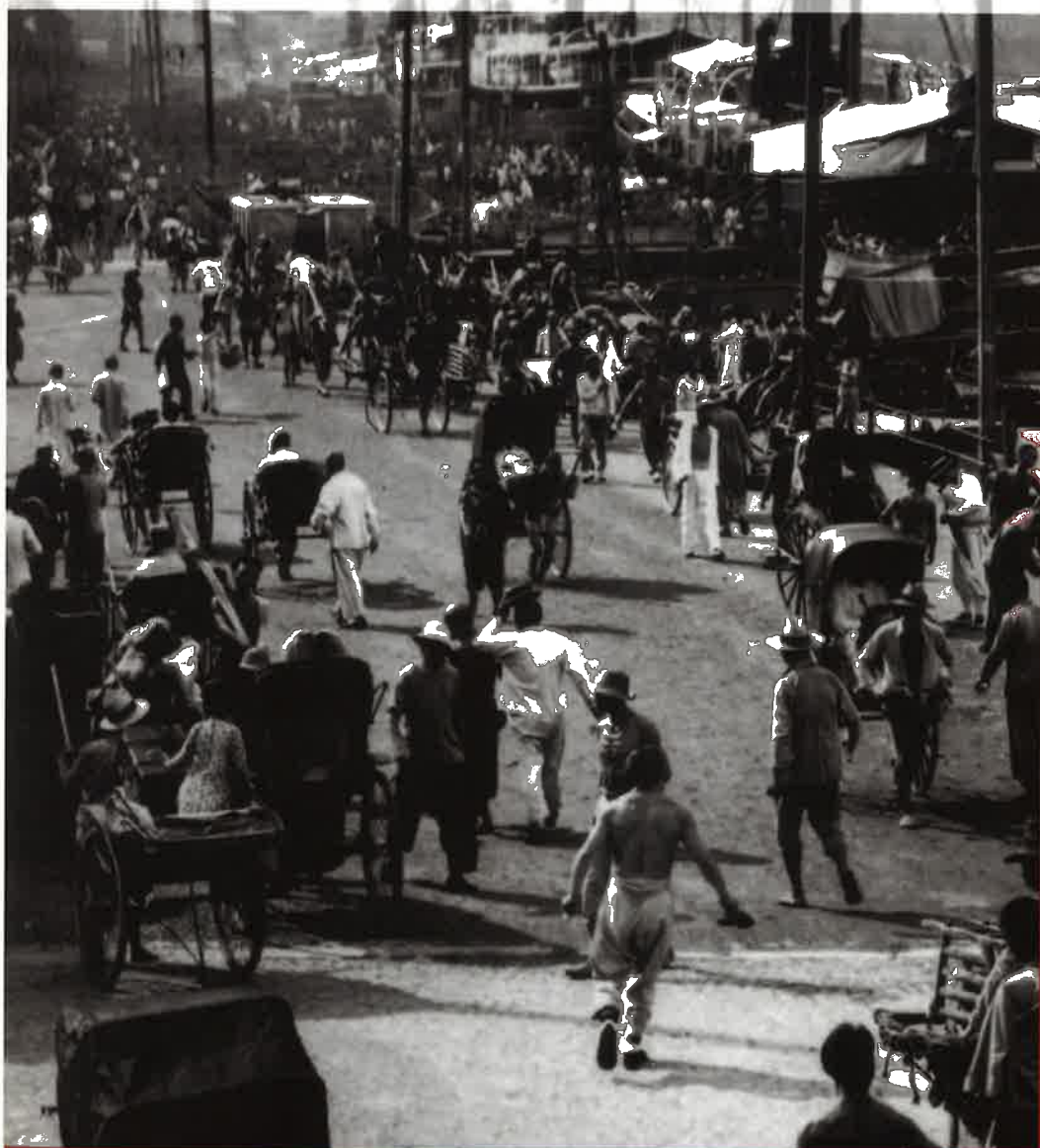# Cities in Motion

Interior, Coast, and Diaspora in Transnational China

Edited by Sherman Cochran and David Strand
Wen-hsin Yeh, General Editor

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INSTITUTE OF EAST ASIAN STUDIES
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Cities in Motion

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Cities in Motion: An Introduction

SHERMAN COCHRAN and DAVID STRAND

The title of this volume owes at least two debts: one to Jonathan Spence's book on the Kangxi emperor and his chapter on the emperor's travels—"In Motion"—and one to Craig Clunas's *Superfluous Things* and his chapter "Goods in Motion."[1] Spence's evocation of the state's response to the challenge of China's vast geographic expanse and Clunas's analysis of the fluid distribution of material culture across region and empire suggest the vast political and commercial dimensions of the Chinese experience. In his ruminations on the pleasures and perils of hunting and making war beyond the Great Wall, Kangxi observed that "the conditions in these northern areas can be understood only if you travel them in person."[2] Despite the risks, for Kangxi being there was better than simply reading or hearing reports. Less adventuresome emperors could also walk and ride through the simulacra of empire contained in the gardens of the Forbidden City or the imperial summer retreat at Chengde. For his part, Clunas stresses the ways in which material goods in the late imperial period (c. 1500–1900) circulated cultural meaning along trade routes and into the lives of elite consumers. A consumer's imagination pinned to rare or useful goods produced at a distance and available in the local marketplace could be as fertile and expansive as that of a statesman bent on conquest and tax receipts.

A political ruler and a merchant prince may see the world in different ways. However, as the late imperial state became more dependent on commercial taxes for its revenue and on the merchant-gentry as community leaders, the difference between a

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[1] Jonathan D. Spence, *Emperor of China: Self-Portrait of K'ang-hsi* (New York: Vintage, 1975); Craig Clunas, *Superfluous Things: Material Culture and Social Status in Early Modern China* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991).

[2] Spence, *Emperor of China*, 13.

business perspective and the optic required by statecraft narrowed. A late-Qing official such as Hu Linyi, responsible for the heavily commercialized central Yangzi River region, perforce "balanced Confucian views with an incipient mercantilist developmental strategy."[3] The context of economic and governmental activity also changed in ways that helped place the pursuit of wealth and power along parallel, and sometimes intersecting, tracks. Beyond Ming commercial revolution and Qing conquests lay the widening terrain of China's confrontation with the West and Japan. As the West and Japan advanced, a greater China continued to emerge through migration, exile, and settlement beyond national borders, creating complex, highly dispersed zones of contact.[4]

"Motion," as varieties of movement, may at first glance apply more easily to commerce since the circulation of goods is so central to modern economic life. But states also move, through the journeys of a peripatetic ruler like Kangxi, the shuttling of couriers with edicts and reports, the delivery of tax revenues to the capital, or the march of armies. The functions of government depend on the circulation of officials, documents, and wealth to sustain and defend fixed points of control and lines of jurisdiction. The importance of these fixed points and lines to the identity and security of the state means that the power map represented by government usually changes more slowly than patterns of trade or the movement of populations. Cities likewise, once built, have an inertial presence that makes moving a capital or replacing a central economic function subject to resistance. However, once we imagine state and city, economic enterprises and populations, as expressing and embodying flows of goods, revenues, documents, books, acting troupes, convicted criminals bound for prison, copies of films and videotapes, bones shipped home for burial, political activists, news, and other tangible and less tangible things, cities and the systems they are embedded in are "in motion" as a matter of course.

Chinese cities, like modern urban centers everywhere, are best understood not as stand-alone entities but as the sites of enterprise and action that extend beyond city walls, city limits, and regional and national boundaries. This volume hopes to offer a fresh

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[3] William T. Rowe, *Hankow: Commerce and Society in a Chinese City, 1796–1889* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1984), 199.

[4] Ellen C. Semple, "Geographical Boundaries—II," *Bulletin of the American Geographical Society* 39.8 (1907): 1; Eric R. Wolf, "Cultural Dissonance in the Italian Alps," *Comparative Studies of Society and History* 5.1 (October 1962): 1.

ONE

Grave Concerns: Bodies, Burial, and Identity in Early Republican China

CAROLINE REEVES

> In the desolate regions there is only wild grass and the setting sun;
>   We use both ploughs and shovels to bury the dead in graves....
>   The battlefield is full of dismembered bodies.
>   We bury them to link our destinies with theirs.
>   They died for the country and have fulfilled their calling;
>   Their records will be marked on stelae and engravings.[1]

As Chinese of all classes were increasingly drawn into the human and natural catastrophes of the early twentieth century, enormous numbers of unclaimed corpses littered China's landscape. Beyond the reach of their families, these bodies were left to the mercy of anyone who would care for them. Options for the dead further dwindled as central and local governments, traditionally the undertakers of last resort, collapsed during this period. A new organization stepped up to care for these unclaimed corpses: self-consciously modern, the Chinese Red Cross Society appropriated a traditional Chinese imperative to bury the dead, rescripting it in the early 1900s to connote a new range of meanings.

Inspired by the ever increasing visibility of the displaced dead—those who have died in the wrong time or the wrong place or both through war, violence, disease, hunger, or other causes—scholars have recently turned their attention to investigating the dead qua dead: how they die, what happens to them after death, how they are portrayed, and how their deaths are interpreted.[2] As Gilpin Faust points out in her work on death in the

TWO

Warfare and Modern Urban Administration in Chinese Cities

KRISTIN STAPLETON

By the 1920s most large and many smaller Chinese cities had felt the effects of a transnational urban reform movement embraced by governments and nongovernmental organizations worldwide. In his introduction to a recent volume examining elements of what he calls the "modernist project" in Chinese urban administration, Joseph W. Esherick suggests that there was "remarkable uniformity in the modernist agenda of China's urban reformers," attributing this largely to the influence of a common model of city planning in the West and Japan.[1] Dozens of young Chinese men studied urban administration in Tokyo, Paris, London, Berlin, New York, Chicago, Berkeley, and Ann Arbor in the early Republican era. Hundreds more enrolled in urban administration programs set up at universities in Beijing and Shanghai. Beginning in the 1910s, many of them found employment in new urban governments across China.

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[1] Joseph W. Esherick, ed., *Remaking the Chinese City: Modernity and National Identity, 1900–1950* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999), 7. Many of the essays in the Esherick volume show the similarity of urban construction projects and administrative innovations launched in different Chinese cities in the first four decades of the twentieth century. See also David D. Buck, *Urban Change in China: Politics and Development in Tsinan, Shantung, 1890–1949* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978); Mingzheng Shi, "Beijing Transforms: Urban Infrastructure, Public Works, and Social Change in the Chinese Capital, 1900–1928" (Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1993); and Kristin Stapleton, *Civilizing Chengdu: Chinese Urban Reform, 1895–1937* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2000). Michael Tsin argues the case for the existence of a "modernist project" in his study of Guangzhou in the early twentieth century, although he emphasizes its internal contradictions. Michael Tsin, *Nation, Governance, and Modernity in China: Canton 1900–1927* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1999).

THREE

Webs and Hierarchies: Banks and Bankers in Motion, 1900–1950

BRETT SHEEHAN

"Financial systems are inherently spatial," as Ron Martin notes. "The geographical circuits of money and finance are the 'wiring' of the socio-economy, as it were, along which the 'currents' of wealth creation, consumption and economic power are transmitted."[1] Because of this spatial aspect, the dramatic success and growth of banking institutions based on foreign models in the first half of the twentieth century—so-called modern banks or *yinhang*—both reflected and changed China's urban systems.[2] This chapter analyzes two kinds of motion of banks and the bankers who worked for them. First, banks constructed large networks of offices that placed their footprints on the Chinese landscape. Once constructed, this brick-and-mortar infrastructure remained in motion as banks added or eliminated branches, elevated and demoted offices in bank hierarchies, formed—and re-formed— regions of bank administration, and exchanged information among offices. Second, bankers themselves moved from place to place. In their youth, they sought out educational and training oppor-

    [1] Ron Martin, "The New Economic Geography of Money," in *Money and the Space Economy*, ed. Ron Martin (Chichester: John Wiley and Sons, 1999), 3. I would add the movements of bankers themselves to Martin's list of things that moved among banks.

    [2] On the development of the banking system, see Brett Sheehan, *Trust in Troubled Times: Money, Banks and State-Society Relations in Republican Tianjin* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), chap. 1; and Linsun Cheng, *Banking in Modern China: Entrepreneurs, Professional Managers, and the Development of Chinese Banks, 1897–1937* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

FOUR

To the Countryside: Communist Recruitment in Wartime Shanghai

ALLISON ROTTMANN

An iconographic photograph of the outbreak of the Second World War in Shanghai captured thousands of residents fleeing across the Waibaidu Bridge to seek refuge from the Japanese invasion in the foreign-controlled treaty concessions. After the bombing began in August 1937, the population in Shanghai's foreign concessions doubled to over three million, creating a refugee crisis that remained a problem even after December 1941, when Japan finally occupied the entire city. The devastation, opportunities, and politics of war set people into motion, and those who lived in the besieged Yangzi River delta through the early years of the war were no exception to this rule. From 1937 to 1941, when Shanghai's foreign concessions remained out of Japanese hands, many with the social or economic means to do so moved their families to the perceived safety of the French Concession or International Settlement. Yet the displacement of war also pushed people out of the city. Urbanites left homeless and jobless by the war moved in with relatives in outlying areas less touched by the violence. Likewise, people left occupied Shanghai and even the nation for political and economic reasons tied to the war.

This chapter studies a certain segment of Shanghai residents who moved to the countryside seeking the war rather than refuge—those who volunteered to join the Communists' New Fourth Army in its Central China Base (Huazhong genjudi) in rural Anhui, Jiangsu, and Zhejiang provinces. In October 1937, as

Architects as Cultural Heroes

VIMALIN RUJIVACHARAKUL

"Architects as cultural heroes" is neither about how Chinese architects express their political minds through the design of architecture for modern China nor about the nationalist manifesto of modern Chinese architects. This chapter instead discusses how modern Chinese architects have established their profession as a modern field indispensable to the urban scenes of modern cities during the Republican period of China (1911–1949) and how the professionalization of modern Chinese architectural knowledge turned selected individual Chinese architects into heroic cross-cultural importers of modernism and modern knowledge.

The image of architects as cultural heroes is a phenomenon typical in historiographies of modern architecture. As Panayotis Tournikiotis argued in *The Historiography of Modern Architecture*, from the early days of its birth in the 1930s, modern architectural history was written from the present position to search for roots in the past, in order to project the future of what-ought-to-be modern architecture.[1] In that writing, modern architects play the heroic roles of messiahs who bring about the advent of modernism and modernization. The trope hence attributes changes in architectural landscape to selected individual architects.

Outside Europe and the United States, this image of architects as cultural heroes is further enhanced with the belief that cultural importation, from the West to the non-West, was the main source of modernization in the late nineteenth century and throughout the twentieth. This belief is built upon immediate changes in urban areas, when new forms of cities emerged and brought about new lifestyles. As the builders of cities, architects are also seen as

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[1] Panayotis Tournikiotis, *The Historiography of Modern Architecture* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999), Epilogue.

Shanghai Fashion: Merchants and Business as Agents of Urban Vision

KARL GERTH

Cut your queue, change your clothing, and revolt.
—Common slogan during the 1911 Revolution

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Chinese revolutionaries aimed to replace two thousand years of dynastic rule with a Republican government, substitute a mandated men's hairstyle (the queue and shaved forehead) with cropped hair, and move men out of traditional silk gowns and into wool suits. The polity proved easier to overthrow than men's hair and clothing styles. This chapter demonstrates how these three efforts were deeply connected and why the issues of clothing and hair, long linked politically but generally studied by scholars separately, parted. Although the focus here is on hair and wear, this essay argues that an emerging interpretation of material culture shaped the foundations of all of modern China, not only a single industry or service.[1] The primary purpose of this chapter, then, is not simply to catalog these dramatic changes in everyday life but rather to reveal the fusion of two key aspects of modern life: consumerism and nationalism. The controversy over Western-inspired fashions erupted during the Republican revolution of 1911–12. By early 1912, revolutionary forces had overthrown China's last dynasty throughout southern China and had established a provisional government in Nanjing.

Like revolutionaries in France, the United States, and other countries, the leaders of the 1911 Revolution promoted and

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[1] The broad relationship between consumerism and nationalism is the subject of my *China Made: Consumer Culture and the Creation of the Nation* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2003), which includes an expanded version of this essay.

Visions of Order and Modernity: Crime, Punishment, and Justice in Urban China during the Republican Period

KLAUS MÜHLHAHN

When cities were "set in motion" in modern China, a growing part of the urban population found itself in a state of immobility. At a time when Chinese cities were connected with each other and with cities in Asia and the West through links of exchange and movement, institutions of confinement and exclusion emerged in the interior of urban spaces in China. In this chapter I will argue that both developments were related: the establishment of institutions of confinement was part of the efforts of urban administrations to set up and enforce norms in an increasingly fluid and internationalized urban environment. Institutional confinement first appeared in modern China as a legal penalty. In the first half of the twentieth century various Chinese governments invested considerable amounts of financial, organizational, and human resources in the establishment of a new system of criminal justice and punishment. The most visible sign of these efforts was the costly construction of about a hundred large model prisons in all major Chinese cities in the Republican era. While the legal reforms and policies were certainly planned to be comprehensive and eventually extend to all Chinese citizens, urban society was at the center of the reform efforts. In the eyes of Republican administrators, the rapidly changing landscape of the Chinese city was both positive and negative. Among the negative aspects were rising crime rates, growing social tensions, and frequent outbreaks of domestic and criminal violence. A new criminal justice system should address these problems and provide the administration with a modern and efficient tool to resolve the social conflicts and

Exporting Homosociality: Culture and Community in Chinatown America, 1882–1943

MADELINE Y. HSU

An uncomfortable silence hangs over the study of Chinese American history. For much of their history, from 1850 until around 1970, a majority of the Chinese American population has been male. However, very few scholars have examined male-male relationships and culture in communities that were famous for their high ratio of "bachelors." Most accounts of Chinese American history focus on the masculine heroics of railroad workers and gold rush miners, the discrimination that enclosed them in Chinatown niches, or the comparatively tiny numbers of women who made possible "normal" family lives. Apart from their work, their status as victims, or the rarely attained status of fathers and husbands, not much is known about Chinese American men and the values and social practices that characterized their long-term "bachelorhood" in the United States.

This problem stems primarily from two causes. Chinese American studies scholars, and Asian Americanists more generally, are strongly averse to speaking of homosociality and homosexuality among a group that otherwise cries out to be analyzed in such terms. With the goal of redeeming Chinese Americans and gaining mainstream acceptance after more than a century of vilification as intrinsically un-American and unmasculine, Chinese American studies specialists have been particularly eager to emphasize the heterosexual normativity of their subjects. A second key problem is the dearth of historical sources documenting activities and relationships that would have been shameful to this already unusually secretive group. Despite these difficulties, exploring homosociality during the Chinese American bachelor era highlights the cultural continuities and disjunctures that accompanied Chinese migrants

NINE

Moving Bones: Hong Kong's Role as an "In-between Place" in the Chinese Diaspora

ELIZABETH SINN

On 7 July 1855, the American ship *Sunny South* arrived in Hong Kong from San Francisco carrying the remains of seventy Chinese.[1] This was the first of many such shipments, as the remains of tens of thousands of deceased Chinese from around the world continued to be returned to China via Hong Kong for almost another century. Hong Kong was to become not only the major embarkation port for Chinese departing China but also the main disembarkation port for those who returned, dead or alive. As a "space of flow," to borrow a term from Manuel Castells,[2] its open and prompt access to information and other resources and the disproportionately immense energy it generated kept persons and things in motion and consolidated its central position in many different kinds of networks. By studying the activity of bone

[1] *China Mail*, 12 July 1855; Yong Chen, *Chinese San Francisco, 1850–1943: A Trans-Pacific Community* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2000), 105.

[2] Manuel Castells, *The Age of Information: Economy, Society, and Culture* (Cambridge, Mass: Blackwell, 1997), vol. 2: *The Power of Identity*, 1. Castells uses this term to describe a new type of social space created by information technology, but I am borrowing it because it is so potent in evoking an imagery of intense and constant movement.

TEN

Charisma in Motion: The Compassion Relief Movement in Taiwan, Japan, Malaysia, and the United States

ROBERT P. WELLER and C. JULIA HUANG

Taiwan's eastern coastal city of Hualian is a minor city even in the context of Taiwan, with a population just over 100,000. Yet it is "home" (Minnan *chhu*) to the roughly five million (in 2000) followers of the Buddhist Tzu-Chi (Ciji) Compassion Relief movement.[1] Very few of them actually live in Hualian, and only a few lay followers live on the grounds of the Still Thoughts Abode, the founding place of the movement. Many followers have never been to Hualian in their lives, yet they speak of the Still Thoughts Abode on the outskirts of the city as their home.

These followers generally live in the most politically and economically powerful cities of the island and of the world. Compassion Relief has official branches in 28 countries, and followers in 114, primarily concentrated in the largest cities. Much of the following is well off, and includes many cosmopolitans who travel easily and often among the world's major cities. Going to this imagined spiritual home for them means traveling far down the global hierarchy of cities, from places such as New York or Tokyo to Taipei, and finally to Taiwan's poor east coast, long considered

[1] We refer in this chapter to the situation in 2001, except when noted otherwise. For convenience, we will refer to them as "Compassion Relief" although they frequently use the Chinese form, Tzu-Chi, in English.

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