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Lean, Eugenia

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The Modern Elixir: Medicine as a Consumer Item in the Early Twentieth-Century Chinese Press

EUGENIA LEAN

FROM THE LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY into the first half of the twentieth century, medicine was the consumer item *par excellence* on the pages of *Shen bao* and *Dagong bao*, two of China's first modern newspapers.¹ Advertisements for nutrition-boosting remedies, miracle pills, medicinal syrups, and ointments were ubiquitous, surpassing in amount ads for all other consumer items and luxury goods. This burgeoning commercial site commanded the casting, shaping, and molding of a narrative on modern medicine for urban China. In this paper, I examine the rise of the medicinal commodity to learn about evolving cultural understandings of modern science from the last years of the Qing period until the Japanese invasion in 1937. I argue that this development in print marketing not only created cravings for the pills and tinctures featured, but also wove gendered and semicolonial narratives of desire for science, modernity, and nationalism.

These narratives developed in a socio-political context of great turmoil and structural change. The turn of the century saw the collapse of the whole dynastic structure after peasant uprisings and repeated humiliation by Western imperial powers and Japan. Afterwards, the Revolution of 1911 did not bring immediate stability, as the Republican era was marked by internal military struggle among warlords and attempts by a weak and corrupt Nationalist Party (Guomindang) to consolidate its rule. Semicolonialism also continued, rooted in extra-territorial concessions and treaty ports. Understandably, intellectuals were acutely aware of China's frail constitution and bemoaned widespread spiritual degradation. For many of these reforming intellectuals, science became the guarantor of modernization.

During the Self-Strengthening movement during the Tongzhi reign in the

1870s, Chinese statesmen had argued for a measured dose of Western science and technology. By the end of the Qing period many were learning how to build actual scientific institutions and educational facilities from missionaries or by going abroad.² At that time, intellectuals started to express the need for science as not simply technological innovation but as a modern way of thinking and as an ethos. May Fourth intellectuals in particular advocated the adoption of “Mr. Democracy and Mr. Science” for nation-state building purposes. Science became the spiritual panacea needed to scourge China’s blood vessels of the crippling virus of Confucianism.

Medicine played a unique role in this intellectual discourse on Chinese modernization and science. First, such literary and political intellectuals as Lu Xun, Liang Qichao, Gu Jiegang, Guo Moruo, Xu Zhimo, Ding Ling, and Lao She, among others, employed the metaphor of medicine to speak of China’s national and cultural condition. Second, reformist intellectuals committed to Western science and modernization were loathe to reject traditional Chinese medicine. Caution was taken not to modernize at the expense of being “Chinese.” This reluctance was a product of the tension between the desire to be modern and national pride.³ Similar to this conscious deployment of medicine in rhetorical strategies of elite nationalism, commercial texts and their visual images also placed medical science front and center in a more widespread cultural discourse on modernization.

The community of readers engaging in the commercial print discourse on medicine was undoubtedly still a very small educated urban minority in China’s overwhelmingly agrarian population. They were not congruent with the above reform intellectuals per se, nor were they necessarily exclusive of them. Many elite intellectuals had their own exclusive forums for expression and they frequently attacked modern journalism for being blatantly commercial and sensationalistic.⁴ On the other hand, as a source of daily news, many were undoubtedly avid readers. Newspaper consumers also included the post-gentry bourgeois elite⁵ and the *xiao shimin* or so-called “petite bourgeoisie.”⁶ Thus this readership was a heterogeneous group, potentially bringing different readings to the developing discourse on science.

At the same time, the increasingly expansive reach of the print media served to draw these various groups together, presenting to them a single, albeit potentially multivalent, narrative.⁷ Neither sent abroad nor taught by missionaries, most readers had not personally engaged in scientific endeavors. They came to know and desire science at least partially because of exposure to advertisements in China’s growing consumer culture. The use of already familiar notions of physiology and alchemy was vital in making this new narrative less foreign and

more accessible. Traditional ideas about immortality and the natural world critically facilitated the rise of the medicinal commodity throughout this period. Readers witnessed and accepted the shift from turn of the century apothecary advertising of miracle drugs to the later, showier commercials for modern medicine.

Other narratives of modernity were embedded in these sales pitches. Knowledge about the close relationship between medical science and nationalism was disseminated to urban readers, reinforcing a larger discourse on modernization and nation-state building. Life-styles and modern identities were also on sale. The post-gentry urban sophisticate and the new public woman replaced nationalism as featured items by the 1930s. These new personae became naturalized and legitimate in print, but they were still ideal dreams perennially out of reach for most readers.⁸

The knowledge of and ability to consume modern science became a means to demarcate social standing. The Taiping Uprising (1851-1864) had generated mass dislocation and migration of both elites and peasants from the Yangzi delta into Shanghai, and provincial gentry-elites had been forced to shift their resources to Shanghai's new cultural and mercantile arenas. Old means to structure social status subsequently became obsolete and new ways had to be forged in the treaty-port context.⁹ Many urban elites started to enlist knowledge about the commodity of science as solid new cultural capital. The ability to actualize these narratives and purchase advertised products further separated the truly elite from the rest.

By arguing that these narratives of desire played a part in constituting modern urban consciousness, I do not mean to suggest that buyers were solely victim to new advertising trends and marketing strategies. Advertisers, concerned with developing a market niche, promoting products, and making sales, had to tap into consumer demand as well as to recreate consumer predilection with multiple ad campaigns.¹⁰ Led by their business acumen, they had to understand what was acceptable and what would make sense to their targeted audience, pitching their sales within discursive constraints. At times they egregiously transgressed what was tolerable. At other times, through sheer ingenuity and repetitive display, they successfully introduced new vocabulary and syntax to a developing urban discourse. This complex process infused the signs and symbols of these commercials with meaning, validity, and power, making them autonomous in the sense that neither consumer nor advertiser could completely control or define their significance.

These narratives also have implications for our understanding of the rela-

tionships among gender, science, and China's colonial experience. In this paper, my gender analysis takes its cues from several feminist scholars. Joan Scott, for example, provides me with a useful theoretical framework. She considers a primary task of historians to be the determination of historically specific ways in which politics constructs gender and vice versa.¹¹ More specifically, Evelyn Scott Keller focuses on "ideologies of woman, nature, and science" in her examination of science after the Scientific Revolution in Europe. Science was gendered male in contrast to the preceding "feminine" practices of magic and alchemy.¹² I follow a similar line of inquiry regarding gender and science for Republican China.

This inquiry will show that China's commodity culture of medicine actively constituted gender identities and new patterns of consumption behavior by the 1930s. As I argue below in my examination of the ads, the New Consuming Woman appeared as the key consumer and as a model for real female readers. In turn, these new gender roles informed the understanding of modern science and China's position in the age of imperialism. The unprecedented commercial pairing of the Chinese female consumer of science and the Western male provider dramatized the dissemination of scientific knowledge from male expert to female recipient, illustrating the power dynamic between the metropole and periphery.¹³ This pattern of gendering was a colonial construct which had the effect of introducing Western standards to treaty-port China.

As my gender analysis suggests, I approach the development of science in China as a historically specific phenomenon. I am informed by poststructuralists such as Michel Foucault who adopt a more historicist approach to emphasize the particular contexts in which discursive "truths" or domains of knowledge develop as constituting power.¹⁴ Recent postcolonial writings, starting with Edward Said's pioneering critique of Orientalism, have warned against the inherently colonizing tendencies of writing about cultures of the Other from the pulpit of Western academe. Taking heed of this caution, I also assume a postcolonialist position of historicization that is self-reflexive in its attempt to recuperate systems of signification that exist outside the categories of Western modernity.¹⁵

In this spirit, I map the semiotic representation of modern medicine that merchants, eager to hawk their wares, were crafting in the treaty-port print media. I historicize these Chinese advertisements that provided the gendered metaphors, frames of references, and patterns of verbal and visual expressions for the Chinese urban subject to conceptualize powerful constructions of modern science and medicine. Finally, I find that this narrative was a product of China's semicolonial moment, subverting complete cultural colonialism in its insistence to understand, at least partially, modern medical science from the

viewpoint of Chinese physiology and cosmology.¹⁶

Turning to the ads for miracle drugs, it is evident that around the turn of the century the commercial pages of the *Shen bao* proved to be the ideal advertising space for alchemists of all stripes. Most advertisements were commercial bulletins for companies such as pharmacy houses, trade companies, banks, booksellers, and insurance firms, rather than ads for a particular product. Apothecaries (*yaofang*) concerned with promoting their reputations were extremely aggressive advertisers. Postings by individual doctors (*daifu*) were also quite popular.¹⁷ Many highlighted a specialty of the house or secret remedy; others simply posted their various potions, tinctures, mixtures, and powders.¹⁸ Gradually, vendors grew to understand the power of the commodity and the ability of a single house specialty to attract customer attention. By the 1910s, urban China's consumer culture started to flourish and the commodity grew, eventually becoming larger than life. Its iconic representation became grander and flashier, dominating its advertisement. Featuring the commodity, these ads constructed a system of signification for consumerism that looked remarkably similar to Western systems.¹⁹ By the early twentieth-century in China, the elixir, or miracle drug, was the advertising spectacle.

What exactly was the miracle drug? The boast of one typical 1900 advertisement can give us an idea: "To enjoy long life, have boundless sexual energy, cure one hundred illnesses, and develop a strong physique, take this pill."²⁰ Targeting all, men and women, young and old, ads for various *zhiyao* (curative medicine) and *yaowan* (medicinal pills) assured relief for ailments ranging from *mengyi* (nocturnal emission) by men to various sexual diseases of both sexes. They promised to regulate irregular menstrual periods and tame opium addiction. Some even claimed the power to revive the dead.²¹ Most importantly, they were marvelous, inexplicable and divine. Ads labeled them "Wonder Item" (*miaopin*), "Wonder Pill" (*miaodan*), or "Divine Ball" (*xianwan*). Some simply read "Wonder! Wonder! Wonder!" Some brazen advertisers appropriated the claims made by miracle drug vendors to promote goods outside the realm of alchemy. A 1905 advertisement sold jeweled electricity belts.²² Easy to wear, it functioned like the elixir, able to miraculously cure those with disease and to improve overall strength for those without. One would most assuredly become the same with the strongman in the ads, emitting a glow of virility and looking forward to the privilege of *changming* (long life). Miracle drug commercials pledged everything, explained nothing, and were ubiquitous.

A perennial favorite among advertisers and buyers alike was the *buyao* (the nourishment tonic), which did not cure or mend, but primarily boosted, supplemented, and maintained. *Buyao* commercials made claims of fantastic and un-



FIGURE 1. This 1890 *Shen bao* commercial is a common example of earlier Miracle Drug advertising. It features the Red-footed Immortal as a trademark.

canny efficacy. For example, advertisers for the *buyao* called *Rendan* promised solace and relief from stomachaches, toothache, indigestion, overeating, anemia and weakness, vomiting, feeling faint, headache and dizziness, chills, hangovers, depression, and at least one hundred other possible complaints.²³ *Rendan* also reminded readers that it prevented future illness by expelling all poison from the body, and if necessary it revived one from the dead. The *buyao* was a true panacea.

Other miracle drugs were potions concocted to remedy specific problems. For example, the popular *Baidu* tablets or powder specifically treated venereal disease, promising to eliminate all visible symptoms, ease uncomfortable swelling and burning, and purge the body of disease. Moreover, *Baidu* was not going to sell the consumer short of miraculous side effects, improving general health and extending life in addition to curing gonorrhea. Pills for opium addiction similarly offered wondrous byproducts. Besides offering to end a habit painlessly, advertisers threw in pledges for a better appetite, an improved sex life, mental vigor, and longevity as part of the package deal.

Although clearly unabashed in making claims for their amazing merchandise, these miracle drug advertisements were not simply about the bravado of promotion. Consistent notions about the body, immortality, and cosmology appeared as well. Early *buyao* commercials presented a physiology far different from that familiar to the modern West. The modern Western body is often essentialized as a fixed and discrete unit, constituted by various anatomical parts and systems that can be dissected and known objectively.²⁴ It is a sophisticated machine with isolated parts occasionally in need of repair. Contemporaneous discourses, from schoolhouse health charts to Hollywood and billboard cultures obsessed with perfect bodies, constantly reinforce this “completeness.”²⁵ This flesh-bound machine and its organs and skeleton were distinctly foreign to the Chinese reader in the early twentieth century. In the verbal text of commercials, a Chinese signifier for the corporeal “body” rarely if ever appeared. Visual imagery associated with early miracle drugs included rough, handdrawn merchandise containers marked simply by a brand name. At most, a figure of an immortal graced a container as a trademark promising longevity (Figure 1).²⁶

The absence of a material body characterized the discourse and practice of

traditional Chinese healing. Its physiology featured a multiple “body,” contingent upon “occasions of analysis and the purposes for which analyses are made,” guiding clinicians and healers rather than representative of a material reality.²⁷ In turn-of-the-century print culture, the absence of a mechanical body did not mean the lack of a systemic conception of physiological activity. Physiology was organized conceptually around notions of interacting circulation tracts of life-force substances. Advertising rhetoric primarily targeted the maintenance of the harmony of these substances with disease resulting from a disturbance in their flow. Constant refrains of regulating *qi*, harmonizing one’s *yin* and *yang*, and nourishing one’s *jing* essence, echoed throughout.

Qi is a difficult notion to render into English and is often inadequately translated as “pneuma” or “matter-energy.”²⁸ It referred generally to the material essence of the Chinese cosmos and was imagined variously as a concrete gaseous flow or as a more tenuous, nonperceptible energy. Its harmonious and unblocked circulation was crucial for cosmological and political harmony in various political and philosophical discourses.²⁹ With the body as the microcosm of the universe, the forces dictating the physiological function echoed those of the larger political cosmos. Though *qi* flowed separately in individual people, animals, and inanimate objects, including China’s bureaucratic society, these separate flows were still interconnected and part of a universal *qi*. Thus, just as the emperor had to ensure free-flowing Heavenly *qi* to prevent political and moral chaos, the individual had to maintain his or her own *qi* for mental and physical well-being. Almost all miracle drug advertisements targeted *qi* circulation explicitly as vital to general health and vigor.

Another fundamental aspect of Chinese cosmology was the dual forces of *yin* and *yang*, whose interaction and balance constituted and regulated the functioning of all natural phenomenon including human physiology. These two forces were centerpieces in the sexual and procreational economies of imperial China. *Yin* was the force characterized by the feminine, darkness, the moon. *Yang* represented the masculine, light, the sun. They were not thought of as binary opposites defining male-female sexuality, which is more reminiscent of modern Western philosophical and sexual discourses. Rather, sexual differentiation depended upon the configured distribution of both fluid forces.³⁰ Men had more *yang* and women had more *yin*.

Several discourses privileged *yang* over *yin*. Daoist alchemical traditions identified *yang* as the source of vitality and life, unlike modern biological and medical discourses of the West that identify the ovum as primary.³¹ The solid manifestation of male *jing* was to be expended only when there was the possibility of progeny. Otherwise, the goal was not only to conserve but to replenish. *Yin*, on

the other hand, was a threatening force sapping men of their virility and *yang*. Much of popular Chinese literature depicted the female *yin* as insatiable and dangerous in its excess.³² This belief is also scattered throughout Chinese official historiography. From the historical account of Bao Si, the beloved concubine of King You of the Zhou, to the beauty Yang Guifei, the beloved concubine of the Emperor Minghuang, women with excessive *yin* prompted the political failures and deaths of their lovers and political chaos at large.

Modern popular advertising strategies continued to rely on many of these assumptions of procreation, using threats of *yin* and *yang* imbalance to sell their products. For men, *yang* depletion would mean enervation, weakness, and in extreme cases, the inability to produce *jing*, the seminal essence for procreation. Products such as *Guangsi jindan*, or the Golden Pill for Multiple Descendants, prevented such dangers.³³ Some ads spoke directly of *bujing* (the nourishment of *jing*), conveying the need to replenish especially after nocturnal emission or *mengyi* (literally, the loss of dreams). For women, *yin* imbalance was dangerous. Irregular menstrual periods would result with the serious possibility of not being able to get pregnant. Several *buyao* pledged *yin* nourishment, pregnancy, and even a male child. The long-running ad for *Fuke jiangsheng dan*, which spanned from as early as the 1910s into the 1930s, warned against the imbalance of a water and a cold womb, all danger signals of excess *yin*.³⁴

Along with *yin* and *yang*, the system of “five elements”—wood, fire, earth, metal and water—was essential to Chinese physiology. These elements were less physical substances and more qualitative phases of cyclical processes fundamental to the Chinese view of the natural world.³⁵ By the Former Han period, the “five elements” came to correspond to the physiological activity of five visceral domains of the body, each governed by specific internal organs.³⁶ This physiological schema influenced early advertisers of various pills and cordials. Many vendors repeatedly targeted the same few organs, with the kidney and spleen being especially popular.³⁷ These were not isolated parts of a whole body in need of repair, but crucial governing agents for the working of a set of physiological processes. Once nourished, they served to offer relief from various ailments, maintain an unchecked flow of *qi*, and generate vigor.

Along with these key tenets of Chinese physiology, long-standing faith in elixirs of longevity (*changshou*) not only dominated *buyao* advertising but were crucial in ensuring their popularity. The Daoist discourse was the primary cultural milieu in which Chinese immortality and the belief in alchemical means to achieve it developed.³⁸ The Daoist cult of the *xian* (the immortal), popular after the fourth century, sought for a distinctively material renewal in which the body was necessary for deathless existence on earth and for ascension as a per-

fected immortal to the administrative ranks of the heavens.³⁹ Esoteric potions were concocted from various metallic and mineral substances to stimulate artificially *yin* and *yang* juices and to invert the natural course of bodily decay.⁴⁰

Notions of Daoist adepts, powerful elixirs, and eternal youth were not restricted to a canonical Daoist discourse, but occupied popular cultural imagination throughout Chinese history. From official histories to fiction, accounts portrayed the Daoist adept as the key person in the quest for immortality. Dynastic histories dating to the medieval Warring State's period recorded incidents in which the politically powerful accidentally ended their lives by imbibing poison and mercury for the reckless sake of rejuvenation.⁴¹ Most famous perhaps is the legend of *Qinshi huang*, the first emperor of the Qin dynasty, who sent a mission to the eastern islands in search of means to guarantee eternal life. This resulted unexpectedly in the founding of Japan—without immortal glory for the son of heaven.

The elixir and its maker have been infused with multiple moral meanings in Chinese literary history as well. In *wuxia xiaoshuo* (martial arts novels) and in their predecessors, Tang dynasty *chuanqi* (the tales of the strange), heroes rely constantly on various efficacious wonder drugs (*lingdan miaoyao*).⁴² These heroes consume wonder drugs to preserve their youthful complexion, achieve long life, and most importantly, supplement their fighting skills, all for the ultimate pursuit of martial righteousness (*xiayi*). The elixir facilitated martial and moral superiority. On the other hand, many literary figures who associated with Daoist adepts suffered fatal results. In his quest for sexual immortality, the crass and greedy hedonist, Ximen Qing, overdoses on some alchemical mixture while vainly attempting to arm himself against the insatiable female *yin*. The ingestion of an elixir often resulted in tragic disaster and death perhaps because immortality was associated with immoral greed and excess, two nearly inexcusable and deeply rooted sins of Chinese literature.⁴³ Whereas the desire for long life was morally permissible, the lust for a deathless existence was often rendered excessive.

By the end of the Qing period, the miracle drug was legitimate and culturally significant to consumers as the latest manifestation of a long line of Chinese alchemical elixirs or *waidan* used in the pursuit of immortality. Merchants were doing all they could to entice, lure, and even deceive readers to accept promises of mineral-facilitated renewal and purchase cherished notions of longevity and male heirs. Long life became available to all who had the knowledge and the means to buy. Immortality became a salable commodity in China's rising culture of consumption.

By the 1910s as China's commodity culture took flight, there were signifi-

FIGURE 2. "Every Picture Tells a Story" states this 1920 Shen bao commercial. Imperialist dispensers recognized the power of images and the symbolic capital of Western goods.

"Stop that Cough"!!



此藥片為治咳嗽喉痛喉管發炎及治喉痛喉管發炎
度效速口乾喉痛喉痛喉痛喉痛喉痛喉痛喉痛喉痛
青皮立見功效治喉痛喉痛喉痛喉痛喉痛喉痛喉痛
味美且色香味俱全凡男女老少皆宜且服法極簡華商使

咳之為患入都以為
普通小恙其實不然
因咳能致肺癆也患
者急宜覓對症之藥
早為治愈毋因循自
誤釀成危險之重症

Doan's Cough Lozenges



cant shifts in the semiotic landscape of advertising. Pills and potions bottled and labeled as "science" increasingly eclipsed the early *buyao* elixirs. Though the Western trademark symbolized trustworthiness, expertise, and quality in ads as early as the 1890s, these later advertisers were more thoroughly repackaging their products as modern pharmaceutical goods.⁴⁴ Actual Western products,

such as Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People, Doan's various Tonics, Angier's Emulsion, and Chamberlain's Painkiller, also increased markedly (Figure 2).

Western and Westernized products acquainted the Chinese reading populace with new disorders and maladies. With its aggressive marketing, Odol's World Dentrifrice introduced successfully the unprecedented condition of tooth decay.⁴⁵ It presented bad breath and dirty teeth as a regrettable condition that only Odol's could properly remedy. Another example was armpit odor (*huxiu*). Perspiration had not been seen as something to be "treated" until its frequent mention in 1930 advertising. These ads for Western products exhibited an array of new health problems to the Chinese and enticed them to buy.

The anatomical and dissected Western body became a noticeable icon and an object at which to gaze in the 1910s. Advertisers isolated, highlighted, and "extracted" organs from the body for inspection and reader edification. Bits and pieces of the body never known to the consumer before were severed and identified as potential trouble spots. This new body was invaded microscopically, divided minutely, and displayed proudly for sale. For example, makers of Doan's ointment included pictures of swollen and infected body parts, isolated and bodiless.⁴⁶ The consumer was repeatedly reminded with graphic detail how even the most infinitesimally small part of the body could potentially go awry and that Doan's could offer relief.

Textual cues also blazed the new contours of the body. Sales pitches explained exactly how the body should be conceptualized, renaming, mapping,

FIGURE 3. This ad for *Shou'erkang* longevity powder placed the anatomical Western body, its brain tissue and explicitly labeled glands (from the pituitary to the pancreas) on display for the urban reader.

and categorizing organs and body parts (Figure 3). By the late 1910s scientific notation and labeled diagrams appeared everywhere. Advertising language started to include scientific terms of glands, diseases, and conditions. In the 1920s advertisers were employing pithy statements similar to “proven effective” (e.g., *zhuzhi xiaoyan*) to sanction their wares. One full-page 1936 ad for *Shou'erkang* made claims to objectivity and scientific standards, the stamps of approval sought by increasingly “informed” consumers.⁴⁷ It included “before” (*jia*) and “after” (*yi*) photographs of a lab rat who had grown from weak



and emaciated to fat and healthy after an injection of *Shou'erkang*. The image of the lab rat was clearly borrowed from Western medical culture to signify scientific expertise and knowledge. The advertisers used photographs as documentation of the truth-value of the product. These new icons replaced older means of legitimating medicine, including personal recommendation and reputation.

The debut made by the modern professional scientist as a new cultural hero in the 1930s was significant as well. Bespectacled and distinguished looking, he (invariably it was a he) worked in his lab coat or in Western clothing, mixing, titrating, measuring, and conducting experiments.⁴⁸ He was always gracious when passing medical knowledge onto the consumer. The “traditional” Chinese doctor or *daifu* also appeared at this time (Figure 4). In the typical format of personalized confessions of Dr. Williams’ Pink Pills for Pale People advertisements, a contemporary doctor recounted the glorious tradition of medical arts while flanked by two *daifu* dressed in classic garb and headgear.⁴⁹ The scientist was now validated by a long indigenous genealogy and heritage.

Early twentieth-century advertising witnessed competing claims for the understanding of the natural world. By the 1930s commercials for both apothecary house specialties and the more visually striking ads of modern medicinal commodities were present, with the latter increasingly relegating the former to secondary, less prominent space. Western discourse on modern science did not completely overtake the discourse on the natural world presented in earlier *buyao*



「醫良爲則相良爲不」

醫術之在中華惟良相堪比擬其精潔可謂千矣然其受此譽崇亦非偶
然蓋中華之醫術迄今已有四千六百餘年之此實歷史矣顧各國醫學研
究之結果現今醫家可資借鑑者其範圍其廣即如著名補血健腦良藥韋
廉士醫生紅色補丸亦爲進步的醫學研究結果之一許多醫家咸認此丸
爲最有效驗之治療品江西馮萬小全九號許壽餘醫生即其中之一也
許醫書云「鄙人幼讀詩書及科舉廢乃專攻岐黃之學因余若服膏丹
人不爲良相當爲良醫之言也然而醫之爲業難擅而研究亦殊吃力移因
用腦過度致心力交瘁面黃肌瘦眠睡不安飲食乏味雖珍
丸胃納頓佳夜眠安適續服不久腦力增強身肥體健此均
韋廉士醫生紅色補丸所賜也曷勝感謝」韋廉士醫生
紅色補丸由其補血健腦之功有裨于許醫其能裨益任何
他人亦復如是舉凡血虧病弱宜續早老痛癢病後虛弱以
及婦科各症此丸治療之功均已屢試屢驗矣
各藥房皆有出售或逕向上海江西路四五一
號韋廉士醫生藥局函購每瓶大洋一元五角
六瓶八元郵力在內



FIGURE 4. The construction of a heritage and medical tradition as symbolically represented by the image of the daifu was part of the crafting of a narrative of modernity in these medical commercials.

advertising, however. Merchants were clearly still selling the modern pharmaceutical as a miracle drug. Early Republican vendors dressed miracle elixirs in the costume of modern science while ideas about Chinese physiological processes, *buyao*, and eternal life persisted partially tucked away in the fine print.

Like their late imperial predecessors, the modern products of medical science continued to guarantee *bushen* (the supplementing of one's spirit) and *qiangjing* (the strengthening of one's *jing*). They promised to remedy weak *jingshen* (life-spirit), prevent aging, strike against hidden illnesses, ensure pregnancy for women, and cure nocturnal emission for men. A 1935 *buyao*

ad perfectly expressed this coexistence of old and new.⁵⁰ The central image was a stark silhouette of the female body (Figure 3). The brain tissue was drawn in and various glands, from the pituitary to the pancreas, were identified. Despite the Western iconography, the product being sold still functioned as a longevity elixir, promising above all the regulation of wayward *qi*.

These persistent ideas about substance flows and immortality were significant because they rendered new icons of the Westernized body and modern medicine sensible to the reading public. This marketing strategy essentially collapsed science and Westernization into the synecdoche of a pill that was remarkably similar to earlier *buyao*. By so doing, it facilitated the importation and sales of Western pharmaceutical goods that began in the 1900s and inundated the urban markets by the 1910s and thereafter. It also played a crucial role in carving out critical conceptual space for a constellation of unprecedented narratives that were to be associated with modern medicine.

The burgeoning sentiment of nationalism was one of the most noticeable new narratives. By the 1910s, the modern pill or panacea teemed in meaning with previously unknown connotations of national strength. In 1915, nationwide boycotts of Japanese goods occurred after Japan issued to China the Twenty-one Demands, egregious and humiliating calls for reparations payment. In 1925, boycotts of the British followed the May Thirtieth incident in which the British had opened fire on Chinese citizens. More boycotts happened in 1927 and 1931 to protest Japanese imperialism in Northern China. These elixir advertisements predated these nationalistic boycotts and thus were not simple shows of patriotism. They were active participants in the spinning of a commercial narrative on nation-state building that, while reinforcing a general discourse on nationalism, offered its own version—with the modern elixir as the centerpiece.

Advertisers represented China as a nation-state with its own national merchandise and national citizens. Unprecedented references were made repeatedly to *Zhongguo* (China) and *Zhonghua* (the Chinese Republic). Many promoted their medicinal products as *guohuo* (national goods) and *guoke* (national science). The image of the new Chinese citizen also emerged.⁵¹ Usually always male, he was dressed in modern garb, often waving the national flag. He both sold national merchandise and was a role model for readers.

At this time the individual body was clearly being identified as the microcosm of the nation. Individual health was rendered as crucial to national strength. One 1915 ad for a nourishment juice visually portrayed this intimate relationship by directly superimposing large, black characters, “brain boosting, heart-strengthening potion” (*yinao buxin zhi*), onto the clear characters, “Countrymen, love your nation” (*quan tongbao aiguo*).⁵² The country’s plight was to be treated with medicine just as human illness was treated: “From ancient times until now, there has never been a situation where as people, we are strong and the country is weak. This then is the role of *yao* (medicine)—how can it not be important?” A 1915 ad for the Rising Sun Pill similarly offered to “cure illness and alleviate the nation.”⁵³ Intake of this pill minimized both the internal *luan* (disorder) of the individual’s body and that of the national body. For the Chinese populace, the message was clear: a strong nation required strong bodies, attainable through the purchase of national *buyao*.

Immortality also gained new significance in the era of nation-states. A few advertisements explicitly coupled immortality with the health of the nation. A 1920 ad for *Xiandan*, literally “the Drug of Immortality,” assured protection against multiple diseases and promised the nation eternal life.⁵⁴ This pill of pure *yang* enabled both personal longevity and national immortality. Its nationalistic vendors enjoined citizens to buy the domestic product made out of Chinese



FIGURE 5. "Why go far..." asks this 1925 Shen bao advertisement. Instead, good health can be acquired easily from your local apothecary. These later ads explicitly narrated the act of consumption.

medicine rather than foreign goods. Desire for an immortal nation state could be sated with the patriotic purchase of China's modern elixir.

Besides constructing narratives on medical science and national strength, print advertising engaged in the making of the individual consumer and a cosmopolitan bourgeois lifestyle. During the final few decades of the Republican Era, commercials fixed the new language and images through which Chinese could express their modern personalities. Dramatic shifts in the gendered meaning of consumption accompanied these developments. The consumer went from being a male patriarch representing the household unit in early advertising to an individual urban female buyer of the 1930s.

Appearing primarily before the 1910s, the earliest consumer of


欲康健者何必遠求

司各脫乳白鯊魚肝油 各處皆有出售蓋全球
 最著名之強身品願新強骨味病去弱不問男女老幼服之
 皆能轉弱為強

凡各種虛弱症病例如寒熱癆瘵之類服此油能服油手實魚
 商標之司各脫油心可也即見效

賜顧請認明包皮上有油士產油士原自
司各脫

各大藥房
 均有出售



(五)

print advertising was the Chinese household as represented by the patriarch. Speaking on behalf of all members of the household, he gave personal testimony to the efficacy of the showcased elixir and conveyed to readers exactly how the advertised drug aided in crucial family matters. In several ads, the patriarch, who had taken the responsibility to assure the existence of the next generation by buying the featured *buyao*, expressed his family's gratitude and

happiness with its success. The ability to produce a male heir was not simply the problem of the daughter-in-law or wife, but that of the whole family. Conspicuously absent was the individual consumer, male or female.

Ads started to address and target individual consumers rather than the full household after the 1910s. They often placed the consumer as an object of the readers' gaze and consumption. The prominently displayed virile strongman or the plump healthy child in *Weiluo* nourishment juice ads demonstrated what could happen if readers simply made the right purchase.⁵⁵ Other ads showcased a well-coiffed person along with the pharmaceutical product.⁵⁶ Not only did the dignity of the person featured guarantee the value of the product, but his dignity was also on sale. These later advertisements carefully differentiated each product's appropriate buyer. For example, an offspring of Dr. William's' Pink Pills called "Baby's Own Tablets" spoke about the urgent need for specialized medicine targeting unique infant health problems.⁵⁷ By placing portraiture with the caption, *(nū)bai gongzi* (the Child Prince), these advertisers envisioned and visually affirmed that the child was a separate consumer with unique needs and vulnerabilities. Pharmaceutical goods were no longer *buyao* effective for all.

Increasingly the featured consumer was no longer simply an idealized object of consumption desire but became a subject that the reader could identify with. Pictures vividly depicted discomfort with which the reader could sympathize. One man grasped his head with both his hands, clearly suffering from a migraine.⁵⁸ Another was bending over in pain from a backache.⁵⁹ Men and women were seen in active poses, directly applying balm to a sore spot or taking a calibrated dosage. These ads presented images of the consuming Everyman or Everywoman experiencing commonplace ache and discomfort.

By the 1930s what I call "lifestyle ads" were prevalent, stringing together a full narrative of the urban bourgeois consumer's way of life. Not simply images with which readers could identify, they were snapshots of comfortable "everyday life" that constituted a complete cosmopolitan identity for sale. In a popular 1930s Vitaspermin commercial the ideal urban couple was out for a romantic evening at the theater, but the man imprudently dozes off.⁶⁰ He had obviously neglected to take his Vitaspermin, leaving himself susceptible to exhaustion and unable to enjoy the perks of cosmopolitan privilege. Constantly working, playing sports, going to the theater, and traveling to far away lands, the consumer fully appreciated this bourgeois lifestyle only if he bought the advertised good.

Merchants presented these images to the reader as desirable and very possible despite their often being difficult to emulate in actuality. Some images were clearly out of reach for the majority of urban readers. For example, the

jockey racing at the colonial outpost of the Shanghai racetrack first appeared in advertising in a 1925 ad for longevity powder (*shoufen*).⁶¹ Though the Chinese participated in horse racing as spectators, they were not permitted to participate in the sport. Many Chinese, including ordinary urbanites, went to watch, enjoying it more as an occasion to gather rather than as a sport. Ultimately though, it was still a colonial activity and the Chinese observed with a spectator's gaze the meanings of colonial modernity embedded in the event and the track.⁶² Readers gazed at the horse racing icon of medicinal advertising along with other representations of Western leisure. These all became symbols of modern treaty-port urbanity, achievable through a simple purchase.

Consumption itself became a commodity and identified as part of this new urban lifestyle. Ads depicted customers entering stores and leaving satisfied with handfuls of medicine. One 1925 Emulsions sales pitch assured readers that health as a desirable commodity could be obtained at the neighborhood pharmacy (Figure 5).⁶³ The accompanying image displayed a well-dressed person, suggesting that his dignity could be yours as well with this purchase. Another 1925 pitch for Doan's Cough Syrup (*Dou'an*) placed itself within its own *Shen bao* ad (Figure 6).⁶⁴ Two sick people were curiously observing a large billboard advertisement of Doan's cough medicine, coughing and clutching their necks as if mirroring the man on the billboard. This ad-within-an-ad method made the process of identifying with the act of consumption explicit. Another man pointed at the billboard, advising the sick ones to purchase quickly and seek relief. Advertisers encouraged literal mimicry hoping to elicit sales.

In addition to this proliferation of "lifestyle ads," the consuming woman entered most majestically and came to reign in the late 1920s and 1930s. Previous ads had already acquainted consumers with *fuke*, the health care of female reproduction, and the miracle drugs used to regulate menstruation and fertility.⁶⁵ As mentioned earlier, the *buyao* narrative primarily constituted reproduction as the concern of the whole household rather than as a private matter for the woman. The woman as an individual, whether as an independent consumer or as the key object of sale, emerged forcefully into the public space of consumption only in these later years.

The 1930s public consecration of women as the bourgeois consumer was significant considering the history of women in imperial China. Elite imperial women were rarely public consumers of medicine. Men dominated orthodox and public practice of medicine, always characterized by the textual presence of medical classics. Women, on the other hand, were active consumers and deliverers of other types of health care within the confines of the family compound. Behind closed doors, women established all-female health networks, with many

各埠藥房均有出售 每打洋七元 上海江西路美商兜安氏西藥公司啓

兜安氏補肺聖藥

咳之為患 均由 痰積 胃弱 而未 服藥 得當 其愈 也速 如其 藥不 對症 咳嗽 加厲 甚至 由感 冒而 釀成 癆咳 者 有之 此藥 治 傷風 咳嗽 喘失 音啞 吐血 等 症 肺必 奏效 也

明聲籍國

敬啟者 敝公司 係在 美國 政府 註冊 之領事 署按律 司助總 公司設 於美之 白佛羅 地方 華人 總商會 及上海 美商會 之會員 誠恐 各界不 明真相 特此 聲明

代理人 美商 兜安氏 西藥公司 啓

FIGURE 6. Vendors of this 1925 Doan's Lung Tonic were not just selling a product, but also the act of pharmaceutical consumption as part of Chinese modernity.

elite women preferring female midwives and healers, often Buddhist nuns, over proper male doctors (*daiyi*) chosen for them by their fathers or husbands.⁶⁶ Female publicity or activity outside the inner quarters of any type was a hotly contested moral issue. Nonelite women in public arenas (such as courtesans and Buddhist and Daoist nuns) were always favorite targets of elite men, gatekeepers of various moral discourses. When elite women of the Jiangnan area started to be more active in literary activity and production during the late Ming period, they too became objects of frequent male criticism.⁶⁷

By the turn of the twentieth century, female publicity again became an avidly discussed topic. Prompted in part by urbanization, missionary-initiated female education and proposed anti-footbinding reforms, post-Taiping Rebellion gender dislocation resulted in a cacophony of voices debating and redefining proper female behavior. Early twentieth-century elite modernization and reform commanded many new gender narratives that for the first time insisted upon female publicity. May Fourth intellectuals rendered the woman's body a crucial public cite upon which to contest the meaning of China's national and modern fate. They placed female liberation at the crux of Chinese moderniza-

FIGURE 7. In this 1935 *Dagong bao* advertisement, the pharmaceutical product was rendered as crucial for the constitution of the new modern cosmopolitan family. The commercial advises parents to buy this panacea to keep themselves fit and thus the entire family healthy.

tion and juxtaposed the cloistered, foot-bound female victim as a metaphor for traditional China's plight. It was not until the arrival of the commercial heroine of the 1930s, however, that a public woman was presented as a social norm. This public woman was no longer simply a patriotic creation of a tiny handful of elite intellectuals, but the urban Everywoman, the New Consuming Woman. She was far more dominant than her male counterpart, the consuming Everyman, demanding tolerance for a new female identity that was sexy and appealing and that revolved around consumption.

From one vantage point, advertisers still appropriated these female images to sell products. The sophisticated, seductive woman became a common sight, purposely placed as an object for the male gaze. A 1935 advertisement for Doan's skin ointment that specialized in treating skin infections, rancid sores, tender inflammations, and foot fungi, featured a female icon which lacked any apparent association with the ointment.⁶⁸ Her presence suggested to men that buying this particular brand would reduce their skin problems, increase their sexual attraction, and very likely end in possession of similarly beautiful women. Women were among the exhibited items to be consumed.

強自嗣強身



設有所健之子女必失亦己身之強健己身不強
 則所生之子女亦必羸弱不若他兒之活潑且易
 感染疾病此所以強嗣必先強身也強身之道即
 服兜安氏秘製保腎丸以補內腎而強健利血
 液純淨足以養生而身體遂口臻康強矣
 婦女大都因生疰之用力及內腎之虧弱致常
 患肚痛兜安氏秘製保腎丸為此症之確效良藥
 久為婦女所讚譽此丸除補腎極效外專治腎虧
 所致之背痛腰酸腿痛小便頻數尿赤常虧
 弱或遺精腰痛腿痛不眠等症服之立見功效
 勿取之背腰痛腿痛不眠等症服之立見功效

上海英大馬路

司公藥西氏安兜海上海

From another vantage point, these advertisements crafted a female consciousness and gendered subjectivity, providing real women with the look, the attitude, and the cultural capacity to purchase. The Doan's saleswoman, for example, was a model of modern femininity and sexuality. She was loaded with seductive power and appeal and provided a possible look for female readers to copy. Advertisers were bold and creative, defining various other unprecedented poses and roles. The modern woman was also the capable mother,⁶⁹ the bourgeois housewife, the caring spouse,⁷⁰ the nurse and the patient,⁷¹ and the confident and independent cosmopolitan woman.⁷² These numerous images together constituted the complex personae of the New Consuming Woman which female readers were to covet and emulate through purchase.

These ads had high hopes for the woman's aptitude in her various new roles. An ad for Pinkettes' tablets for constipation featured the housewife busily boiling water on a modern stove.⁷³ She was elegant, with a bobbed haircut and high heels even while donning an apron in front of a hot stove. It was with the simple consumption of a tablet or two that the housewife could maintain her composure and poise against the discomforts of constipation.

One of the more prominent identities for the New Consuming Women was as a representative of the rising bourgeois urban family. The family was no longer a traditional multigenerational household represented by the male patriarch. Vendors now froze nuclear families in action poses from their modern urban lives and identified the mother as the principal consumer (Figure 7).⁷⁴ The infrequent commercial that singled out the husband did so only to remind him to think of his tired wife, whose health had to be supplemented to ensure the health of the family.⁷⁵ The housewife became the primary buyer and icon of consumption in a newly configured household division of labor.

These commercials also instructed female readers in the requirements of the maternal role with assurance that it was not difficult with the correct medicinal commodity. Beyond simply producing male children, as required in earlier ads, modern motherhood was now longer, marked by various stages, and by more opportunities to buy. The process began with pregnancy. Construed as a vulnerable time during which there was the likelihood of becoming frail and sick, pregnancy required special preventive medication. The postnatal period was also precarious. Merchants made postpregnancy (*chanhou*) tablets readily available for supplementing lost blood and fundamental *qi* (*yuanqi*).⁷⁶ During infancy, the concerned mother, often breastfeeding her sickly child, sought relief with various pharmaceutical products. The single child then became a flock of two or three school-aged children who begged for cough syrup to comfort a

sore throat or for ointment rubbed on their inflamed calves. The modern mother performed these duties easily.

The 1930s New Consuming Woman who dominated the pages of the *Shen bao* and *Dagong bao* was a complex creature of consumption. Central to her identity—whether she was representing the new urban family or was single, independent, and sexy—was the modern elixir. In addition, she became increasingly demanding over time. As the ads provided the identity for real women to consume, actual female consumption undoubtedly started to affect actual sales. She was not solely an object of advertiser manipulation but also became a subject to inform and demand how medicine should be sold.

China saw medical practice organized increasingly as a professional field by the early twentieth century.⁷⁷ Medicine was no longer scattered health-care practices interwoven into everyday culture and ritual. This organization of medical practices and discourse was part of the larger trend whereby China was gradually developing the notion and institutions of *kexue* (modern science). Unfortunately, scholars in the past have tended to depreciate mass culture, obscuring the importance of consumption in the development of *kexue*. This paper attempts to show that the ubiquitous commercials for the elixir were critical in disseminating knowledge about and creating desire for modern science in China. Pharmaceutical merchandise was repackaged, covered in scientific labels, and labeled with Western trademarks. Health and modern medicine became integrally related to an unprecedented discourse on nationalism and to new gender and elite subjectivities. Professional scientists appeared everywhere as heroes.

Besides playing a crucial role in this constitution of *kexue*, medical advertising, particularly its gendered imagery of the 1930s, is revealing for China's complex colonial experience. Whereas the consumer of science was the modern Chinese woman, the provider of science was male, and often a Western male. In one 1935 commercial for Santal Midy pills, a popular remedy for venereal disease, the male doctor dressed in Western attire handed a roll of tablets to the distinctly Chinese female patient (Figure 8).⁷⁸ With his back to the reader, the doctor appeared stern, confident, and chastising while still providing for and educating the nonplussed woman. Lu Xun had similarly used the literary image of syphilis to describe his country's spiritual state, suggesting that the core of China was rotting and that it had become congenital. Unlike Lu Xun's bleak diagnosis, this advertisement depicts China, the female patient infected with venereal disease, heading in the right direction by choosing to consume modern medicine. Vendors offered hope for improvement with their products. Nor were Japanese merchants going to miss the opportunity to manipulate effective colo-

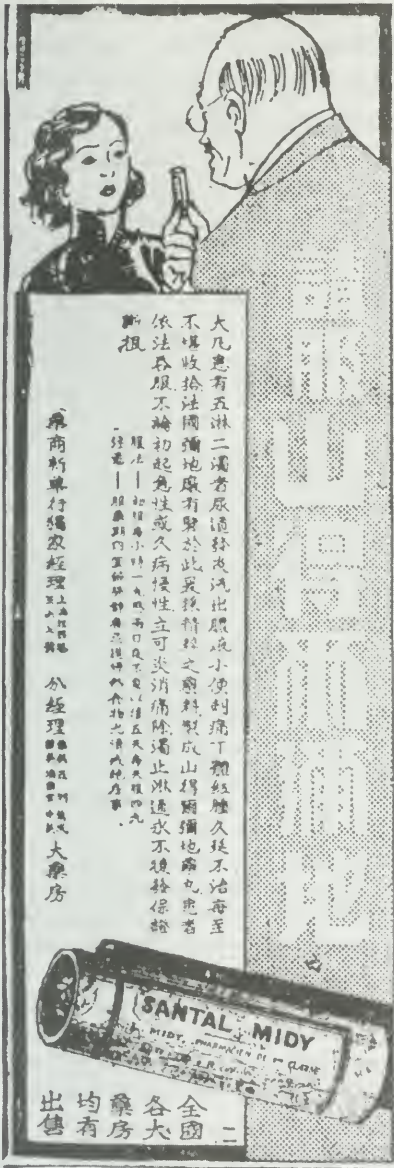


FIGURE 8. This 1935 Santal Midy commercial expresses metaphorically the passing of modern medical science from a masculine West (the Western male doctor) to a feminine consumer, China (the Chinese female patient).

nial and gendered imagery. In an ad for *Rendan*, Japan's most popular product in the Chinese market, a Japanese colonel (an obvious symbol of Japanese imperial expansion) was ceremoniously handing a packet of *Rendan* to a Chinese woman in common dress.⁷⁹ The visual narrative of both these ads represents the gendering in these commercials at large: feminine China buying and receiving medical and scientific enlightenment from a masculine West.

China's desire for modern science was partially a product of cultural imperialism. China was not completely complacent and passive, however. Like the New Consuming Woman, China was both colonized object and demanding subject, and in this way a truly semicolonial agent. Imperialist dispensers of pharmaceutical goods and Western medical science had to grapple with tenacious and long-standing ideas about the function of *buyao*, immortality elixirs, and cosmological assumptions from *yin* and *yang* to *qi*. Western narratives were relatively limited in their ability to thoroughly transform pre-existing Chinese discourses on health and physiology. The urban Chinese continued to constitute modern medicine and science at least partially on their own terms.

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NOTES

1. *Shen bao* was first published in 1871 under foreign guidance in the treaty port of Shanghai. *Dagong bao* was established in 1902 in the treaty port of Tianjin. Both were mainstays in urban print culture of the Republican era.
2. Though early contacts between Chinese and Western medicine started before 1600 and were maintained steadily by Catholic missionaries during the early and mid-Qing, the intensification of medical missionary work did not really begin until after 1840. The formation of systemic medical training for the Chinese was initiated in the 1880s and expanded significantly after 1900. See K. Chimin Wong and Wu Lien-teh, *History of Chinese Medicine: Being a Chronicle of Medical Happenings in China from Ancient Times to the Present Period* (Tianjin: 1936; reprint, Taipei: Southern Materials Center, Inc., 1977). James Reardon-Anderson also identifies the end of the Qing period as significant with the development of modern chemical and scientific institutions. These new institutions were structurally distinct from previous imperial organizations of alchemy. See Reardon-Anderson, *The Study of Change: Chemistry in China, 1840-1919* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).
3. Ralph C. Croizier, *Traditional Medicine in Modern China: Science, Nationalism, and the Tensions of Cultural Change*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968).
4. Leading intellectual Lin Yutang wrote a history of public opinion and the press in 1936, decrying the decadent state of Chinese journalism and identifying the *Shen bao* as the worst offender. See Lin Yutang, *A History of the Press and Public Opinion in China* (Shanghai: China Institute of Pacific Relations, 1936).
5. This group included many of the gentry that moved into treaty-ports in the wake of the Taiping Rebellion. Some transferred their previous wealth and status into merchant and industrial activity and became wealthy industrialists and the urban bourgeoisie. Others were simply cultural elites, without much economic capital, trying to start new cosmopolitan lives.
6. Perry Link identifies the *xiaoshimin*—neighborhood merchants and local entrepreneurs—as readers of “middlebrow” culture, including Butterfly fiction and daily newspapers, in his *Mandarin Ducks and Butterflies: Popular Fiction in Early Twentieth-Century Chinese Cities* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California, 1981).
7. The late imperial period and Republican Era saw the rise of print media. Commercial papers in particular were widespread. The *Shen bao* reached a daily circulation of 150,000 at its height in the 1930s. Advertising space accordingly expanded over time along with the rise in circulation. See Lin, *A History of the Press*.
8. These commercial narratives shaped and constituted buyer consciousness and craving rather than reflected actual consumption behavior. See Roland Marchand’s introduction in *Advertising the American Dream: Making the Way for Modernity 1920-*

1940, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988). He argues that advertisements do not accurately reflect material or social reality, but distort reality, like a funhouse mirror, to fabricate the American dream, an ethos of the future.

9. Previous means to determine provincial gentry status, including land ownership, participation in classical scholarship, and the civil service examination, were clearly far less effective in urban arenas, although the wealth of the gentry elite helped many invest in new ways of defining urban elite status.
10. Stephen MacKinnon shows that treaty port newspaper editors consciously imitated the Western press's advertising and circulation strategies. As a result, the print site became increasingly entrepreneurial and both foreign and Chinese merchants took advantage of this to sell their goods. See MacKinnon, "Towards a Comparative History of the Chinese Press in the Twentieth Century" (Los Angeles: Printing and Culture in Late Imperial and Modern China, Southern California China Colloquium, February 1995).
11. Joan Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *American Historical Review* 91 (1986): 1053-1075.
12. Evelyn Scott Keller, *Reflections on Gender and Science* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), especially chps. 2 & 3.
13. Turn-of-the-century English advertisers specially targeted and constructed the middle-class female consumer as well. See Thomas Richards, *The Commodity Culture of Victorian England: Advertising and Spectacle, 1851-1914* (London: Verso, 1990).
14. Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 1 (New York: Vintage Books, 1990).
15. Nicholas Dirks advocates the use of "ethnohistory." See Dirks, *The Hollow Crown: Ethnohistory of an Indian Kingdom*. 2d ed. (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1996), xiv - xix.
16. China's semicolonial experience was very different from the colonialism in countries like India. China did not experience complete colonization and imperialists were limited geographically, economically, and politically to treaty-ports. Without central control of cultural mechanisms such as the education system, imperialists were limited in their cultural reach as well. This is not to say though that cultural colonialism did not take place. On the contrary, the West exerted a great deal of cultural influence in treaty-ports especially through collaborative treaty-port journalism and its advertising space.
17. For example, in 1890 a typical day's layout had seven pages dedicated to commercial postings and only three to news. A typical advertising page had up to nine apothecary and *daifu* postings out of a total of 20 ads. E.g., *Shen bao*, 21 February 1890, 7.
18. Both types of commercials are ubiquitous. See any advertising page, e.g., *Shen bao*, 21 February 1890, 7.
19. Thomas Richards argues that turn of the century advertisements in England were crucial to the creation and reproduction of the power of the commodity. He identifies them as "the focal point of all representation, the dead center of the modern world," central to capitalism's semiotic consolidation over England. See Richards, *Commodity Culture*, especially the introduction. As mentioned above, Chinese mer-

chants imitated foreign advertising strategies. One strategy, I suggest, was the representation of consumerism and its fetish with the commodity.

20. *Shen bao*, 12 January 1900, 7.
21. *Shen bao*, 8 May 1905, 7.
22. *Shen bao*, 6 May 1905, 8.
23. *Shen bao*, 4 January 1910, 6.
24. There is a tremendous amount of literature on the history of the body in the modern West. Perhaps best known is the work of Michel Foucault. See for example, his *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception* (London: Tavistock Publications Limited, 1973).
25. See for example, Arthur Kroker and Marilouise Kroker, "Panic Sex in America" in *Body Invaders: Panic Sex in America*, Arthur Kroker and Marilouise Kroker, eds. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987).
26. A frequently seen "trademark" was that of *Chijiao daxian* (the Red-footed Immortal). E.g., *Shen bao*, 5 March 1890, 6.
27. See Judith Farquhar, "Multiplicity, Point of View, and Responsibility in Traditional Chinese Healing" in *Body, Subjectivity, and Power in China*, Angela Zito and Tani Barlow, eds. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 78-99.
28. Joseph Needham attempts to translate it into "matter-energy" and then suggests it is best to leave it untranslated. See Joseph Needham, ed. *Science and Civilization in China: History of Scientific Thought* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1956), 2:472.
29. For example, in the political and philosophical discourse of Song Dynasty *lixue*, *qi* was the material essence, whereas *li* was the nonmaterial patterns of the universe, including the higher phenomena of both the mind and social life. *Ibid.*, 472-3.
30. Disorderly configuration of *yin* and *yang* was used to explain biological anomalies in human beings in imperial medical texts. See Charlotte Furth, "Androgynous Males and Deficient Females," *Late Imperial China* 9:2 (1988a): 1-31.
31. Daoist texts identify *jing* as the seed of procreation, which mixes with female *qi* to produce the embryo. Needham, *Science and Civilization*, 2:41.
32. Late Ming fiction depicted an inordinate amount of female *yin* as treacherous, depleting male *yang*. Many of these tales morally advocated the exercise of caution against excessive sexual intercourse. See Keith McMahan, *Causality and Containment in Seventeenth-Century Fiction* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1988).
33. *Shen bao*, 22 January 1918, 7.
34. *Shen bao*, 24 December 1918, 14.
35. Needham, *Science and Civilization*, 2:243.
36. Judith Farquhar calls these domains "visceral systems of function." Based loosely around an organ, these systems rule certain bodily functions and not one system is more determinative than the other. Rather, they "interpenetrate both spatially and temporally" as "uncentered ... subsystems of concrete physiological and pathological activity" with a material basis that rejects any notion of fixity or discreteness. See Farquhar, "Multiplicity, Point of View, and Responsibility," 84-86.
37. The spleen governs transmission and transformation, elevates clear fluids, and commands blood flow. It is affiliated with the stomach. The kidney system acts on

- fluids and marrow and accepts *qi*. It stores *jing* (semen) and is affiliated with the urinary bladder. *Ibid.*, 85.
38. The *Daozang* (the classic scriptures of Daoism) contains many of the earliest texts and recordings of alchemical activity.
 39. Though their goal was to ensure material immortality, Daoist alchemists did not neglect spiritual eternity. Chinese material immortality incorporated the notion that a person's soul was to live forever within the artificially sustained physical body. See Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilization in China: History of Scientific Thought* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1956), 5:71, 93.
 40. The Daoist adept also conducted physiological alchemy or *neidan* (internal alchemy), cultivating breathing exercises, tumbling through gymnastic moves, and employing inventive sexual techniques. Like their alchemical potions, it was means to adjust *yin* and *yang* proportions to attain long life. Needham, *Science and Civilization*, 2:139-153.
 41. See Joseph Needham and Ho Ping-Yü, "Elixir Poisoning in Medieval China" in *Clerks and Craftsmen in China and the West*, Joseph Needham, ed. (Cambridge, England: University of Cambridge, 1959), 316-339.
 42. See Ye Hongsheng, "Dantan Wuxia xiaoshuo de lailong qumai" [A Discussion on the Origin and Development of Martial Arts Fiction], *Lishi yuekan* 75 (1994): 75-80.
 43. See McMahan, *Causality and Containment*, which explores how even in literary pieces known as vulgar and pornographic, the final moral message advocates the reigning in of greed and excess.
 44. These earlier ads tended to rely more on traditional means of legitimation. Apothecaries and doctors made claims that their products were passed down through generations as an old family secret concoction. Because word of mouth was another form of cultural capital, many of these bulletins were personal testimonials.
 45. *Shen bao*, 1 November 1925, 16.
 46. *Shen bao*, 1 July 1930, 10.
 47. *Shen bao*, 20 January 1936, 18.
 48. E.g., *Shen bao*, 7, 20 January 1936, 16, 18.
 49. *Shen bao*, 5 January 1936, 11. One carried the symbolic *hulu*, a gourd used by doctors to carry their various powders and medical herbs.
 50. *Dagong bao*, 7 January 1935, 7.
 51. E.g., *Shen bao*, 9 July 1920, 16.
 52. *Shen bao*, 8 December 1915, 8.
 53. *Shen bao*, 1 November 1915, 6.
 54. *Shen bao*, 8 August 1920.
 55. *Shen bao*, 4 January 1913, 14.
 56. E.g., *Shen bao*, 25 November 1913, 14.
 57. *Shen bao*, 8 August 1920, 21.
 58. *Shen bao*, 11 September 1925, 14.
 59. *Shen bao*, 23 December 1913, 3.
 60. *Shen bao*, 10 January 1936, 13.
 61. *Shen bao*, 4 November 1925, 7.

62. In his "Shanghai Before Nationalism," *East Asian History* 3 (1992): 33-52, Ye Xiaoqing emphasizes the equal footing of spectators, Chinese and foreign, elite and commoner, at the racetrack in his attempt to demonstrate the lack of anti-foreignism in pre-twentieth century Shanghai. His analysis may be too sanguine as he failed to contextualize his source, the *Shen bao*, itself a collaborative effort between treaty-port Westerners and elite Chinese journalists interested in presenting Chinese and foreigner harmony. Yomi Braester's analysis of the track and its spectators in "Economies of Modernity: The Social and Narrative Spaces of the Shanghai Race Club," *Modern Chinese Literature* (forthcoming), is more similar to mine, rejecting an innocuous reading of the track's significance. Analyzing writings by Liu Na'ou and Mu Shiying, two authors of the School of New Sensibilities, he argues that the Shanghai racetrack plays a crucial role in ordering the "economy of desire" in Chinese modernity. This space was an urban metaphor that creates an illusion of excitement and lighthearted gambling and the simulacrum of agency, concealing the more unpleasant aspects of modernity and capitalism such as alienation. I suggest it also repressed aspects of cultural colonialism.
63. *Shen bao*, 4 November 1925, 7.
64. *Shen bao*, 4 November 1925, 15.
65. Ads for *fuke* medicine spanned the entire period I reviewed from 1890 until 1936. The literal translation of *fuke* is "the science of women." Contemporary renderings include "gynecology." An interesting project would be to trace the subtle changes in the discursive meanings of *fuke*.
66. Christopher Cullen has taken the lead investigating the history of this cloistered culture of female medicine. With a dearth of materials, he has been forced to take creative routes and use literary texts, such as the famous imperial novel, *Dream of the Red Chamber* (*Honglou Meng*). See his, "Patients and Healers in Late Imperial China: Evidence from the Jinpingmei," *History of Science* 31:2 (June 1993): 99-150.
67. Some conservative scholars reacted with alarm and concern that China's moral fiber was being seriously weakened. See Susan Mann, "*Fuxue* (Women's Learning) by Zhang Xuecheng (1738-1801): China's First History of Women's Culture," *Late Imperial China* 13.1 (June 1992): 40-62. Of course sympathetic male relatives and friends played crucial roles on occasion, delivering letters to other "inner quarters," editing and printing female literary works and anthologies, and convening coed poetry circles. See Dorothy Ko, *Teachers of the Inner Chambers: Women and Culture in Seventeenth-Century China*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994) and Ellen Widmer, "The Epistolary World of Female Talent in Seventeenth-Century China," *Late Imperial China* 10 (December 1989): 1-43.
68. *Dagong bao*, 6 January 1935, 6.
69. E.g., *Dagong bao*, 6 January 1935, 6.
70. E.g., *Shen bao*, 21 January 1936, 15.
71. E.g., *Shen bao*, 7 January 1936, 7.
72. E.g., *Shen bao*, 21 January 1936, 15.
73. *Shen bao*, 29 July 1930, 7.
74. E.g., *Shen bao*, 1 January 1936, 23.
75. *Shen bao*, 5 July 1930, 8.

76. E.g., an advertisement for *Bailingji* in *Shen bao*, 27 August 1925, 4.
77. By this I don't mean to deny that there did not exist a practice and knowledge of what we now call *zhongyi* (traditional Chinese medicine). However these practices of Chinese medicine were organized and categorized as a unified system only after its binary opposite, *xiyi* (Western medicine), was introduced.
78. *Dagong bao*, 7 January 1935, 7.
79. *Shen bao*, 1 February 1918, 14.

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