# City of Working Women

Life, Space, and Social Control in Early Twentieth-Century Beijing



Weikun Cheng

#### Notes to this edition

This is an electronic edition of the printed book. Minor corrections may have been made within the text; new information and any errata appear on the current page only.

China Research Monograph 64
City of Working Women: Life, Space, and Social Control
in Early Twentieth-Century Beijing
Weikun Cheng

ISBN-13: 978-1-55729-153-0 (electronic) ISBN-13: 978-1-55729-098-4 (print) ISBN-10: 1-55729-098-9 (print)

Please visit the IEAS Publications website at http://ieas.berkeley.edu/publications/ for more information and to see our catalogue.

Send correspondence and manuscripts to

Katherine Lawn Chouta, Managing Editor Institute of East Asian Studies 1995 University Avenue, Suite 510H Berkeley, CA 94720-2318 USA ieaseditor@berkeley.edu



# City of Working Women

Life, Space, and Social Control in Early Twentieth-Century Beijing

Weikun Cheng



A publication of the Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, Berkeley. Although the institute is responsible for the selection and acceptance of manuscripts in this series, responsibility for the opinions expressed and for the accuracy of statements rests with their authors.

The China Research Monograph series is one of several publication series sponsored by the Institute of East Asian Studies in conjunction with its constituent units. The others include the Japan Research Monograph series, the Korea Research Monograph series, and the Research Papers and Policy Studies series.

Send correspondence and manuscripts to

Katherine Lawn Chouta, Managing Editor Institute of East Asian Studies 2223 Fulton Street, 6th Floor Berkeley, CA 94720-2318 ieaseditor@berkeley.edu

#### Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Cheng, Weikun, 1953-2007.

City of working women: life, space, and social control in early twentieth-century Beijing / Weikun Cheng.

p. cm. -- (China research monograph; 64) Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN-13: 978-1-55729-098-4 ISBN-10: 1-55729-098-9

1. Women--China--Beijing--Social conditions--20th century. 2. Working class women--China--Beijing--History--20th century. 3. City and town life--China--Beijing--History--20th century. 4. Public spaces--China--Beijing--History--20th century. 5. Beijing (China)--Social conditions--20th century. I. Title.

HQ1770.B36C44 2011 305.48'96230951156--dc22

#### 2011001027

Copyright © 2011 by the Regents of the University of California. Printed in the United States of America. All rights reserved.

Cover: Anonymous [Qing dynasty], *Sailing a Land Boat*. Actresses in a "land boat," a model boat made with wooden frames and skirts, used as a stage prop during performances. Performers usually made themselves up as characters in dramas such as *The Romance of the White Snake* and danced about according to the plots. From *Beijing minjian fengsu baitu* [A pictorial record of old Peking folklore] (Beijing: Beijing tushuguan chubanshe, 2003).

Image used by permission of the National Library Press, Beijing.

# Contents

Preface	vii
Introduction	1
1. Women in the City	21
2. Livelihood	48
3. Neighborhood	73
4. Leisure	98
5. Actresses	134
6. Prostitutes	165
7. Policing Women	197
Conclusion	231
Bibliography	238
Index	259

## **Preface**

Unfortunately, Weikun Cheng (1953–2007) was unable to write a preface for this book. He (together with his wife, Xiaoping Lei) left us due to an automobile accident at the end of 2007. However, we feel relief to see that his book *City of Working Women: Life, Space, and Social Control in Early Twentieth-Century Beijing,* a project Weikun worked on for many years, will be out soon. As Weikun's colleagues and friends, and, more importantly, as his fellow students in the Ph.D. program under Professor Bill Rowe at Johns Hopkins University, we would like to take this opportunity to introduce his life and academic career to our readers.

Weikun received his undergraduate degree in history from Sichuan University (1977–1982) and graduate training in modern Chinese history from the People's University of China (1982–1984). After graduation, he became a lecturer at the Institute of Qing History at the People's University, the leading research institute in this field in China. During his five years at the Institute of Qing History (1984–1989), Weikun established his academic reputation in China with twenty articles published in academic journals in Chinese, which resulted from the massive research he conducted on the rich sources in the First National Archive, Beijing Municipal Archive, and major libraries. His special interest then was the 1911 Revolution and its economic and social impact, but his research also ranged more widely, from the anti-Christian missionary movements and secret societies to political parties and the transformation of popular culture. Weikun focused his attention on the popular movements that laid a ground for the Republican revolution.

Weikun enrolled in the Ph.D. program at Johns Hopkins University in 1989 and studied with Bill Rowe for six years, earning his doctoral degree in 1995. During 1994 and 1997, he was a visiting assistant professor at the Department of History, State University of New York at Oswego. In 1997, Weikun joined the Department of History of California State University, Chico. He was tenured and promoted as an associate professor in 2002. A month before his death, a unanimous vote was cast in favor of his promotion to full professor.

During his years at Hopkins, Weikun's interest shifted to social history and, in particular, women's active role in challenging, shaping, and reinventing urban social fabrics and cultural forms in the early twentieth century, which at that time was still an understudied field just beginning to draw research attention. His dissertation was an investigation of the political and social changes in northern Chinese women's lives. He adopted a unique approach to comparing different female groups in their comprehension of the concept of liberation, and he explored the multiple meanings of feminism in China. From his dissertation, Weikun published two articles, one of which is "The Challenge of the Actresses," questioning the dominant assumption held by both Western and Chinese historians that ordinary Chinese women were victims of Confucian ideology and social institutions. The article reveals how actresses, who pursued professional careers and freedom in the public world, could challenge the established gender mores and be role models for other women. The other article, titled "Going Public through Education," modifies the theory of the two separate gender spheres and demonstrates how women could use education strategically as an instrument to turn the private/female sphere into a heterosocial public sphere.<sup>2</sup>

Besides these two articles, Weikun had at least five other publications in English and several in Chinese. His article "Politics of the Queue" examines political transformations in the early and late Qing from a new angle.<sup>3</sup> Another, titled "Creating a New Nation, Creating New Women," discusses the hot issue of women and nationalism and explains how Chinese women created a new identity in the process of building the modern Chinese nation-state.<sup>4</sup> His third and fourth articles, "Organized Women in the National Politics" and "Women in Public Spaces," analyze similar issues surrounding the role of female societies and the relations among theaters, modernity, actresses, and moralist discourses in early twentieth-century Beijing.<sup>5</sup> Weikun's last piece, "In Search of Leisure," explores

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Weikun Cheng, "The Challenge of the Actresses: Female Performers and Cultural Alternatives in Early Twentieth-Century Beijing and Tianjin," *Modern China* 22, no. 2 (1996): 197–233.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Weikun Cheng, "Going Public through Education: Female Reformers and Girls' Schools in Late Qing Beijing," *Late Imperial China* 21, no. 1 (2000): 107–144.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Weikun Cheng, "Politics of the Queue: Agitation and Resistance in the Beginning and End of Qing China," in *Hair: Its Power and Meaning in Asian Cultures*, edited by Alf Hiltebeitel and Barbara D. Miller, 123–142 (Albany, N.Y.: SUNY Press, 1998).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Weikun Cheng, "Creating a New Nation, Creating New Women: Women's Journalism and the Building of Nationalist Womanhood during the Period of 1911 Revolution," in *Chinese Nationalism in Perspective: Historical and Recent Cases*," edited by C. X. George Wei and Xiaoyuan Liu, 15–32 (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Publishing, 2001).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Weikun Cheng, "Organized Women in the National Politics: An Analysis of Female Societies in Early Twentieth-Century Beijing," American Review of China Studies 4, no.

Preface ix

women's activism through their participation in festivals in late Qing Beijing. This article is especially meaningful as it addresses the disputes between ordinary women and the ruling elite and shows a pioneering effort in exploring ordinary women's pursuit of freedom and personal gratification in public spaces in late imperial Beijing. In an attempt to add women's leisure and social lives to the repertoire of Chinese women's studies, he has opened our eyes to the various forms of women's resistance. Thus, Weikun's major contributions lie in the area of Chinese women and urban history.

This book will be a major contribution to feminist scholarship, especially to the study of lower-class urban women in China. The work contains solid research based on a variety of original sources including local archives, newspapers and magazines, memoirs, social surveys, and interviews. Situating laboring-class women in the larger context of the political liberalization and the profound social and economic transformations in late Qing and early Republican Beijing, the book presents a nuanced picture of women's potentials and possibilities, and their dangers and anxieties, in a rapidly changing city, and it captures their active and controversial use of urban public spaces. This book introduces to Western readers handicrafts women, maidservants, female beggars, actresses, and several other categories of female workers of which we lack basic awareness. Arguing that urban women successfully colonized public space as their everyday space and used public space to extend their opportunities and influences, the book diverts our sight from women's domestic domain to a public domain where women played significant roles in employment, entertainment, and social interactions. Mainly dealing with women in the urban public space, the book balances two feminist approaches: treating women as agents and using gender as an analytical category. Weikun's unique perspectives and thorough analysis of women's everyday lives and resistant strategies add to our understanding of women's culture and identity in early twentieth-century China.

Moreover, the focus on lower-class women's use of urban public space opens a new dimension in the study of modern Chinese cities. Through the lens of women's everyday experience, the book presents Beijing as a city of contradictions. The Republican revolution overthrew the crumbling Qing government, but the new parliamentary politics remained off-limits to women, especially the laboring-class women who constituted the the majority of the female population of Beijing. The imperial economy,

<sup>1 (2003): 1–14; &</sup>quot;Women in Public Spaces: Theater, Modernity, and Actresses in Early Twentieth-Century Beijing," *Asian Journal of Women's Studies* 9, no. 3 (2003): 7–45.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Weikun Cheng, "In Search of Leisure: Women's Festivities in Late Imperial Beijing," Chinese Historical Review 14, no. 1 (2007): 1–28.

which made Beijing a center of consumption rather than production, declined as a result of regime change, political instability, and massive poverty, but the lackluster industrialization did not provide women with new options and better alternatives for securing a livelihood. Radical intellectuals had called for a cultural revolution that sought to give women an equal footing in social and economic arenas, but the imperial gender norms that formulated a gendered separation of space and labor retained their cultural force and thereby resisted women's claims to urban public space. Laboring-class women's experience highlights these incomplete changes, inadequate developments, inconsistent reforms, and inconclusive debates in early twentieth-century Beijing and also allows us to study what these meant to women in their daily struggles.

Before the accident, Weikun's manuscript had been accepted for publication by the Institute of East Asian Studies at the University of California, Berkeley, but he was still working on revisions, and the final version of the manuscript had not yet been submitted to the press when he passed away. Since then we have worked closely with IEAS to ensure the publication of the book. We are very grateful to Joanne Sandstrom and Katherine Lawn Chouta, successive editors at IEAS, for their efforts in publishing this book, especially to the latter for her copyediting and her guidance of the book through production. We would also like to thank Laird Easton, chair of the Department of History at California State University, Chico, for providing funds for the indexing of this book. Although we have tried our best to help answer all the queries raised during its editing, we might not have been able to handle them very well and hope our readers will understand that the end product lacks the author's final approval.

Di Wang, Texas A&M University Zhao Ma, Washington University in St. Louis

## Introduction

This book investigates the life experiences of ordinary women, specifically in connection with Beijing's urban public spaces, during the late Qing and early Republican periods. The narrative starts with the last decade of the Qing dynasty (1644-1912), when urban reforms began to transform the cityscape, provide more material goods, and inspire a feminist movement. The story ends in 1928, when the Nationalist Party (Guomindang) subjugated the local women's movement to a nationalist feminism and increased its intervention in lower-class women's lives. During this time, women's use of urban public spaces grew as dramatic cultural shifts changed social attitudes toward the presence of women in public. Significant political and cultural events such as the late Qing reforms, the Revolution of 1911, the New Culture Movement of the 1910s and 1920s, and the reunification of China by the Nationalist Party in 1928 removed many social barriers that had confined women to their homes and led to more relaxed social mores. The presence of commoner women, who ventured into the streets for economic, social, and entertainment purposes, became more accepted but also more controversial.

Women's activities became more prevalent and innovative in the last decade of the Qing dynasty, even while conventional rituals changed little. Middle-class women ventured outside to take their daughters to school and attend political rallies and charity drives while lower-class women sought to earn a living and find entertainment in the streets. This phenomenon might have resulted from the breaking down of domestic constraints and women's desire to find meaning in their lives, or it could have been prompted by economic necessity, familial obligations, or a need for temporary escape from quotidian obligations; regardless, it does not necessarily suggest liberation. Context, format, and motivation usually dictated a woman's behavior outside her home. In this transitional period, when social norms deteriorated and urban reforms were implemented at unprecedented levels, women's public roles and

identities tended to be more complex and ambiguous. We can find evidence of women using old customs to justify vacations or their involvement in the booming new entertainment industry; we can also identify the intertwining of traditional professions for women with the new concept of self-employment on the street by lower-class women as a solution to rampant urban poverty.

Still, we cannot ignore the phenomenon in which the wives and daughters of working-class men scrambled for various kinds of low-end jobs. One thing is clear: women in Beijing didn't present a homogenous social category; their reactions to the shifting and challenging social environment varied. Middle-class and working-class women adopted different approaches to their participation in the construction and reconstruction of urban public spaces.

#### Study of Women and the City

The study of commoner women's everyday lives and their use of urban public spaces in early twentieth-century Beijing is rooted in feminist scholarship. Scholarly inquiries into women and labor history, urban prostitution, and modernization have been particularly helpful to the formulation of this book's framework. Publications on the female industrial workforces in Shanghai, Tianjin, and Hangzhou supplement our understanding of women' strategies for survival, unfair treatment in the workplace, social networks, and political consciousness, as well as the governmental policies regarding women. Scholars have found that cotton mill workers went to the city from rural areas, organized sisterhoods based on kinship and native place, and struck for better jobs and welfare benefits. Their common experience of working in low-skilled, low-paying jobs and facing discrimination because of marriage and pregnancy didn't necessary unite them, because regional loyalties and kinship networks tore them apart. The mundane realities of these women's experiences contradict the old assertion that women, as part of the exploited working force, were unified and acquired class awareness under the Communist Party.<sup>1</sup>

More relevant to our understanding of working-class women in Beijing during the late Qing and Republican periods are scholarly examinations of women who worked in nonfactory jobs in various sectors as actresses, dance girls, waitresses, and prostitutes. In theaters, dance halls, and teahouses, female employees often replaced males but had to trade their sexuality and reputations for job security and income. Their public

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Hershatter, *The Workers of Tianjin*, 1900–1949; Honig, *Sisters and Strangers*; Perry, *Shanghai on Strike*; and Rofel, *Other Modernities*.

## Women in the City

As the imperial capital of the Yuan (1279–1368), Ming (1368–1644), and Qing dynasties, Beijing imposed a gender-based regime through its political, administrative, and ceremonial functions. An urban gender regime is imposed via the prevailing ideologies of how men and women should act, think, and feel; their access to social positions; their control of resources; and the relationships between them. The city's social order sought to embody the harmony of cosmic forces, while various temples those dedicated to ancestors, heaven, agriculture, the soil and grain, the Sun, the Moon, and the Earth—facilitated cults devoted to the patriarchal ideal and the supernatural powers from which the ruler received his political legitimacy. The imperial capital was a sacred place woven by the warp of a cosmic/astral system of symbols that identified the city as the center of the world and the weft of a system of shared beliefs in gods, spirits, and heroes.<sup>2</sup> Thus, the emperor performed his duty as the son of heaven and presented a system of leadership to the male-dominated society. He commanded the army, conducted imperial ceremonies, and oversaw the administrative bureaucracy. The city's walls and gates epitomized a mechanism of control beyond their basic protective function: the opening and closing of the gates provided a strict regulation of travelers' movements and a checkpoint for identifying and detaining criminals and runaway women. The Forbidden City, located in the southeast of the Imperial City, was home to what was probably the largest patriarchal family in China. The emperor, surrounded by a significant number of consorts, eunuchs, and children, exercised absolute authority over the family hierarchy, including women's duties and children's education. The emperor and empress were considered role models for all Chinese families, who also learned about social norms and the role of virtue from the Confucian

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Lynn M. Applenton, "The Gender Regimes of American Cities," in Garber and Turner, Gender in Urban Research.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Meyer, The Dragons of Tiananmen, 6.

## Livelihood

If middle-class daughters gained satisfaction from an expanded social sphere that facilitated their political consciousness, social networks, and personal autonomy, laboring-class women opted to use urban public spaces for financial gain. Their revenue-generating endeavors, whether home based or publicly operated, were related to outside agencies, institutions, or places. Their efforts to earn a living accounted for a crucial part of the urban economy and helped lower-class families acquire the resources needed for subsistence. Yet, women were not granted access to the public domain by male authorities or because of the city's transformation from ancient to modern. Instead, women found jobs through their own negotiations and struggles. Laboring women took on the work appropriate for their station in life. Their strong will to survive, plus their diligence and sacrifices, helped them adapt to the competitive urban environment. Although their entry into public spaces was propelled by financial need and their jobs were mostly low paid, low skilled, or disreputable, the fact that they worked, especially outside their homes, directly challenged the elites' ideal of female dependency and eventually redefined city streets as workplaces for women.

The outside/inside dichotomy representing both the division of male and female labor and the values and assumptions that degraded women's contributions existed in the city's job markets.¹ Women's work anywhere in the city was systematically underrated. Yet, lower-class women hardly observed geographical boundaries, restricting their work to the family home or courtyard; they used streets or other sites to earn a profit. Wives' dual responsibilities for profit seeking and child rearing blurred the distinction between production and reproduction. In late Qing and early Republican Beijing, some female workers received orders from workshops and completed them at home, operating in the low end of the industrial production chain. Other women worked as maids, recycled junk, sold

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Jacka, Women's Work in Rural China, 3-4.

## Neighborhood

A neighborhood could represent many things to a laboring-class woman: work site, social hub, buffer zone between her home and the city, and source of immediate support. The borders between homes and the surrounding alleyways and streets were always obscured because the lives of most lower-class women unfolded primarily beyond the household and even the courtyard. These laboring-class women might interact with neighbors and friends, look for opportunities to make money, care for children, bargain with vendors, enjoy street shows, or confront trespassers. They felt more secure and well-connected in their residential areas than in the city at large. Housewives could rebel against their abusive parents-in-law or husbands, defend their own well-being, claim their rights and territories, and win sympathy and support in the street. Yet, this was also where women could become victims of crime, and where they could act out their own dramas of greed and lust. The streets held promise but were also dangerous and cruel.

A neighborhood is a community, a small-scale and spatially bound area within which residents share certain characteristics. "Community" is a term connoting warmth and solidarity. It is a relational rather than a categorical concept, defined both by material social relations and by symbolic meanings. This chapter explores the social dimension of ordinary women who built networks and sought support in their neighborhood communities. Lower-class women demanded communication, friend-ship, and mutual aid. Their emotional ties extended from their multifamily compounds to the households of nearby neighbors. This chapter explains how women fought for justice and sought moral support and mediation from their neighbors, often pursuing conflicting goals and competing for resources and opportunities. The chapter also shows that social tensions exacerbated by economic pressure turned the neighborhood into a battle zone where women became the prey of criminals, ran

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> McDowell, Gender, Identity, and Place, 100.

#### Leisure

If work and everyday life associated lower-class women with neighborhood streets, leisure involvement extended women's activities to more and further places in the city. In the late imperial capital, *guojie* (celebrating festivals) and *guangmiao* (strolling around temple fairs) were two great pleasures for ordinary women who filled their vacation time with worshipping local deities, shopping, gathering with friends, or pursuing amusements. Their leisure time and activities were regulated by the calendar and approved by most of the households in the city. The growth of urban public facilities, along with the booming of the entertainment industry and the relaxation of restrictive norms, gave rise to a new tide of pleasure-seeking women during the early twentieth century. Urban public spaces opened to women on an unprecedented scale and nurtured women's individualism and sociability.

Here, a fundamental question emerges as we compare women's traditional leisure pursuits with their new forms of recreation. How did they differ? Would leisure serve as a vehicle to renew women's domestic obligations and images or would it help women break down social barriers? Historians who study Chinese women have discovered that, even under the custom of seclusion, women of all classes liked to visit temples or go on pilgrimages in late imperial China. Elite women might make scenic outings, go boating and on picnics, or take long journeys accompanying their husbands on their official duties, while countrywomen could watch plays put on in villages and market towns. Did those leisure activities suggest a kind of liberation? Feminist scholars generally believe that women's lack of choices about their patterns and spaces for leisure reflects unequal gender relations. Because of domestic obligations, women, whether working outside the house or staying at home, usually have less leisure time than men, and since leisure can be a form of resistance

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Bray, Technology and Gender; Ko, Teachers of the Inner Chambers; and Ebrey, The Inner Quarters.

## Actresses

Unlike most family-oriented ordinary women, who used public spaces as their auxiliary territories, stage actresses treated public spaces as their homes and workplaces. As professional artists, they were trained, gifted, and, in many cases, accomplished. Despite often humble origins, they entered a public realm newly opened to them as rivals to male actors. They shared the same class background as streetwalkers yet had access to fame and wealth. They were contract workers, self-employed, or business managers who worked outside the home. Like courtesans, they were alienated from mainstream family life and associated their sexuality with the entertainment industry.1 In theory, actresses didn't sell their bodies but their art. Their sexuality was available only in their audience's imagination. In terms of publicity, they overshadowed courtesans by performing for men and women of all social classes, traveling widely, and being prominently featured in the news media. Nonetheless, their work in the commercial theater complicated gender relations and further underscored women's paradoxical identities. They could be accomplished artists that male elites applauded, female role models that the government manipulated, or immoral and dangerous women that officials and policemen attempted to constrain.

The government banned female performers from the public stage beginning in the late Ming, and male actors then performed all roles. The Manchu rulers kept the law prohibiting actresses and excluded women from the theater either as performers or as audience members.<sup>2</sup> It was only in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that actresses began to resurface in major cities. As early as the 1870s, traveling troupes of actresses performed at private affairs in Beijing. Siblings You Jinhua and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Susan Mann argues that there were two foundations for women's sexuality: one built on the family and child rearing and one based on prostitution (see "What Can Feminist Theory Do for the Study of Chinese History?," 241–260).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Dolby, A History of Chinese Drama; Tan Fan, Youling shi.

#### **Prostitutes**

Whereas the morality of actresses was often and widely questioned, prostitutes epitomized moral deficiency. In early twentieth-century Beijing, new elites and the government associated sex workers with urban corruption and national backwardness, viewing them as a target of reform. Among lower-class women who worked outside their households, prostitutes were the least respected and considered the most dangerous. Because these women deserted their feminine duties and entered an occupation that could ruin men's careers and affected wives and daughters of honorable families, they were detested, demonized, and shunned. Beijing prostitutes were public women in the sense that they worked in public sites, advertised their services, and used their private rooms as social spaces to entertain male clients. If lower-class women's work, either at home or on the street, was taken for granted as part of female domestic obligations, prostitutes' work was a violation of both feminine virtues and public order. The "body problem" generally meant defending the female body in the public realm against intrusions by men, but for prostitutes this became an issue of using the body for commercial purposes. In urban public spaces, sex workers were seen as victimizing others and having nothing morally to safeguard.

Scholars have investigated various aspects of the market for sexual services in China and conceptualized the sex trade as a hierarchical profession, a workplace for women, a forum where reformist elites criticized the old and backward China and created a new nation, and a site where the state regulated women's sexuality and lives. These research

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Xiaoqing Ye, "Commercialization and Prostitution in Nineteenth Century Shanghai," in Finnane and McLaren, *Dress, Sex, and Text in Chinese Culture*, 37–57; Henriot, "Chinese Courtesans in Late Qing and Early Republican Shanghai"; Henriot, "From a Throne of Glory to a Seat of Ignominy"; Henriot, *Prostitution and Sexuality in Shanghai*; Ho, "Selling Smiles in Canton"; Hershatter, "The Hierarchy of Shanghai Prostitution"; Hershatter, "Courtesans and Streetwalkers"; Hershatter, "Modernizing Sex, Sexing Modernity: Prostitution in Early Twentieth-Century Shanghai," in Gilmartin et al., *Engendering China*, 147–174; and

## Policing Women

One outcome of urban reform was the state's effort to penetrate and regulate Beijing's burgeoning population through its police force. The ubiquitous policemen presided over streets and neighborhoods, coming into close contact with ordinary citizens daily. Their interactions with women were intensified, too, because of women's growing presence in public. Like family patriarchs who looked after women at home, paternalistic policemen watched over women in public. During the late Qing and early Republican periods, the police defended female domesticity in an attempt to keep women from falling into life on the street and adopted various policies to reduce the numbers and influence of the "dangerous" women already there. Mary Ryan has categorized nineteenth-century American urban women as "endangered" and "dangerous" in the context of the assumptions of the bourgeois class. Endangered women were clearly in the middle and upper classes, while dangerous women were the streetwalkers, beggars, and vagrants from the lower classes. Businessmen and reformers protected endangered women through gender segregation in public spaces, and lawmakers attempted to restrict the freedom of dangerous women. This division of women in public epitomizes the urban elites' attitudes toward women of different classes, but it needs to be modified when applied to the Beijing scenario. In the eyes of Beijing authorities, dangerous women could be similar to those in American cities, but the endangered should include women from decent lower-class families. Policemen believed that girls and women could be endangered morally and physically if allowed to mingle with men in public, and thus female citizens were subject to segregation and monitoring. Prostitutes, homeless women, and female criminals threatened people of both sexes and thus should be restrained or banned. The dangerous and endangered, however, differed according to context. Prostitutes, for instance, threatened men's morality, finances, and families, yet they were themselves victims of traffickers, bustard

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Ryan, Women in Public, 58-94.

## Conclusion

In 1928, the Nationalist Party unified China and extended its control to the Republican capital, which was renamed the Beiping Special Municipality (Beiping tebieshi). The Nationalist Party and government endorsed the women's emancipation movement but guided it with a mixed ideology of modernization and Confucianism. The party supported women's rights while stressing women's domestic responsibilities and social hierarchies. The new municipal authorities emphasized the transformation of popular culture as an indispensable component of the revolutionary cause and encouraged citizens to discard concepts and rituals associated with the imperial past. Women's foot binding, men's queue wearing, and opium smoking were prohibited for being "injurious to health and undermining of the race."2 Meanwhile, women's home industriousness and equal employment opportunities were highlighted to promote production and consumption. The city government tightened its regulation of prostitution and attempted to transform midwives into medical workers. To cultivate women's new character and morality, the Nationalist police force intensified the surveillance of women in public spaces and imposed strict censorship on plays and movies. The party and government also protected women in the family and forbade the trafficking of women. Party members reorganized charitable institutions as a way to build a modern city and made the rescue of problematic women a priority.<sup>3</sup> In addition to urban reforms through which the Nationalist Party carried out its guideline of women's enhancement, the party attempted to mobilize working-class women for the revolution. The party used middle-class women's societies as an instrument for indoctrinating them with a nationalist ideology and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Fan, Footbinding, Feminism, and Freedom, 225–254.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> "Beiping tebieshi shehuiju diyici xuanyan" [The first declaration of the Social Bureau in the Beiping Special Municipality], *Shizheng gongbao* 2 (August 1928): 276–277; "Bugao" [Poster], *Shizheng gongbao* 4 (October 1928): 283.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> "Beiping tebieshi shehuiju xunling" [Instruction of the municipal government of the Beiping Special Municipality], *Shizheng gongbao* 4 (October 1928): 312–313.

# Bibliography

- Abu-Lughod, Lila. "The Romance of Resistance: Tracing Transformations of Power through Bedouin Women." *American Ethnologist* 17, no. 1 (February 1990): 41–55.
- Altman, Irwin, and Ervin H. Zube. *Public Places and Spaces: Human Behavior and Environment*. New York: Plenum, 1989.
- Arlington, L. C., and William Lewisohn. *In Search of Old Peking*. Peking: Henri Vetch, 1935. Reprint, Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1987.
- Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso, 1991.
- Aston, Elaine. *An Introduction to Feminism and Theatre*. London: Routledge, 1995.
- Bai Hequn. *Lao Beijing de juzhu* [Residences in old Beijing]. Beijing: Yanshan chubanshe, 1999.
- Bai Tiezheng. *Lao Beiping chui erpangfeng* [An old Pekingese blows at your ears]. Taipei: Huilong wenhua youxian gongsi, 1974.
- Bai Yei and Shen Ying. *Tianqiao*. Beijing: Xinhua chubanshe, 1986. *Baihua jiebao* [Vernacular herald]. Beijing, 1913.
- Bao Tianxiao. *Chuanyinglou huiyi lu xubian* [Continuation of the Memoir of Chuanyinglou]. Taiyuan: Shanxi guji chubanshe, 1999.
- Barlow, Tani E. *The Question of Women in Chinese Feminism*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2004.
- Beahan, Charlotte. "Feminism and Nationalism in the Chinese Women's Press, 1902–1911." *Modern China* 1, no. 4 (October 1975): 379–416.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Women's Movement and Nationalism in Late Ch'ing China." Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1976.
- Beijing nübao [Beijing women's daily]. Beijing, 1905–1909.
- Beijing renmin chubanshe, ed. *Beijing shiyuan* [Historical gardens of Beijing]. Beijing: Beijing renmin chubanshe, 1983.
- Beijing ribao [Beijing daily]. Beijing, 1910.
- Beijing xingshi huabao [Beijing wakening world pictorial]. Beijing, 1909–1910.

#### Index

Note: page numbers in italics refer to illustrations.

A Ying, 148 Abolishing Prostitution Society (Feichanghui), 189 Abundant Blessings Temple (Longfusi), 105, 108, 109 actors, 134, 136, 145, 149, 182. See also actresses actresses: apprenticeship of, 138; association with public spaces, 134, 147, 162; ban and reintroduction of, 134-135; careers of, 142; categories of, 139–140; compared with courtesans, 134, 135, 142, 157, 161; cooperation among, 141; cults of, 160-161; dilemma of, 136; discrimination against, in the theater, 137-138; elite response to, 157-162; feminist scholars' view of, 135; harassment of, 144–145; in male roles, 151; marriages of, 145-147; martial arts, 151; in opera, 135, 137, 158-159; and reformist theater, 147–156, 163; sexuality and, 36, 134, 141-144, 157-159, 161, 162, 163; as threat to morality, 131, 159, 206; troupes of, 140–141; in the United States, 144; virtuous, 159. See also drum-song girls adoptive families (yangjia), 86, 87, 88, 93

Advanced Police Academy (Gaodeng xunjing xuetang), 210
American women, 69–70
amusement parks, 114, 119–120, 129, 180; New World, 115, 140–141, 180; South City Amusement Park, 115, 208
An Zhucun, 86–87, 212
antiprostitution campaign, 189–194, 190n75
"area-specialist fallacy" (Stacy), 5
arranged marriage: ballads about, 25; believed to foster prostitution, 187; and elopement, 95; Manchu, 43; and suicide, 91–92, 145

Baby-Delivering Lady (Songsheng niangniang), 104 babysitters, 54-55 Bada hutong (Eight Big Alleys), 24, 168, 169, 180, 187 Bai Youyi, 51 Bai Yushan, 210 Bai Yushuang, 143, 146n38, 148 Baisiqing teahouse, 117, 180 Baitasi (White Pagoda Temple), 100, 108, 109 Baiyunguan (Shrine of White Clouds), 111 ballads, 25-27 ballroom dancing, 121-122 banbian ren (half person), 24 banner people (qimin), 41. See also **Eight Banners**