⁰ Gamewell. *The Gateway to China: Pictures of Shanghai*. 33.

²⁴¹ Gamewell. *The Gateway to China: Pictures of Shanghai*. 73.

the Far Country of the Prodigal Son. Sadly enough, the presence of degenerate foreigners is largely responsible for the sin laid at the gates of this gay metropolis."²⁴²

This shows that while many foreigners believed Shanghai to be a hotbed for sin and debauchery, they held themselves at least partially responsible for making the city that way. While it is difficult to judge whether or not this is accurate since there is not one defining factor that caused Shanghai to have such a high number of prostitutes, some foreigners living in Shanghai blamed their presence in the country for it.

Gamewell also discusses the Doors of Hope Initiative, which was a faith-based organization that helped women get out of prostitution. She describes the process through which the initiative helps the girls start their lives over. First, the girls go to a receiving home near Nanking road, where they stay for a night. Then, the girl has to go to the mixed court to get admitted into the Doors of Hope. Once admitted, first year girls "spend the morning in study and the afternoon in work."²⁴³ They learn how to make clothes both for themselves and for the dolls that the initiative sells. The second year girls spend the day time working on more complicated sewing, like embroidery, with lessons in the evening. According to Gamewell, most of the girls in the Initiative either convert to Christianity or marry a Christian man.²⁴⁴ While Gamewell asserts multiple times that all of the girls looked extremely happy she does not include any first hand accounts from any of the girls.

In the 1928 article "Concessions in Foreign Hands," which comes from the Republican period, Henry Quigley describes the difference between a concession and a settlement. An area is considered a concession when "the entire area is leased by a single foreign state which pays a

²⁴² Gamewell. *The Gateway to China: Pictures of Shanghai*. 189.

²⁴³ Gamewell. *The Gateway to China: Pictures of Shanghai*. 190.

²⁴⁴ Gamewell. *The Gateway to China: Pictures of Shanghai*. 192.

rental for it; parcels of land are then subleased by the foreign state to private lessees”²⁴⁵ In a settlement, private lessees rent the land directly from the Chinese authorities. Quigley also notes that these two terms are sometimes used interchangeably. Quigley discusses the differences between the International Settlement and other foreign concessions in Shanghai. More often than not, in British international concessions a council of ratepayers has more influence over policy than the consul does, but in European and Japanese concessions the consul has more authority.²⁴⁶

In his review of Ch. B. Maybon and Jean Fredet’s “Histoire de la Concession Française de Changhai,” Pierre Gourou provides important information about what the French Concession of Shanghai was like during 1929 as context for his readers. He states that the French Concession of Shanghai had “360,000 inhabitants, is crossed by 92 kilometers of carriageways, has an annual budget of 3,816,000 taels.”²⁴⁷ He explains how, even though the concession was technically established by the Franco-Chinese treaty of 1844, but that the Chinese authorities did not give the French the land that they requested until April 6, 1849. He credits the fact that the Chinese turned over the land at all to the shrewd negotiating skills of Consul Charles de Motigny.

Even though the Chinese established the French Concession because of the unequal treaties that were a result of the Opium Wars, this proves that the Chinese still attempted to put up resistance to the foreign presence in Shanghai. Gourou also explains how, even though the French opposed the merging with the English and American enclaves into the International Concession in 1854 when the merger took place, the French Concession did not establish itself as

²⁴⁵ Quigley, Harold S. “Foreign Concessions in Chinese Hands.” *Foreign Affairs* 7, no. 1 (Oct. 1928): 150.

²⁴⁶ Quigley, Harold S. “Foreign Concessions in Chinese Hands.” 150-151.

²⁴⁷ Pierre Gourou. “Ch. B. Maybon et Jean Fredet : Histoire de la Concession française de Changhai,” Review of *Histoire de la Concession française de Changhai*, by Ch. B. Maybon & Jean Fredet, *Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient* 29 (1929): 395.

“absolutely distinct” from the International Concession until 1863.²⁴⁸ Not only did the French Concession face Chinese opposition to its existence, but the British and the Americans also pressured the French to give up complete control over their Concession in order to be part of the International Concession. However, the French chose to hang onto complete political control over their Concession instead of working alongside the British and the Americans.

“La Nouvelle Organisation Judiciaire à Shanghai,” F.E.H Groenman describes how the city of Shanghai was organized. His work was written in 1930 and focuses on how the concession’s judicial organization has changed since its establishment. He outlines the difference between the way that Chinese people fall under legal jurisdiction in the International Settlement, The French Concession, and the rest of the city which is under Chinese jurisdiction. He categorizes the Chinese justice system as “organized entirely in Chinese” while “the French division follows a mixed Franco-Chinese system and the International Settlement has, since April 1, 1930, a judicial organization, one can say Chinese, subject to certain restrictions.”²⁴⁹

Groenman also describes how the concessions impacted the way that the police operate. The municipal police had the authority to prosecute cases themselves “if they have preceded the prosecution” and all of the prosecution took place in public.²⁵⁰ The Municipal Council also has the right to find out about anything that goes on in court as long as it files for the information beforehand. Both the procedural and criminal courts had to adhere to the modern Chinese codes of civil and criminal procedure. Before 1927 there was also a mixed court which borrowed rules

²⁴⁸ Gourou. “Ch. B. Maybon et Jean Fredet : Histoire de la Concession française de Changhai,” 396.

²⁴⁹ Groenman, F.E.H. “Nouvelle Organisation Judiciaire à Shanghai, La,” *Bulletin de l'Institut Intermediaire International* 23 (1930): 11.

²⁵⁰ Groenman. “Nouvelle Organisation Judiciaire à Shanghai, La,” 12.

from both the local customs and ancient Chinese laws. However, that was replaced with a provisional court which applied the same system in 1927.²⁵¹

In his 1938 article *The International Settlement and the French Concession at Shanghai*, Sir John T. Pratt provides a historical account of how the French Concession and the International Settlement were established. According to Pratt, “nearly half the population of Shanghai resides in the French Concession and the International Settlement.”²⁵² When the French Concession was first founded, it was 164 acres, but by 1914 it had been granted three expansions that increased the size of the concession to 2,525 acres.²⁵³ In 1899 a proposed expansion of the French Concession caused tension between the French and the British. The British people living near the area of the proposed extension were worried it would have a negative impact on their lives. So the British ordered the French to submit all of their “municipal regulations” to the British Minister from that point onwards if the regulations would affect the British.²⁵⁴

Pratt also explains a rule called the *règlement of 1868* which stated that “one or more Chinese might be appointed by the Consul-General and the Taotai as advisory members (i.e. without a vote) of the French Municipal Council, but this remained a dead letter until after the extension of the French Concession in 1914” when two Chinese people were allowed to hold advisory positions.²⁵⁵ By 1938, when the article was written, five Chinese people held advisory positions. While the French had complete control over how the Concession was governed, they did make an attempt to take the Chinese people’s views into account, even though those efforts were very minor.

²⁵¹ Groenman. "Nouvelle Organisation Judiciaire à Shanghai, La," 13.

²⁵² Pratt. "The International Settlement and the French Concession at Shanghai," 1.

²⁵³ Pratt. "The International Settlement and the French Concession at Shanghai," 16.

²⁵⁴ Pratt. "The International Settlement and the French Concession at Shanghai," 7.

²⁵⁵ Pratt. "The International Settlement and the French Concession at Shanghai," 17.

In 1935, the French Concession's largest expenditure was their police force, which they spent \$3,109,345 on. This was also the International Settlement's largest expenditure, with \$9,901,640 being spent on police and goals. This is reflective of the large crime problem taking place in Shanghai at this time. In total, the French Concession made \$9,690,604, which is a very small number in comparison with the International Concession's 1936 revenue of \$24.5 million. However, this extreme disparity begins to make more sense when one takes into account that the International Settlement had a population of 1,149,443, while the French concession had a population of 497,529. The French Concession specifically had 479,294 Chinese people and 18,235 Foreign people living there. Surprisingly enough, the largest group of foreigners living in the French Concession were Russians (8,260 people), followed by British (2,689), and Americans (1,792). The French came in fourth place in their own concession with only 1,430 people. The Japanese were the only ethnic group with less numbers than the French, with only 280 people living in the concession. This is interesting because the Japanese were actually the most numerous ethnic group in the international settlement with 14,184 people living there.²⁵⁶

In the 1940 book *Shanghai: City For Sale*, Ernest O. Hauser details interactions between China and foreign powers in Shanghai. He argues that the West insisted "Western ideas were right and Eastern ideas were wrong" when interacting with China.²⁵⁷ This is reflected in the way that prostitution was policed in the French Concession since the model used to regulate prostitution there was based on what France had done to regulate prostitution in the past. Hauser also illustrates how these ethnocentric attitudes had negative consequences, particularly in the form of the Taiping Rebellion, which was partially motivated by rising antiforeign sentiments.

²⁵⁶ John T. Pratt. "The International Settlement and the French Concession at Shanghai," 18.

²⁵⁷ Ernest O. Hauser. *Shanghai: City for Sale*. New York: Harcourt, Brace And Company, 1940: 27.

The French often had a large part of the burden of defending the foreign enclaves from the Taiping Rebels placed on their shoulders since the French Concession was located closer to the walled city than the International Settlement was.²⁵⁸

The book also includes population statistics from the early years of the French Concession. While the concession began with only a consul and a handful of missionaries, by 1856 the population had grown to about five hundred people over the course of twenty years.²⁵⁹ While this is small in comparison with the more than 2,000 people who lived in the International Concession, this is still a large amount of population growth which shows that the Concession was flourishing. In these early years, the French rarely left their concession and the Jesuit Fathers were some of the most respected members of their community.²⁶⁰ This is obviously very different from the place with a high number of prostitutes that the French Concession eventually became.

Hauser also details an early conflict that took place between the French and the Chinese. While building a road, the French removed most of the coffins in the cemetery of the Ningpo Colony, which rightfully angered the local people.²⁶¹ The local people responded by rioting in the streets, which the French people dealt with by ordering a detachment of marines to shoot into the crowd. However, this did not completely solve the problem, so they abandoned the project and allowed the Ningpo people to build a wall around the cemetery, in spite of protests from the British who wanted to French to force the Chinese to let them build the road.²⁶² While the French did resort to violence to try and suppress the local people, the fact that they eventually bent to the will of the Chinese shows that they prioritized peaceful relationships with the Chinese over their

²⁵⁸ Hauser. *Shanghai: City for Sale*. 41.

²⁵⁹ Hauser. *Shanghai: City for Sale*. 68.

²⁶⁰ Hauser. *Shanghai: City for Sale*. 69.

²⁶¹ Hauser. *Shanghai: City for Sale*. 84.

²⁶² Hauser. *Shanghai: City for Sale*. 85.

own pride and the advice of their British neighbors. The British opposition to this suggests that the British were more concerned with proving their own strength to the Chinese people living in Shanghai than the French were.

Another time that the French clashed with the Chinese in the concession was when the municipal council raised the tax on wheelbarrows, which caused the wheelbarrow men to riot in 1897. Approximately five thousand wheelbarrow men broke into the French Concession and unsuccessfully attempted to fight the police force, which ended with two of them being killed.²⁶³ Unlike the conflict with the Ningpo people, this conflict is an example of a time that French comfort and security was more important than maintaining positive relations with the Chinese people. Additionally, the fact that the French police force was able to successfully fight off 5,000 attackers shows that they were both well trained and effective.

However, life in the French Concession had its peaceful moments as well. Under the Consul General the Comte de Bezaure, more French cultural institutions like the “Parisian Hair Dressing Saloon” came to the French Concession.²⁶⁴ Since he was concerned with living lavishly and throwing extravagant parties, this involved creating an image of himself that aligned with traditional French conceptions of what those things entailed. This desire to improve his own self image led to French Culture being diffused throughout all of Shanghai.

In China Letter No. 1, Robert Foxx provides an extremely critical account of his travels in Shanghai. This letter was published in 1947, during the final years of the Republican period before the Communist party took over. He claims that the city “would delight that emperor who could not digest his supper unless accompanied by the screams of the tortured: if I have to judge

²⁶³ Hauser. *Shanghai: City for Sale*. 92-93.

²⁶⁴ Hauser. *Shanghai: City for Sale*. 102.

a man quickly, I ask him whether he likes Shanghai-if he does, he is a Yahoo, that is all I have to know about him, and all you have to know about Shanghai.”²⁶⁵ While the letter documents his trip throughout multiple different cities in China, in which he finds something to criticize about all of them, he specifies Shanghai as his least favorite of them all. He thinks lowly of Shanghai because there are so many criminals and people who promote vice there. The large number of prostitutes that he found in the city is his first criticism of Shanghai.

He also takes separate issue with the number of Russians living in the French concession, especially the number of Russian women who have sex with visiting sailors. While the author is not exclusively referring to Russian prostitutes, it is very likely that a portion of the women he was referring to were prostitutes because many of the Russian prostitutes' clients were foreigners and sailors. Foxx also claims that many of the Russians living in the French Concession are doing so begrudgingly and that they are all dreaming of a day when they can return Russia to its pre-revolutionary glory. However, Foxx does not include any conversations that he had with any Russians living in the French concession. So, it is difficult to tell whether this is based on things that he observed or if it is merely a reflection of his own perception of Russian people.

Henry Champly's Road to Shanghai

One of the most extensive sources written about European prostitutes living and working in Shanghai is *The Road to Shanghai* by Henry Champly. In this book, which was originally written during the Republican period in 1934, Champly set out to discover what happened to European women who went, either willingly or unwillingly, to be prostitutes in East Asia. One of

²⁶⁵ Robert Foxx. “China Letter No. 1.” *The Kenyon Review* 9, no. 1 (Winter 1947): 123.

the most significant things about this book is that Champly was able to get direct interviews with multiple different anonymous European prostitutes who had worked in Shanghai. Additionally, the observations he makes about both the prostitutes and their clients provides insight into how French people living in the 1930's viewed prostitution in the French concession of Shanghai.

At the beginning of the book, Champly provides a description of what prostitution was like in France during this time period. He visits a dance hall where white French women cater to Chinese, Vietnamese, Filipino and black customers.²⁶⁶ While he is not happy about the fact that men of color are being sexually intimate with white prostitutes in France, the prostitutes that he interviews there do not seem to mind that their customers are not white. In fact, one prostitute expresses a desire for one of her Chinese clients to take her back to Shanghai with him because she believes Chinese men “are the nicest, besides they’ve got the most money.”²⁶⁷ Later in the book, he meets another French prostitute who intends to move to China so that she can learn to become an acrobat. She states that she’ll “get just as many clients in China. The colour of their skin doesn’t make any difference to” her. This shows that many French prostitutes had Chinese clients, and even thought positively of them. However, they still made many blanket generalizations about their Chinese clients based on their national identity in a way that they did not with their French clients.

Before Champly leaves France to investigate the sex trafficking of French women in Shanghai, he meets with a French police official to see what the French Police know about the subject that he is researching. It is worth noting that Champly believes that the French Police force is a “magnificent” administration, which lines up the often ethnocentric sense of national

²⁶⁶ Champly, Henry. *The Road to Shanghai: White Slave Traffic in Asia*. London: J. Long Limited, 1938: 17.

²⁶⁷ Champly. *The Road to Shanghai: White Slave Traffic in Asia*. 21.

pride that he expresses throughout the book.²⁶⁸ Champly is disappointed to discover that the police do not have any official information surrounding white slave traffic in China, but an unnamed statistician does provide him with some rough estimates. The statistician informs him that, at the police station, they believe that two thirds of the white women who disappear from France enter prostitution, and that less than one half of those women end up in Shanghai.²⁶⁹ The statisticians' estimates show that the French Police force did not view sex-trafficking to Shanghai as an urgent problem, especially in comparison with sex-trafficking to the Americas, which they did have official statistics about. However, the conversations that Champly had with the statistician and the other police station employees gave readers the impression that the police were concerned enough about the issue to help someone else investigate it.

As Champly travels to Shanghai, people he meets on his travels in East Asia talk about Shanghai as though it was a hotbed for prostitution and other forms of vice. For example, one British man Champly meets in Singapore uses Shanghai as a comparison point for the amount of prostitution that takes place in Singapore.²⁷⁰ On the ship that Champly takes to Shanghai, the shipmen remark that, "For pleasure and passion, for Women, there are only two cities in the world beyond compare. Shanghai and Paris."²⁷¹ The sailors draw a direct connection between Paris and Shanghai as centers for prostitution. It is also worth noting that they list Shanghai before Paris, which may be influenced by the fact that they are going to Shanghai on the trip. However, it is still worth mentioning that they listed Shanghai before Paris since people all throughout Champly's travels have been using Paris as an example of a city that has many

²⁶⁸ Chambly. *The Road to Shanghai: White Slave Traffic in Asia*. 30.

²⁶⁹ Chambly. *The Road to Shanghai: White Slave Traffic in Asia*. 34.

²⁷⁰ Chambly. *The Road to Shanghai: White Slave Traffic in Asia*. 66.

²⁷¹ Chambly. *The Road to Shanghai: White Slave Traffic in Asia*. 157.

beautiful prostitutes. This is further evidenced by the fact that Champly says that, “almost all my sailors extolled Shanghai as the great sanctuary of the White Venus, more radiant than the New York one, and more captivating than even the Parisian.”²⁷² Even though there are many more white women living in Paris and New York than there are living in Shanghai, the sailors still claim that the white women in Shanghai are the most beautiful.

While in Shanghai, Champly met a pimp named Nono who had been prostituting French girls in Shanghai since 1930. He had three French girls, who all lived together in the same flat, that he pimped out to a primarily Chinese clientele. He tried to get the clients in and out as quickly as he possibly could by knocking on the wall after fifteen minutes. Nono also used many abusive tactics to manipulate the girls who worked for him and keep them under his control. When explaining the time limits that he put on his Chinese clients to Champly, Nono said that if one of the clients “stayed more than twenty-five minutes, the girl knew she would get it hot from me.”²⁷³ Another way that Nono exercised control over the girls that he employed was by having sex with them in order to prevent them from returning home to their families. For example, when he first met Champly, he was seeking legal advice because he had been accused of “debauching” a 19 year old Breton girl who he met at a cinema, gave a ride in his car, and had sex with her. However, he states that he did this as a business maneuver instead “for his own pleasure.”²⁷⁴ After that, she began working at his brothel, but the police came to investigate her disappearance since she had not told her parents she was becoming a prostitute. However, Nono decided to resolve the issue by marrying the girl to get out of legal trouble.

²⁷² Champly. *The Road to Shanghai: White Slave Traffic in Asia*. 159.

²⁷³ Champly. *The Road to Shanghai: White Slave Traffic in Asia*. 217.

²⁷⁴ Champly. *The Road to Shanghai: White Slave Traffic in Asia*. 219.

While he is staying in Hanoi, Champly meets a Frenchman who goes by the name of Michel Scarface, who used to transport women from France to East Asia to become prostitutes. Through his conversations with Michel, Champly is able to conclude that Frenchwomen, specifically Parisian women, were considered more desirable than any other white women throughout most parts of East Asia:

*“Everywhere she went the Frenchwoman, the Parisian woman – for even the Marseillaises, accent and all, called themselves Parisians to make an impression on their clients – Everywhere she was a triumph. One Frenchwoman was appreciated as much as 20 Australians.”*²⁷⁵

Obviously, it is very likely that Champly is overestimating the desirability of women from his own homeland because of his own sense of national pride. However, later he discovers that it is not just other French women who pretend to be Parisian in order to attract more clients but also many Russian prostitutes as well. A French lawyer who goes by the name of Marcel B tells Champly that there are 10,000 white prostitutes in Shanghai and that 8,000 of those white prostitutes are Russian.²⁷⁶ This is the same statistic for the number of Russian prostitutes in Shanghai that contemporary historian Gail Hershatter cites in her article The Hierarchy of Shanghai Prostitution, which means that this statistic is accurate enough to be used in other academic research.²⁷⁷

Along with the second hand information that Champly received about Russian prostitutes, Champly also made personal acquaintances with a few different Russian prostitutes while doing research in Shanghai. One of these prostitutes, named Natacha, worked at a cabaret

²⁷⁵ Chambly. *The Road to Shanghai: White Slave Traffic in Asia*. 99.

²⁷⁶ Chambly. *The Road to Shanghai: White Slave Traffic in Asia*. 167-8.

²⁷⁷ Hershatter. “The Hierarchy of Shanghai Prostitution 1870-1949.” 473.

called the “Casanova” that was owned by a Chinese woman named Miss Lei Tao.²⁷⁸ Natacha tells Champly that serving “as plaything to the Chinese isn’t so bad, after all ; they’re amorous and they’re artists. *But the Japanese!* They really hate our race. We’re repugnant to them. They only want to trample us under foot, to defile us.”²⁷⁹ This extreme prejudice against the Japanese is also shared by Champly. So, it is possible that Champly could have chosen to include this testimony while choosing to exclude other testimonies that did not validate his own perspectives. However, he includes other testimonies from prostitutes that contradict his own views throughout the book. So, it is more likely that Natacha and Champly’s shared prejudice against the Japanese suggests that many European people living during the 1930’s stereotyped the Japanese as being a menacing threat to European people, while they stereotyped the Chinese as being weak and inferior to European people.

After Champly meets Natacha, she takes him to a place called the Venus Bar, which is on Fearon road. The majority of the prostitutes working there were Russian, while the majority of clients in this bar were Japanese. However, there were also customers there from Formosa, Korea, and Manchuria.²⁸⁰ The brothel primarily catered to Japanese men living in Shanghai who were interested in white women, which was not only evidenced by the fact that all of the prostitutes working there were white, but also by the fact that there was a large painting of a nude white woman on the wall at the end of the dance hall. Despite the fact that the majority of the customers were Japanese and most of the prostitutes were Russian, the owner of the brothel was actually a French man that Champly refers to as “Monsieur R.”

²⁷⁸ Chambly. *The Road to Shanghai: White Slave Traffic in Asia*. 185.

²⁷⁹ Chambly. *The Road to Shanghai: White Slave Traffic in Asia*. 193.

²⁸⁰ Chambly. *The Road to Shanghai: White Slave Traffic in Asia*. 194.

However, even though M. R owns the building itself, it is his wife who actually sells the prostitutes to the clients. M. R's wife is a Jewish woman from Harbin who is viciously stereotyped as a cruel and greedy "tyrant" by both Champly and the Russian prostitutes that he interacts with at the Venus Bar.²⁸¹ This is prejudice against Jewish women comes back into the narrative later, when Champly is having a conversation with a group of Russian prostitutes:

*"According to them, from Harbin to Shanghai it was these women who, as the money-lenders or procuresses, most cruelly exploited the carelessness, the capriciousness, and the beauty of the Siberian refugees."*²⁸²

All of these are antisemitic stereotypes that are often used to unfairly scapegoat Jewish people for societal problems. Taking this into account, one should not take this information at face value. Despite the insistence of both Champly and most Russian women that he meets that Jewish women are crueler than other madames are, neither Champly or the Russian women provide any significant examples of specific acts of cruelty that Jewish madames commit that other madames do not. Additionally, while M. R's wife is portrayed as having a mean and materialistic demeanor, there is no mention of her actually doing anything exceptionally cruel to either the prostitutes or her husband. While it is still possible that this individual woman may have been a cruel madame, it is clear that Champly portrayed that cruelty as a result of her being Jewish because of his own antisemitic biases, not any factual or even anecdotal evidence.

The existence of Venus Bar proves that whiteness was commodified as a way to portray European prostitutes as "exotic" to Asian customers. Later, it becomes clear how Frenchness in particular was exoticized as a marketing tool by pimps and madams trying to appeal to more

²⁸¹ Chambly. *The Road to Shanghai: White Slave Traffic in Asia*. 195.

²⁸² Chambly. *The Road to Shanghai: White Slave Traffic in Asia*. 206.

customers. Champly meets a Parisian man named Maurice who is a pimp and a gun runner. He “deals only in foreign women” and gives every one of the prostitutes under his control instructions on how to act “Parisian” regardless of where they come from.²⁸³ Maurice introduces Henry to a “clearly underage” Siberian girl he had taught how to act Parisian. Even though Maurice and Champly can both tell she’s not French, Maurice insists “it’s good enough for the Chinese.”²⁸⁴ The Russian prostitutes working for Maurice are not the only ones Champly meets that pretend to be French in order to attract more clients. Champly also discovers that there are Belgian women, German women, and other Russian women that also pretend to be French because French women have a reputation for being both promiscuous and desirable.²⁸⁵

However, Champly discovers that this has not always been the case in Shanghai. According to the testimonies of the Russian prostitutes that he met, before 1926, most Russian women were too afraid to go to China. However, many of them moved to Shanghai after political unrest in their own country made them desperate to earn money to feed their sick or starving parents. At first, Chinese men had little to no interest in Russian prostitutes, but the Russian prostitutes adapted to this by doing things that Chinese prostitutes often refused to do. For example, the Russian prostitutes would hold “their robes open, so that the men could see that they were really women.”²⁸⁶

Champly’s travels in Shanghai revealed something very interesting about the nature of prostitution in the city that he had not intentionally been trying to find out. Although Champly did not directly make note of the significance of this in his writings, he did discover that there

²⁸³ Chambly. *The Road to Shanghai: White Slave Traffic in Asia*. 224.

²⁸⁴ Chambly. *The Road to Shanghai: White Slave Traffic in Asia*. 229.

²⁸⁵ Chambly. *The Road to Shanghai: White Slave Traffic in Asia*. 246.

²⁸⁶ Chambly. *The Road to Shanghai: White Slave Traffic in Asia*. 200-201.

were a large number of people with non-normative sexualities and gender identities that relied on the sex work in order to make their livings in Shanghai. One of these people is a Russian woman named Tania, who is the descendant of a Russian writer who came to Shanghai from European Russia. According to Natacha and the author's own inferences, she is attracted to other women. "She served in Wrangel's army"²⁸⁷ and then tried to open a Cabaret, but it went bankrupt because she "never liked seeing any harm come to the dancing girls" Now M. R helps her out financially, because "she's spendthrift again" every time she gets a job.²⁸⁸

Tania also introduces Champly to a person who did not completely identify with the gender that they were assigned at birth. This person, named Schirra, was assigned male at birth, but they preferred to dress like and present as a woman. According to Tania, Schirra made more money and received more attention than any of the female taxi dancers²⁸⁹ that they worked with when they used to be a prostitute.²⁹⁰ It is important to note that Schirra continued to dress and present as a woman even after they stopped being a prostitute and became a dressmaker.²⁹¹ This implies that Schirra was not simply presenting as female because they wanted to attract more customers, but because they genuinely identified with femininity in some way since presenting as a woman has no significant strategic or financial advantages for a dressmaker in the same way that doing so has for a prostitute.

Champly also learns about how the French Concession was established and how it changed over the years when he met a Frenchman who had been living there for 40 years. When

²⁸⁷ Chambly. *The Road to Shanghai: White Slave Traffic in Asia*. 199.

²⁸⁸ Chambly. *The Road to Shanghai: White Slave Traffic in Asia*. 200.

²⁸⁹ A taxi dancer is a paid dance partner that clients pay by the dance in a dancehall. Many, but not all of them, were also prostitutes.

²⁹⁰ Chambly. *The Road to Shanghai: White Slave Traffic in Asia*. 210.

²⁹¹ Chambly. *The Road to Shanghai: White Slave Traffic in Asia*. 211.

the Frenchmen first came to Shanghai in 1890, it “was all swamp” but over the years the French built “ornate, monumental buildings : luxurious private houses, big shops, rich hotels.”²⁹² After this, Champly also gets a tour from a young policeman from the French Concession that is more closely related to his research on prostitution. The policeman claims that, in the French Concession, the policing is “perfect” and there is so little prostitution “that it’s not worth talking about.”²⁹³ The police officer’s claims take him to a cabaret called the Casanova, but he assures Champly that all of the girls take a special bus home at the end of the night. At the Cabaret, Champly assumed that most of the women dancing were Russian and he thought it was particularly interesting that Chinese people were admitted, but “only in European dress.”²⁹⁴ While at the cabaret, Champly and the police officer also discussed how there were numerous cabarets in town where Chinese taxi girls work. Both the Chinese and Russian taxi girls share the same clientele, so they often competed with each other.

Later, the police officer took him to see the *Chu-Pao San*, which was a street near the French Consulate with many brothels on it, that primarily catered to sailors. The police officer tried to justify the existence of these brothels by saying this:

*“You’ve seen those poor women, often middle-aged, degraded, burned up with alcohol, brutalized....And those young men, athletic, tanned golden, who come here to pay for them. Don’t you think that the beauty is to be found in the men, not in the women? They’re lucky that such fine fellows should deign to touch them.”*²⁹⁵

²⁹² Chambly. *The Road to Shanghai: White Slave Traffic in Asia*. 174-175.

²⁹³ Chambly. *The Road to Shanghai: White Slave Traffic in Asia*. 184.

²⁹⁴ Chambly. *The Road to Shanghai: White Slave Traffic in Asia*. 186.

²⁹⁵ Chambly. *The Road to Shanghai: White Slave Traffic in Asia*. 187.

The officer follows this by reassuring Champly that the brothels on the *rue Chu-Pao San* are the worst ones in all of the French Concession. However, Champly does not believe him. This justification shows the influence of the French regulatory model towards policing prostitution because the officer cites the existence of the brothels on the *rue Chu-Pao San* as something that has a societal benefit. While it is clear that he disapproves of the prostitutes and their lifestyle, he believes that they are playing a necessary societal function and that everyone involved in the arrangement is benefitting. His attitude implies that he thinks the existence of these brothels is unpleasant, but unavoidable.

However, once the tour is over, the officer provides Champly with an insight into the corruption of the French police force. He takes Champly back to The Casanova and introduces him to Natacha, whom he describes as “a little friend” of his.²⁹⁶ His tone heavily implies that he paid to have sex with her before, or even that he may have been her pimp himself, but he does not directly state this. Champly agrees to go back to The Casanova so that he can interview her for this book, but not before asking the officer about the bus that takes the taxi girls home. The officer tells him that the bus isn’t running in a way that implies that it never existed in the first place. This moment of honesty from the police officer shows how the French police force was happy to turn a blind eye to vice and corruption as long as it did not threaten the safety of the French Concession.

Conclusions

²⁹⁶ Chambly. *The Road to Shanghai: White Slave Traffic in Asia*. 188.

Prostitution in the French Concession of Shanghai was an ever evolving entity that was influenced by cultural attitudes from all over the world, not unlike the French Concession itself. While prostitutes often divided themselves into categories based on status and ethnicity, the lines between these categories were often not as clear as they seemed, especially in the later years of the French Concession. As Shanghai experienced rapid change and growth, so too did the realm of prostitution within the city. Unlike the British and the Americans, who merged together into the International Settlement and embraced a new identity as “Shanghailanders,” the French tried harder to maintain a distinctly French identity for their concession. This impacted every area of life in the French Concession, including prostitution. The French Concession became home to *Maisons de Rendez-vous* and the police put old French models to regulate and police prostitution into place.

However, the French Concession was far from a carbon copy of France. Chinese architectural styles and city planning strategies mixed with the ones that the French were familiar with, which gave the city a distinctive aesthetic. Cultural institutions like the coffeehouse and the Parisian hair salon also influenced the perceptions of what made someone seem intellectual, elite, or beautiful. This contributed to the cultural commodification of Frenchness, which led some Russian prostitutes to try and convince their customers they were actually Parisian, in order to distinguish themselves from the large number of other Russian prostitutes who lived in the French Concession.

Both contemporary scholars and foreign scholars living in or visiting Shanghai during the late 19th and early 20th centuries provide evidence that prostitution Shanghai’s French Concession had unique characteristics that made it different from anywhere else in the world. By

looking at legal documents and treaties between France and other foreign powers, it is clear that the boundaries of the concession were often a source of tension between France and other nations. By analyzing how prostitution was policed and the mixed court system, it becomes clear that the presence of foreign powers in Shanghai sometimes made it difficult to enforce regulations on crime and vice. This allowed prostitution, along with other forms of crime like gambling, to flourish in the city. This led many foreigners to view Shanghai as a den of vice and sin, although it varied from person to person whether they blamed the Chinese or the presence of foreigners in China for the large amount of crime and debauchery in the city. This can be seen in the writings left behind by not only French scholars, but also other foreign scholars who observed prostitutes in the French concession.

Even today, the Former French Concession still holds the same mystique in the minds of many Europeans and Americans. A 2017 vogue article describes the Former French Concession the same way that visiting academics did back in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The author waxes romantic about how “the breezy, tree-shaded avenues of what was once the French Concession inspire lingering strolls in search of preserved mansions, one-of-a-kind shops, and, most importantly, delicious food.”²⁹⁷ This shows how, while China has undergone extreme changes, both politically and technologically, since 1943, the French Concession still retains its reputation as a hotspot for arts and culture. Now, it draws attention from all over the world, not for its reputation as a den of vice and debauchery as it once did, but for the architecture that remains a symbol of the unique urban landscape that arose from the cultural exchange that took place as a result of China’s semi-colonial status during the age of the French Concession.

²⁹⁷ Jennifer Conrad. “One Perfect Day in Shanghai’s Former French Concession.” Vogue, <https://www.vogue.com/article/shanghai-old-french-concession-guide> (Accessed January 30, 2020).

However, that does not mean prostitution in Shanghai has disappeared completely. Nowadays, travel websites warn English speaking tourists visiting China that prostitutes or their managers may attempt to solicit them aggressively inside Shanghai bars, just like the *yeji* used to do on the streets of the city.²⁹⁸ However, it seems as though these activities mostly take place outside of the former French Concession, likely because of the area's new status as a popular tourist destination. In 2010, a London tripadvisor user who was bothered by the amount of times that prostitutes had approached her and her husband on their trip to Shanghai advised other users of the site to "consider other central areas e.g. French Concession for a trip with less sex for sale."²⁹⁹ While prostitution still takes place in Shanghai today, it is clear that the French Concession no longer is a nexus for it. This is interesting, since one of the contributing factors for this shift seems to be the fact that American and European tourists visiting the Former French Concession do not want to be solicited by prostitutes, which is in direct contrast with how some of the most popular brothels in the French Concession were the ones visited by sailors. However, this is undoubtedly not the only factor responsible for this change. This is an area of study that would require more research before any definitive claims can be made about whether or not this is even a significant factor at all.

Another area of study with regards to prostitution in the French Concession of Shanghai that requires further research is how prostitution changed directly after the French Concession was disestablished in 1943. This is directly connected to the study of how prostitution in Shanghai changed after the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949. Of course,

²⁹⁸ Sara Nauman. "Traveler Warning: prostitution in China." Trip Savvy, <https://www.tripsavvy.com/traveler-warning-prostitution-in-china-1495429> (Accessed January 30, 2020).

²⁹⁹ CocoaBelle. "Peoples Square/Nanjing Road East - Prostitution - Warning." Trip Advisor, https://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowTopic-g308272-i2804-k3091113-o10-Peoples_Square_Nanjing_Road_East_Prostitution_Warning-Shanghai.html (Accessed January 29, 2020).

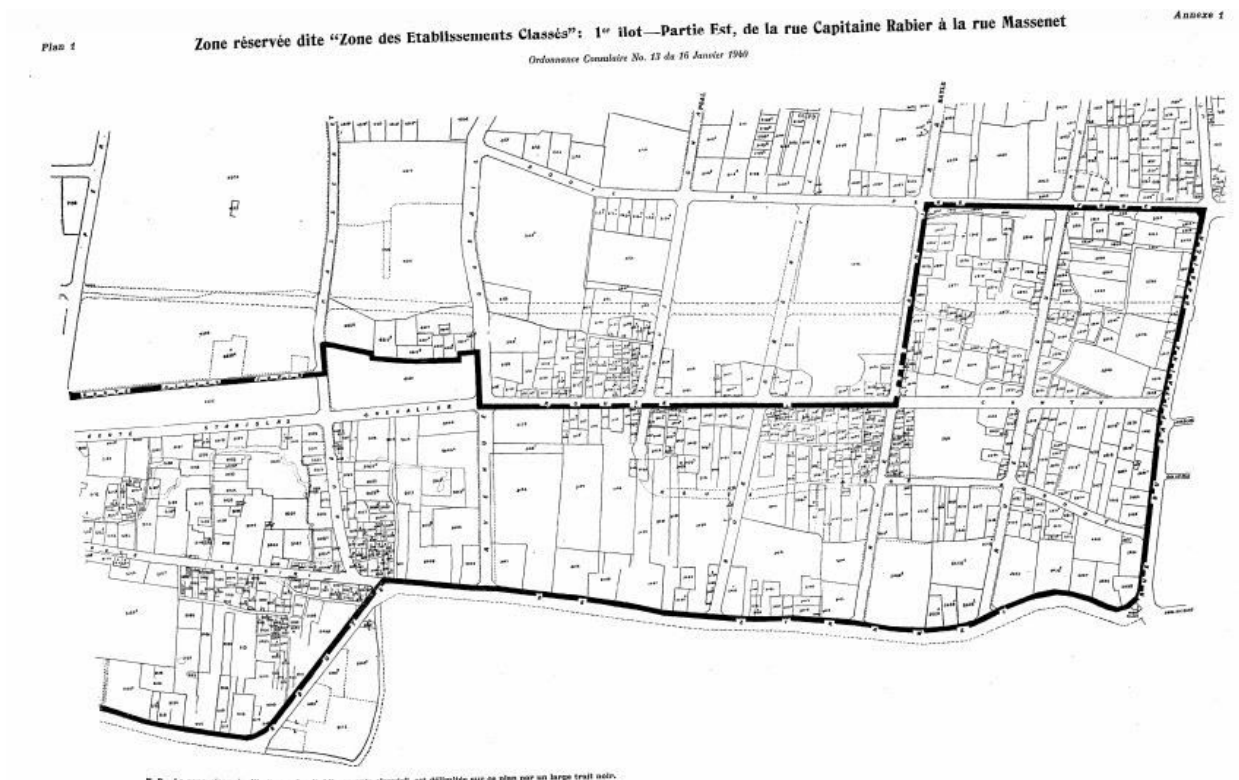
other areas of study that require further research are the lives of the prostitutes themselves.

However, this would require firsthand accounts of their lives and physical sources like clothing and accessories worn by prostitutes that were not accessible to me as I conducted my research.

On a related note, the subject male prostitution in Shanghai, which was briefly touched on in my work but never deeply analyzed, is something that has gone almost completely ignored by modern day academics. However, this is largely in part because of the lack of existing primary sources about male prostitution in Shanghai.

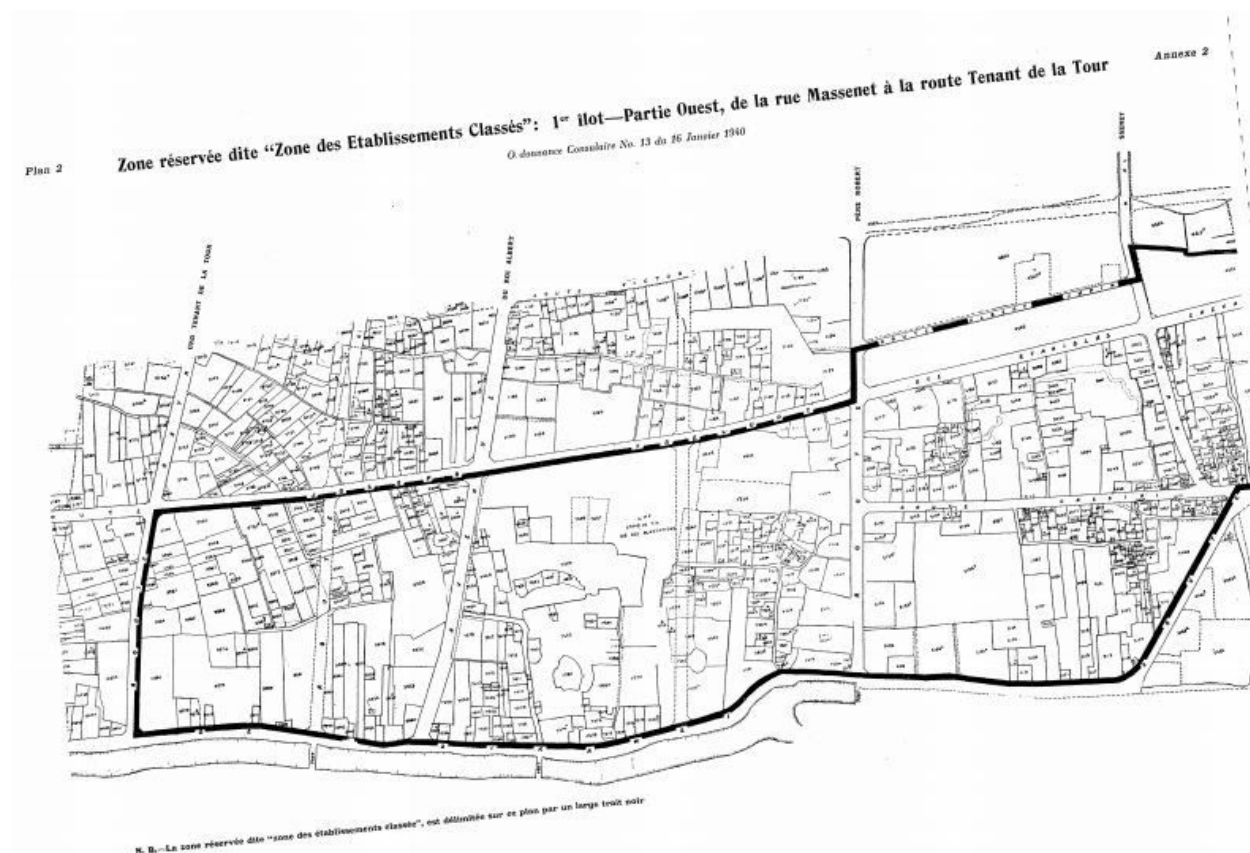
The sheer amount of research that could still be done on this topic shows how many different cultural and political issues are directly connected to the topic of prostitution in the French Concession of Shanghai. As both the issues of sex worker's rights and increasing globalisation in East Asia have recently become important topics in the news around the world, the significance of understanding the impact that cultural exchange can have on prostitution becomes apparent. Understanding the way that French cultural attitudes towards regulating prostitution and how the cultural commodification "Frenchness" impacted the way prostitutes advertised to their clients has the potential to give people a historical framework for understanding how prostitution will change and evolve in an increasingly globalized and interconnected world.

Appendix



Reserved Zone called "Zone of Classed Establishments : 1st Block -- Eastern Part, from the *rue Capitaine Rabier* to the *rue Massenet*"³⁰⁰

³⁰⁰ Conseil D'Administration Municipale de la Concession française. *Compte rendu de la gestion pour l'exercice 1939 - Budget 1940*. 9.



Reserved Zone called “Zone of Classed Establishments” : 1st Block -- Western Part, from the *rue Massenet* to the *route Tenant de la Tour*³⁰¹

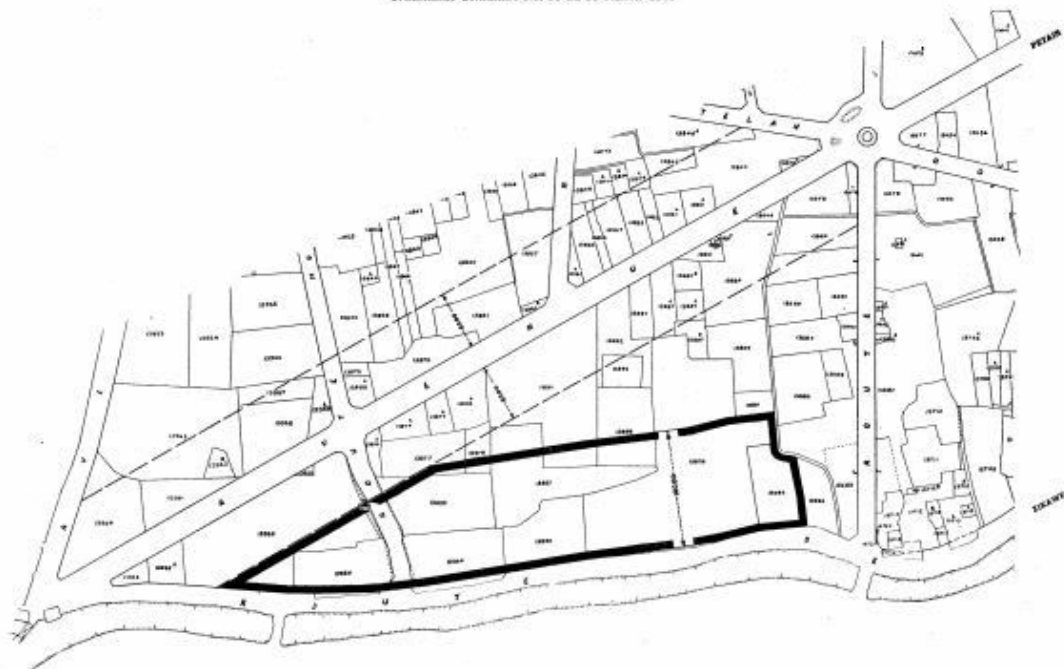
³⁰¹ Conseil D’Administration Municipale de la Concession française. *Compte rendu de la gestion pour l'exercice 1939 - Budget 1940*. 10.

Plan 3

Zone réservée dite "Zone des Etablissements Classés": 2^{ème} ilot

Annexe 3

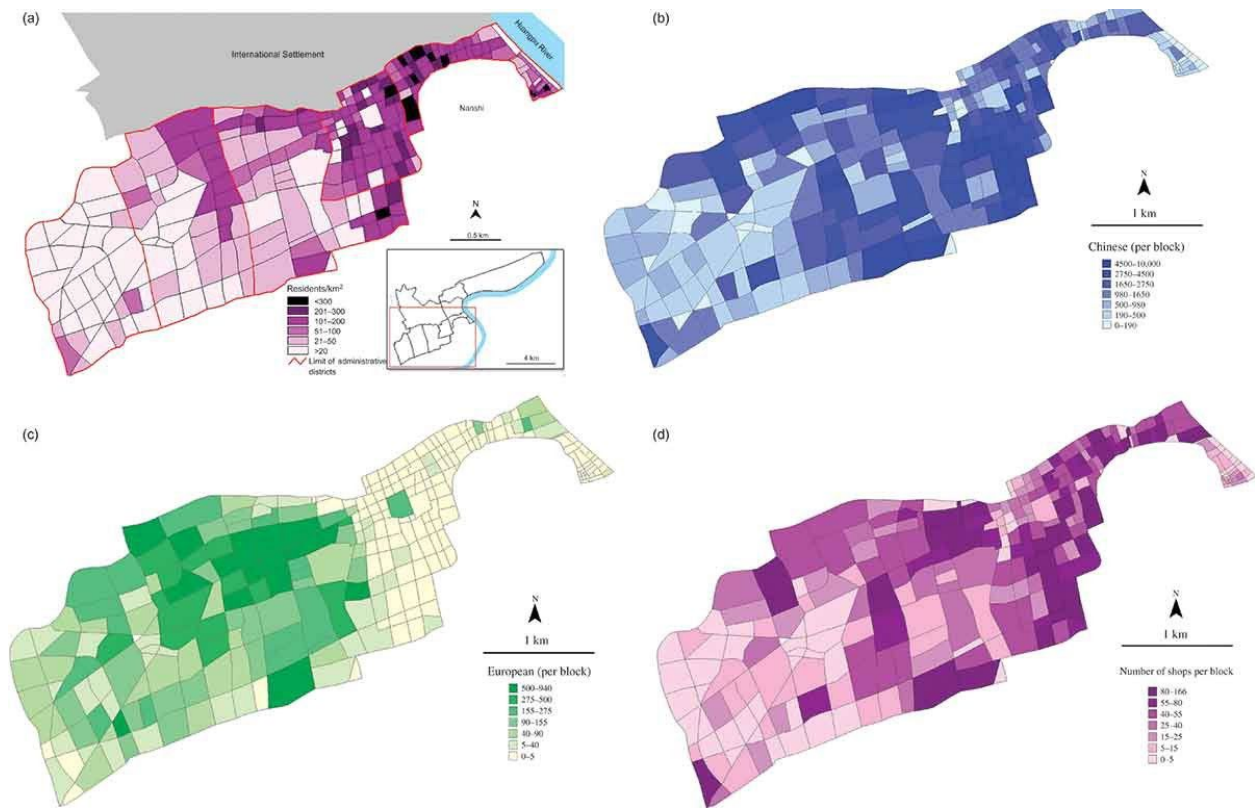
Ordonnance Consulaire No. 13 du 16 Janvier 1930



N. B. - La zone réservée dite "zone des établissements classés", est délimitée sur ce plan par un large trait noir.

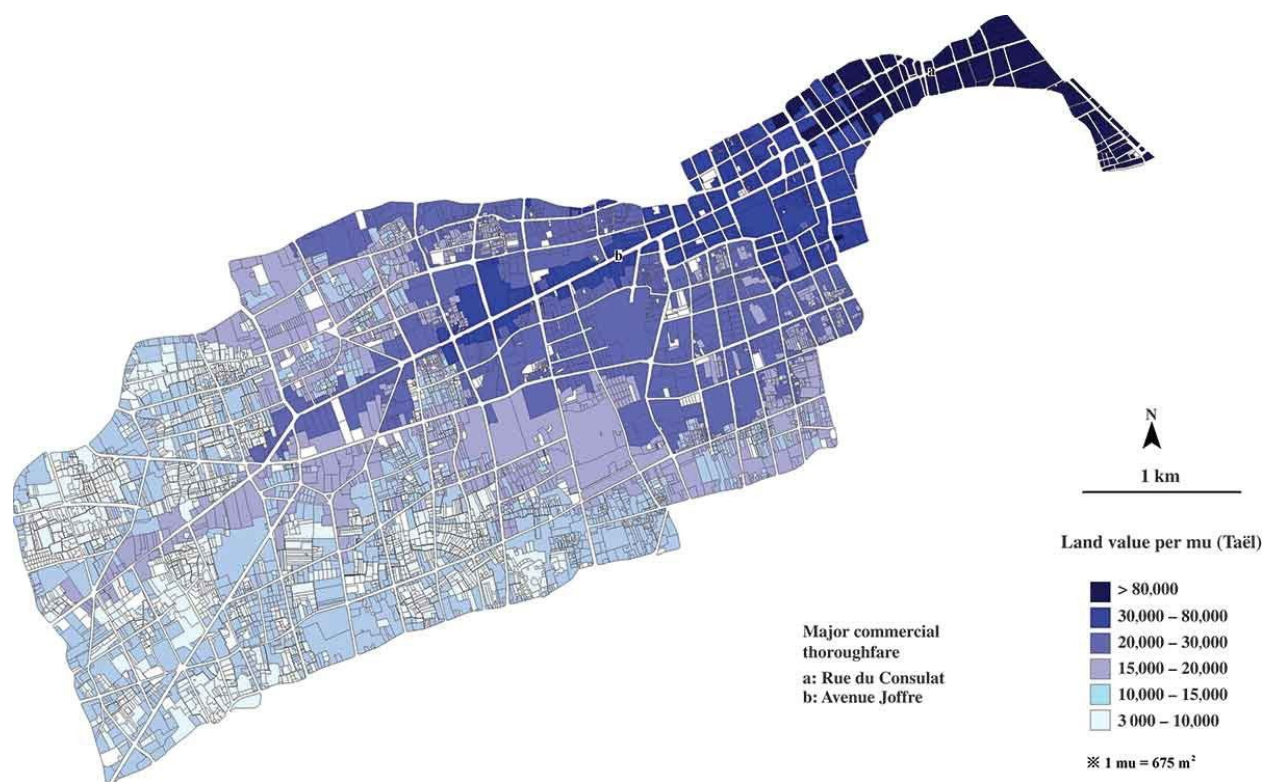
Reserved Zone called "Zone of Classed Establishments" : 2nd Block ³⁰²

³⁰² Conseil D'Administration Municipale de la Concession française. *Compte rendu de la gestion pour l'exercice 1939 - Budget 1940*. 11.



- “(a) Population density in the French Concession (1935).
 (b) Chinese population density in the French Concession (1937).
 (c) European population density in the French Concession (1937).
 (d) Commercial shops density in the French Concession (1937).”³⁰³

³⁰³ Zhenyu Mou. “Using cadastral maps in historical GIS research: the French Concession in Shanghai (1931–1941).” *Annals of GIS* 18, no. 2 (2012): 155.



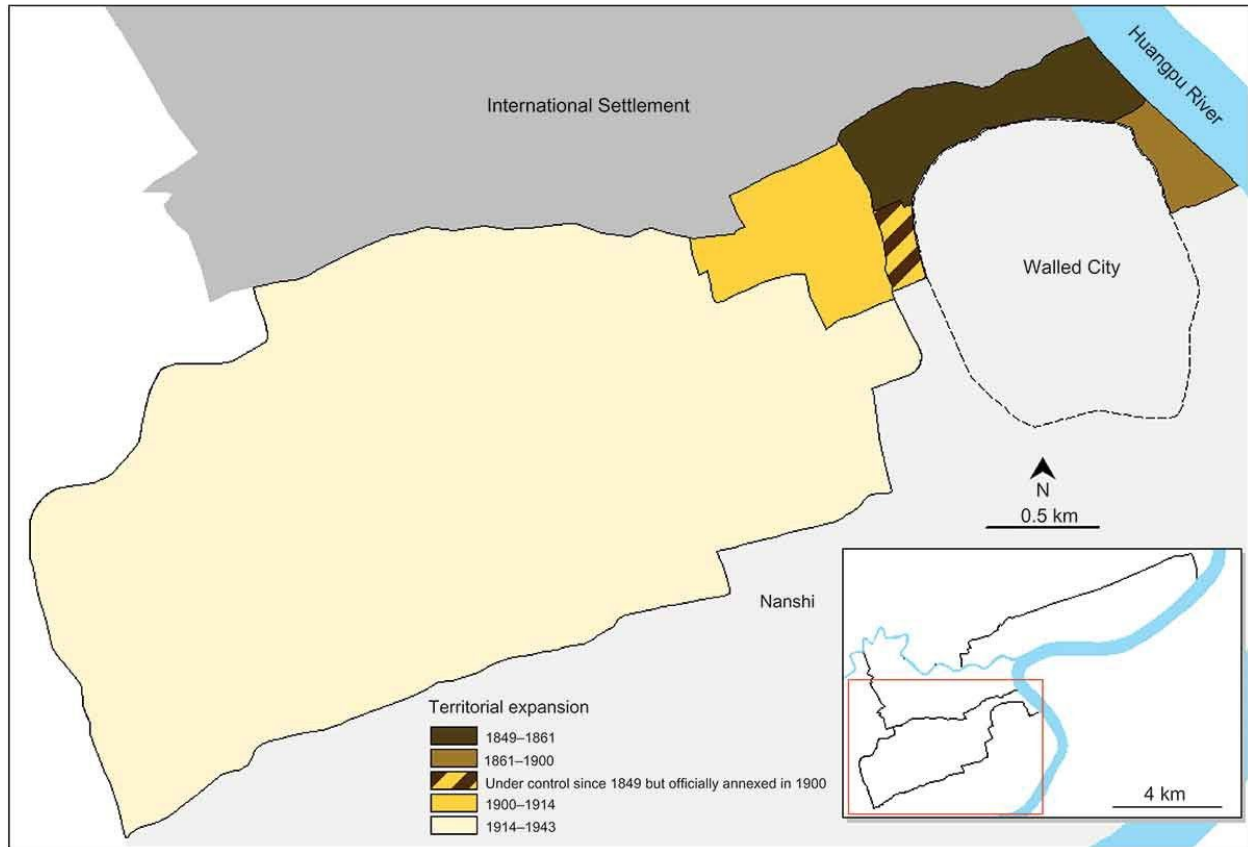
“Land value of French Concession in 1932.”³⁰⁴

³⁰⁴ Mou. “Using cadastral maps in historical GIS research: the French Concession in Shanghai (1931–1941).” 153.



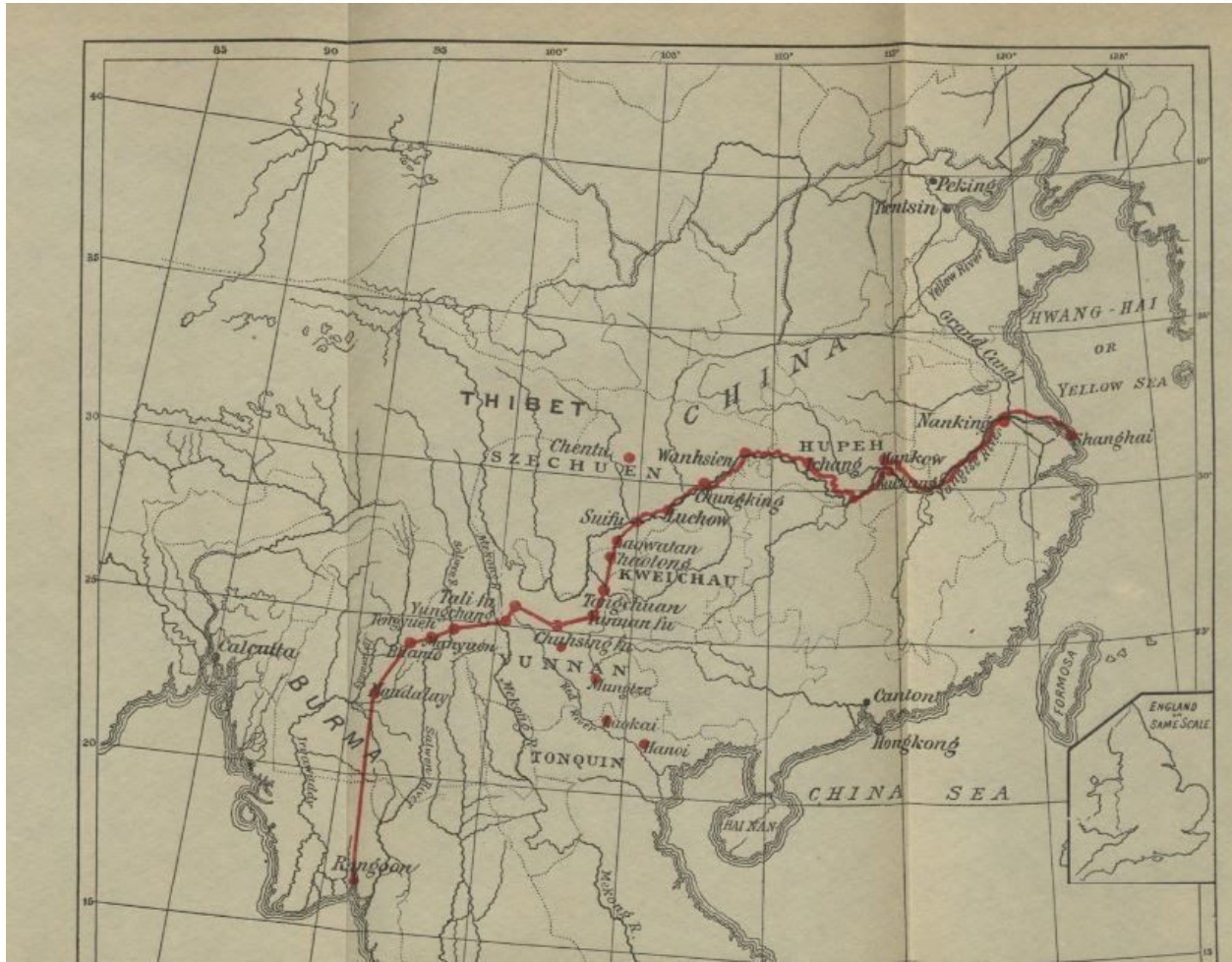
“The real estate distribution of various nationalities in 1932”³⁰⁵

³⁰⁵ Mou. “Using cadastral maps in historical GIS research: the French Concession in Shanghai (1931–1941).” 154.



“The expansion of the French Concession from 1849 to 1943.”³⁰⁶

³⁰⁶ Mou. “Using cadastral maps in historical GIS research: the French Concession in Shanghai (1931–1941).” 149.



“Rough Sketch Map of China and Burma showing Author's Route from Shanghai to Rangoon.”

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³⁰⁷ 1890/1899. *Rough Sketch Map of China and Burma showing Author's Route from Shanghai to Rangoon*. maps. https://library.artstor.org/asset/CORNELL_ECHOLS_1039412523. (Accessed March 3, 2020).

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