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Saving the Young: A History of the Child Relief Movement in Modern China

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the  
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy  
in History

by

Norman D. Apter

2013

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## ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Saving the Young: A History of the Child Relief Movement in Modern China

by

Norman D. Apter

Doctor in Philosophy in History

University of California, Los Angeles, 2013

Professor Kathryn Bernhardt, Co-Chair

Professor Philip C.C. Huang, Co-Chair

This dissertation examines the development of child welfare in twentieth-century China, and interprets those developments within the context of China's long history. The first chapter traces government efforts to provide support for indigent or abandoned children from the Southern Song Dynasty in the 13<sup>th</sup> century CE to the early Republican era in the 20th century. The Song government provided grain and other forms of assistance to destitute families and encouraged the adoption of abandoned children. Such initiatives were abandoned after the collapse of the Song dynasty, and revived only in the early Qing dynasty. In the Qing, however, members of a newly formed merchant-gentry elite took the lead in providing relief for foundlings; the Qing state encouraged these works through the provision of supplementary monetary support and honorary plaques. Government relief efforts were intensified and broadened after the devastation accompanying the Taiping upheaval in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. Thereafter, reformers began to focus greater attention on education and life skills, a trend that intensified in the 1910s

and '20s when government officials and private activists endeavored to turn poor and indigent children into healthy and productive modern citizens.

Chapter 2 traces child relief efforts in Shanghai during the Republican period. Rapid urbanization and the growing disparity between rich and poor motivated Chinese officials, business leaders, education reformers as well as Western expatriates to organize relief efforts and vocational educational opportunities for dependent children. State-private collaboration continued in supporting homes for abandoned infants, poor and orphaned children, and street urchins. Private institutions dominated relief work throughout the period, but the Republican government became increasingly involved in coordinating and supervising relief efforts after establishing the Social Affairs Bureau in 1930. Police and public health officials worked together to improve neonatal services for the destitute, to discourage child abandonment and infanticide, and to place street urchins in homes and give them vocational training.

Chapter 3 concentrates on the impact of the Sino-Japanese war from 1937 to 1945 on government and private child welfare programs. The sheer numbers of displaced persons and “warphans” compelled the state and civic leaders to organize and coordinate relief efforts on a far greater scale than ever before. Relief efforts were combined with educational services to train poor and destitute children in the hope of transforming them into useful and public-minded modern citizens.

Chapter 4 analyzes the intensification of Republican-era trends in the Maoist period (1949-1976), as the state created a hierarchy of welfare management agencies permeating society down to the county level. The state coordinated all communications media and a series of mass campaigns with the goal of transforming parentless children

and homeless youths into healthy, loyal, hard-working, and productive citizens. During the New Democracy period (1949-1953) some private agencies continued to function but under increasing government supervision and coordination. From 1956 onward all private institutions were closed or subsumed by state-run organizations.

The concluding chapter 5 analyzes the evolution of child relief efforts in the Post-Mao era. The “closed” centrally coordinated system of child relief of previous decades has given way to an “open-ended” multifocal support structure during the course of the Reform Period (1978 - present). The demise of the guaranteed employment of the Maoist era, and the one-child policy, have resulted in a rapid increase in the number of abandoned children, and China’s opening to the outside world has led to a broader definition of those deserving support, and given rise to an emphasis on local initiative and experimentation. Throughout the 1980s, China’s state-managed facilities continued to employ a regimen of caregiving and youth training that had become the nationwide standard by the early 1960s. But Civil Affairs authorities as well as domestic and international civic organizations new to the scene have since broken from this mold, pursuing a multiplicity of approaches to target the various developmental deficiencies – physiological, mental, social, emotional, etc. – of their charges. In conjunction with the embrace of “multi-approachism,” we can observe a paradigmatic shift within China’s child welfare sector from institution-based rearing toward family-centered care. As China entered the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a growing commitment among child relief practitioners to the notion that a family setting was best suited to foster the dependent child’s development was reshaping the field of care in a significant way for the first time since the welfare system was established in the mid-1950s.

The dissertation of Norman D. Apter is approved.

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2013

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## Chapter 1. The Historical Foundations of Child Welfare in China

### Introduction

In late September 1917, a colossal flood engulfed a large portion of the north China plain that stretched across Shanxi and Hebei provinces. While this region, home of the intractable Yellow River, was particularly susceptible to flooding, contemporary records indicate that the deluge of 1917 had been its most devastating in decades. According to an official survey, no less than 103 county seats and some 19,000 villages were swamped. As this area formed one of China's major belts of agrarian production, 4.25 million acres of farmland were submerged by the floodwaters.<sup>1</sup>

Unsurprisingly, the inundation spawned a demographic crisis of monumental proportion. More than six million inhabitants were reported to have fled their native places in search of sustenance. As an air of bleakness enveloped the region, it was not uncommon to see desperate parents resorting to the practices of selling their children or discarding their infants by the roadside – two customary responses to situations of extreme deprivation in China throughout its history. Meanwhile, among the throngs of refugees who teemed into Beijing, the region's major urban center, were numerous children who had been separated from their families amid the chaos caused by the deluge.

The Beijing government responded to the calamity with alacrity, calling on Xiong Xiling, a former high official who had recently entered semi-retirement, to superintend relief and reconstruction efforts for the capital and its hinterland. Under Xiong's oversight, various offices investigated the extent of the damage, set up 170-odd provisional shelters for the feeble and elderly among the displaced, and distributed cash

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<sup>1</sup> Xiong, "Xiangshan ciyouyuan fazhan shi," 44.

and grain from official reserves to the afflicted.<sup>2</sup> Growing particularly concerned over the plight of child refugees who roamed Beijing's streets, Xiong also founded a 慈幼局 (*ciyouju*), or "charitable bureau for the young," near the city's west gate to provide the dislocated youngsters with shelter and aliment. By choosing the moniker, 慈幼局 (*ciyouju*), Xiong was consciously adding his organization to a lineage of relief institutions that stretched back to the Song dynasty (960-1279), when the first ones by this name appeared. In spite of its nominal linkage to the past, Xiong's organization would soon evince an unparalleled commitment to the latest approaches to child development and education, positioning itself at the vanguard of China's child relief movement in the Republican era (1912-49).

Taking the evolving concept of 慈幼 (*ciyou*), or "charity for the young," as a point of departure, this chapter delineates the historical development of child relief from the Song dynasty through the early Republican era. Broadly speaking, the period under study saw the rise of two types of philanthropic initiatives for youngsters. The first set of charitable institutions to appear in late imperial times were structured chiefly to succor abandoned infants. Sponsors of these projects endeavored to uphold the Neo-Confucian moral order by saving the lives of foundlings and infants born into abject poverty. A new series of organizations dedicated, by contrast, to training and educating displaced, orphaned and poor juveniles emerged in the late Qing dynasty (1644-1911) and Republican times, as philanthropists began to direct their attention to the plight of older, disadvantaged children. The following study explores how this shift in target group and

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 44-45.

objective was linked to the ascendancy of new ideas in China on the child's place in society.

This investigation also highlights a fundamental distinction between the ideological construct of child welfare in the “modern” West and the conceptual foundations of child relief in late imperial and Republican China. The child protection movement in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Western Europe and America was grounded in a nascent conviction that the state was obliged to safeguard the individual rights of minors. Officials and social reformers thus introduced various legislation and institutions designed to protect juveniles from abuse, neglect and exploitation in the home and the factory. The Western movement gave rise to an ongoing struggle between the state and civic associations, on one side, and the family, on the other, with each laying claim to the ultimate authority of guardianship. Such a tension has remained noticeably absent in China, where emphasis has been placed, rather, on keeping or placing the vulnerable child in a family setting. In short, the findings below indicate that Chinese relief efforts were rooted not as much in the abstract idea of individual rights as in concerns over the breakdown of the family unit, and its implications for the moral order and social stability.

Additionally, this research casts new light on the working dynamics of state and private participation in Chinese social assistance. Whereas previous scholarship has clarified a broad shift from government to community leadership in late imperial child relief, this study shows that collaboration between officials and extra-bureaucratic elites played a crucial role in the organization of such efforts from the early Qing forward. While the community elite assumed much of the responsibility for setting up and

managing philanthropic programs with an ethical basis, such operations typically depended, in part, on government funding. In times of societal crisis, though, the state stepped in to launch new relief projects for the purpose of restoring order, still relying on local notables to assist with these efforts in an administrative and fundraising capacity. The following account reveals that this pattern of state-society cooperation in Chinese relief activity persisted well into the Republican period.

### **The Origins of Charity for the Young in China**

#### *Public Assistance in the Song*

The earliest Chinese charitable institutions for the young on record appeared in the Southern Song period (1127-1279). These organizations emerged as part of a broader movement in the Song to aid the poor, the sick, and those bereft of family support. Unlike previous forms of charitable assistance, Song programs were initiated, managed and funded by the government and set up to function on a year-round basis. The impetus of the movement was rooted in crucial changes in China's economy, society and political thought during the Northern Song era (960-1127).

Though the Song is most often thought of as a period of tremendous commercial growth, the economic forces of the time also left a great number of peasants teetering on the lower rung of an increasingly differentiated socioeconomic ladder. The introduction of new early-ripening, drought-resistant rice strains and improved farming techniques led to dramatic increases in grain output, which in turn supported a marked, if steady, rise in population from the late Tang through the Song. The expansion of arable land, however, did not keep pace with the demographic upsurge. This pressure, along with the practice of household division of property and periodic tax hikes associated with Tangut military



campaigns, led to a diminished margin of subsistence for a growing number of independent cultivators.<sup>3</sup> The jolt of a natural disaster was sufficient to drive the most desperate to flee their rural homelands for the burgeoning commercial towns and cities, where they sought work and formed a concentrated urban underclass with a predisposition toward collective acts of violence.<sup>4</sup>

Sweeping changes in the composition of the political elite and state ideology also played a significant role in the rise of government-sponsored relief programs. The court's adoption of the civil service examination system as the primary mechanism for official recruitment paved the way for both the final demise of the hereditary aristocracy and the formation of a new scholar-official elite trained in Confucian learning. No longer able to rely on family pedigree, aspirants to political office immersed themselves in the study of the Neo-Confucian principles embodied in Zhu Xi's (1130-1200) and other leading thinkers' interpretations of the classics. The newly emergent Neo-Confucian philosophy stressed among other points the interconnectedness between the scholar-official's internal pursuit of moral self-cultivation and his external mission of bringing order to all under heaven 天下 (*tianxia*). Validated by success in the exams and imbued with Neo-Confucian values, Song statesmen were thus more likely than their predecessors to identify themselves as agents for restoring moral and social order to the world around them. Such thinking translated into a more active and interventionist approach on the part

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<sup>3</sup> Scogin, "Poor Relief in Northern Sung China," 35-36.

<sup>4</sup> Wang Te-I asserts that natural disasters occurred more frequently during the Song dynasty than any previous era. According to his tally, China endured 193 floods, 183 droughts, 101 hailstorms, 93 windstorms, 90 plagues of locusts, 87 famines, etc. in this period. See Wang, *Songdai zaihuang de jiuji zhengce*, 26. See Scogin, "Poor Relief," 37, for a brief discussion of urban disturbances in the Northern Song.

of the government to cope with economic and societal problems, not the least of which was the plight of the displaced and dispossessed in urban areas.<sup>5</sup>

The Song state's reconstitution of Buddhist-run charitable programs of the Tang era (607-918) in the latter half of the eleventh century signaled a new strain of official activism in relief work.<sup>6</sup> But it was with the introduction of the "poorhouse system" 居養法 (*juyangfa*) in 1098 that the Song government, under the direction of the ambitious prime minister Cai Jing, showed a historically unparalleled effort to regularize public assistance. Like its forerunners, the "poorhouse" 居養院 (*juyang yuan*) was designed to provide for the material needs of the elderly indigent, widows, orphans, waifs, and all those incapable of supporting themselves. The new system, however, differed from previous initiatives by functioning on a year-round, rather than seasonal, basis and by taking in greater numbers of urban poor. Adults were allocated one *sheng*\* of rice or beans and ten cash each day; children were allotted half of that amount. Regulations stipulated that residents also be given clothing, bedding materials, utensils and an

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<sup>5</sup> The role that the government ought to play in addressing imbalances in society and the economy was nevertheless a matter of heated dispute in the Song. On one side of the debate, Wang Anshi (1021-1086) and his followers advocated unmitigated state management of commerce and extending the government's administrative reach to local society as the best way to ensure the well-being of the empire. Sima Guang (1019-1086), on the other hand, argued for maintaining a distinct line between bureaucratic and private activity. He insisted that officials must not meddle in the interests of the wealthy, who, after all, undertook important public services such as poor relief. See Bol, "Government, Society and Society," 128-192. Hymes' research shows that the debate over the government's role in social services persisted along similar lines down to the end of the Southern Song in the opposing views of Dong Wei and Huang Zhen on famine relief. For further discussion, see Hymes, "Moral Duty and Self-Regulating," 280-309.

<sup>6</sup> The Buddhist charitable organization of the Tang, the "compassionate fields home" (*beitian yuan* or *beitian fang* 悲田院, 悲田坊), offered food and lodging to pilgrims, medicine for the ill and free meals for the destitute. In the early Song, they were reconstituted as *futian yuan* 福田院 during a period, it is worth noting, in which Wang Anshi (see note 5) enjoyed imperial favor (ca. 1069-1085). See Scogin, "Poor Relief," 32.

\* A *sheng* 升 is a volume measure. One *sheng* is equivalent to roughly 1.76 pounds (i.e. about the amount of grain one male adult would be expected to consume daily).

additional sum of five cash per day during winter to purchase fuel.<sup>7</sup> An expanded scale of operations was made possible by the resources that the state could bring to bear. These included property, cash, and personal effects confiscated from terminal households 絕戶 (*juehu*) and revenue from the sale of Ever-Normal Granary 常平倉 (*changpingcang*) reserves. Shortly after the creation of the poorhouse system, the government set up new “charity clinics” 安濟坊 (*anjifang*) and “pauper’s cemeteries” 漏澤院 (*louzeyuan*) to treat the indigent sick and bury the unclaimed dead.<sup>8</sup> These developments underscore a trend toward functional specialization and government initiative in charitable work that would continue with the rise of new organizations for aiding the young.

#### *Song Charitable Institutions for the Young*

Historical records point to Song official sponsorship of a series of increasingly complex measures aimed at saving the lives of infants who faced the loss of parental support. Underlying the nascent ideal of 慈幼 (*ciyou*), or “kindliness toward the young,” to which these measures aspired was a shared conviction among their initiators that securing the infant’s place in the family was the best way to preserve his or her well-being and, by extension, the integrity of the social fabric. This could be achieved, they hoped, by encouraging adoption and providing financial support to particularly destitute birth parents. Some statesmen, however, came to realize that a precipitant rise in the number of discarded babies, often resulting from a subsistence crisis, rendered policies

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 34.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 34, 35; Xu, “Qiyong, duotai wenti,” 37, 39. The new state-run clinics were comprised of multiple wards for the separation of patients according to illness. The indigent sick were examined by physicians and received food and medications prepared by on-site kitchens and pharmacies. The pauper’s cemeteries were to be set up on a plot of unfertile land set aside in each prefecture. Each individual buried was granted an eight-*chi* 尺 plot of land, a coffin and a headstone.

designed to bolster home rearing of little effect. Aware of these schemes' limitations, activist officials began to devise new types of charitable services for the abandoned.

Supporting adoption constituted the Song state's earliest and perhaps most fundamental approach to coping with the problem of deserted infants. An imperial edict issued in the 1055 testifies to the court's early concern over the rampancy of abandonment in times of scarcity and its plan for mitigating the problem:

Upon investigation, we hear that among the famine victims roaming about, there are sons and daughters who are abandoned on the road; I hereby order the Tax Transport Bureau of Kaifeng Prefecture and the areas surrounding the capital to enable the families of the various peoples and officials to purchase sons and daughters who are being sold by refugees; it is also permissible for people to adopt those who have been abandoned on the road.<sup>9</sup>

Over the years, the central government's moderately-phrased position of permitting the adoption of foundlings, as captured in the excerpt above, shifted to a decidedly more aggressive stance of incentivizing such transfers of guardianship. In 1172, the court decreed that people could adopt infants aged three 歲 *sui* (about two years) or under of a different surname and that the state would allocate two *sheng* (about 3.5 pounds) of rice per day to help defray rearing costs. As a further incentive, the new law safeguarded adoptive parents' custodial rights against any attempts by birth parents to reclaim the child they had once forsaken. The imperial center renewed its pledge of support in 1209, dictating that families which adopted discarded infants in times when the capital's

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<sup>9</sup> *Song huiyao jigao* 《宋會要輯稿－食貨》69/41. The original text reads: 訪聞饑民流移有男女或遺棄道路, 令開封府, 景東, 景西, 淮東京畿轉運司, 應有流民僱賣男女, 許諸色人及臣僚之家收買, 或遺棄道路者, 亦聽收養.

hinterlands were afflicted by drought or locusts would receive two allotments of 200 石 (*shi*) of rice.<sup>10</sup>

A second family-centered policy adopted by the government entailed the allocation of grants in grain to destitute families with newborns. At the urging of Fujian Military Commissioner Zhao Ruyu, the central authority first mandated in 1135 that “granaries for raising sons” 舉子倉 (*juzicang*) be set up in four prefectures in Fujian and then, in 1138, throughout the empire.<sup>11</sup> According to the system’s regulations, when a woman from a family of certifiably poor status was about to give birth, her family would submit an application to the community head to receive a subsidy. Shortly after she gave birth, the “granary for raising sons” allocated a one-time grant. The amount varied from location to location, but usually consisted of between 1 and 1.3 石 (*shi*) of rice or a combined allotment of one *shi* of rice and one thousand cash 錢 (*qian*).<sup>12</sup> One of the program’s leading proponents, Fujian Circuit Commissioner Song Zhihui, succinctly laid out the logic behind its arrangements in a memorial: “The human situation of not raising a newborn infant arises out of being destitute and having no alternatives; if the government can provide support, then, as the child gets a little older, a father’s and mother’s love will grow day by day, and there will certainly be no misfortune of

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<sup>10</sup> *Song huiyao jigao* 《宋會要輯稿 - 食貨》 68 (恤災). A *shi* 石 is a Chinese volume measure equal to 100 *sheng* 升, or about 176 pounds. Thus one *shi* of grain was enough to feed an adult male for about 100 days.

<sup>11</sup> Zhang, *Songchao shehui jiuji yanjiu*, 204; Wang, “Songdai de yanglao yu ciyou,” 414. The date of origin is a matter of dispute. According to the *Yongle dadian* 永樂大典, edicts were issued in the reign years 紹興五年 (1135) and 紹興八年 (1138) respectively; however, Wang Te-I argues that the text mistakenly records the character 興 for 熙, rendering the year of origin 紹熙五年, or 1194. See Wang, “Songdai de yanglao,” 427.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 414. One thousand cash (*qian* 錢) refers to a string of 1000 copper coins.

abandonment.”<sup>13</sup> In the view of Commissioner Song and other advocates of the granary, the key to eradicating the custom of abandonment lay in reducing, if only temporarily, the financial strain of indigent birth parents. This reprieve would allow parental bonds of affection to grow strong and the family to emerge as a cohesive unit, disinclined to forsake its members.

Some officials in the field, however, responded to a sudden upsurge of foundlings in their jurisdictions by initiating a new type of care giving institution. In particularly lean years, when greater numbers of parents were compelled by sheer desperation to desert their kin, schemes designed merely to support family rearing stood relatively little chance of forestalling the early death of many infants at risk. Thus, struck by the sight of numerous babies along thoroughfares following a famine in 1216, Jiangdong Financial Commissioner Zhen Dexiu set up a “charity manor for the young” 慈幼莊 (*ciyouzhuang*) in Jiankang Prefecture.<sup>14</sup> Two similar organizations, each designated “infants bureaus,” 嬰兒局 (*ying'erju*) were launched by prefectural officials in succession in 1220 and 1231. The initiator of the latter, a Vice Prefect named Zhao Shanliao, was aroused to action by the spectacle of neonates who, “abandoned by the side of road, sobbing, and, without eating for entire days, ended up starving to death” after a poor harvest in 1231.<sup>15</sup> The central government subsequently drew on these early institutional models, ordering the

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<sup>13</sup> *Song huiyao jigao* 《宋會要輯稿－食貨》61(官天雜錄): The following is the original text: 人情初生子便不舉,亦出於貧不得已,若官中有以贍給之,其子稍長,父母之愛心日生,必無棄之之患。

<sup>14</sup> Zhang, *Songchao shehui*, 216-218; Wang, “Songdai de yanglao,” 420. Stressing the urgency of the circumstances, Zhen noted that he could not wait for the court’s instructions to act.

<sup>15</sup> Wang, “Songdai de yanglao,” 418, cited from the *Ying'er ju* section of the *Yongle dadian* 永樂大典, which, in turn, cites the Tongrui gazetteer 桐汭志: “歉歲貧民有子弗育,棄之道旁,呱呱而泣,終日不食,至飢而死者有之。”

Lin'an prefectural authorities in 1247 to establish a "charity bureau for the young" 慈幼局 (*ciyouju*) to care for foundlings recovered in the imperial capital.<sup>16</sup> In 1256, the court sought to extend the bureaus throughout the realm, instructing that they be set up "in the various prefectures." Historical records indicate that, in fact, a total of eight or nine such organizations were founded during the final three decades of Song rule.<sup>17</sup>

These institutions as a whole differed from past relief efforts by pursuing a more vigorous approach to saving the lives of foundlings who were on the verge of succumbing to starvation or exposure. First, new measures were put in place to facilitate an unwanted newborn's timely transfer to the care of one of these organizations. The sponsors of Jiankang's "charity manor" stipulated that when an infant was spotted, the proximate neighborhood association 鄰保勘會 (*linbao kenhui*) was responsible for determining whether it had been deserted and, if so, for handing it over to an official who would verify the facts and draw up a record. Instances in which the neighborhood association concealed or did not report cases of abandonment were to be met with penalties.<sup>18</sup> Rather than rely on community associations, Jiangkang Prefect Ma Guangzu dictated that the tasks of retrieving and transporting foundlings be placed under the purview of local state agencies. When reorganizing the area's foundling institution in

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<sup>16</sup> Hangzhou 杭州, site of the Southern Song capital, was located within Lin'an Prefecture 臨安府. The *Yongle dadian* notes "In years of famine, many sons and daughters of poor families entered charitable bureaus for the young": 遇歲侵, 貧家子女多入慈幼局.

<sup>17</sup> Zhang, *Songchao shehui*, 214. "Charity bureaus for the young" were established in the following locations: 臨安府 (1247), 寶慶府 (1251), 無為軍 (1255), 蘇州 (1253-55), 臨汀 (1253-58), 健康府, (1265), 江陰 (1265), 撫州 (1253-74). Interestingly, at least half of these bureaus originated prior to the imperial edict of 1256. The central government was clearly throwing its support behind a set of activities already underway.

<sup>18</sup> Song, "Songdai guanban de," 27.

1265, prefect Ma stipulated that officers of the county and urban township “commandant patrol” 尉司 (*weisì*) be charged with conducting vigorous inspections of the areas within their jurisdiction for any discarded babies. As soon as it located a lone newborn, the “patrol” was to register it with the “superintendent office” 提督廳 (*tiduting*). Ma’s regulations also specified the provision of rewards for each instance of recovering a foundling and punishments for officers who were found to be derelict in reporting cases.<sup>19</sup> These regulations show that sponsors had begun to put a premium on getting babies to their organizations before it was too late.

Second, each of the new institutions recruited a contingent of wet nurses to provide sustenance to its charges at a time in which the latter’s survival was in jeopardy. The earliest organizations contracted nurses to feed and care for the foundlings within the former’s homes, until the child reached 7 *sui*.<sup>20</sup> Those hired by the “charity manor” in Jiankang and the “infants bureau” set up in Huzhou in 1220 were required to bring the infants under their care to a central location each month to collect their wages.<sup>21</sup> The latter organization hired one wet nurse to remain on its premises at all times to feed new arrivals before they could be assigned to a permanent caregiver. Some of the agencies set up in later years, though, instituted a system of on site rearing. Constructed in 1247, the building that housed Linan prefecture’s “charity bureau for the young” was specially equipped with residential quarters for hired wet nurses and infants in their charge.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Wang, “Songdai de yanglao,” 413.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 418, 420. Available records do not specify what was done with the child thereafter.

<sup>21</sup> Wet nurses hired by the Jiankang “charity manor” were compensated one *guan* 貫 (a string of 1000 bronze coins) and six *dou* 斗 (6/10 of a *shi*, or roughly 105 pounds) of rice each month for their services.

<sup>22</sup> Song, “Songdai guanban de,” 28.



Records show that foundlings taken in by the Jiangyin “charity bureau” were likewise raised, up to the age of 12 *sui*, by contracted caregivers on its premises.<sup>23</sup> These examples suggest that wet nurses assumed an increasingly formal role within the expanding movement to save the lives of helpless babies.

Despite the gradual expansion of institutional care, the new organizations sought to place the foundling in an adoptive family. These programs both embraced the government’s well-established approach of encouraging adoption with financial incentives and further formalized the procedures by which such transfers of guardianship were carried out. Any family that wished to adopt a foundling from one of the organizations mentioned above was required to file a petition at the township office 廂官 (*xiangguan*) and, in some locations, obtain a formal guarantee from its neighbors.<sup>24</sup> This document was to be submitted to the superintending government office, where a clerk would verify the facts. After the infant was formally turned over to the care of the adoptive family, the latter was eligible to receive payments for a set period of time to defray the cost of rearing. The terms varied from location to location, but adoptive parents, like wet nurses, were typically required to bring the young child to the bureau or a government office each month for verification purposes.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Zhang, *Songchao shehui*, 216.

<sup>24</sup> Wang, “Songdai de yanglao,” 412; Zhang, *Songchao shehui*, 216; Both Ma Guangzu, Prefect of Jiankang prefecture, and his contemporary, a certain Huang Zhen, Prefect of Fuzhou 撫州, delineated these procedures.

<sup>25</sup> Song, “Songdai guanban,” 27. The “charitable manor” in Jiankang, for instance, allocated one *guan* cash and six *dou* of rice each month until the child reached five *sui*, whereas the Lin’an “charitable bureau” distributed one string of cash and 3 *dou* of rice to adoptive parents on a monthly basis until the child was three *sui*.

The functioning of the various Song relief programs for the young discussed above was dependent almost entirely upon state funding. Most were initiated with an official grant of land or cash. Following the Song “poorhouse” model, these organizations sought to create a steady stream of revenue to meet operational expenses by renting out corporate landholdings. The “charitable manor” in Jiankang entrusted a total 1327 畝 *mu* of state-allocated farmlands to four local temples, which oversaw leasing arrangements and rent collection.<sup>26</sup> The Song court adopted this format for the Lin’an “charity bureau for the young” as well, granting the organization 500 *mu* of official farmland 官田 (*guantian*) by decree in 1249. Gui E, the Vice Prefect of Baoqing, set up a similar two-track financial foundation when he took control of the local “charity bureau for the young” in the 1250s. Rent and interest yielded from capital raised by Gui, in the form of 200 *mu* of farmland and 7800 *min* cash, was used to remunerate the bureau’s wet nurses.<sup>27</sup> Though these programs were not placed under a central coordinating agency, they shared the same basic format for generating the funds necessary to provide services on a long-term basis.

In sum, Song charitable programs for the young were distinctive for having been the first of their kind in China and for having been initiated, managed and financed by the state. In line with the position of Wang Anshi, Zhu Xi, Huang Zhen and others who advocated greater government intervention for correcting imbalances in society and the economy, a number of Song officials sought to address the needs of the poor and the

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 420. These landholdings consisted of plots that had been confiscated from terminal households by the Jiangdong Tax Transport Bureau. Access to these resources was facilitated by Zhen Dexiu, who was serving as commissioner of the bureau at the time that he founded the Jiankang “charity manor.”

<sup>27</sup> One 畝 *mu* of land is equal to about one-fifth of an acre. *Yongle dadian* 《永樂大典》 *juan* 19781. A *min* 緡, like a *guan* 貫, refers to a string of 1000 bronze coins.

marginalized, conceived of as those bereft of family support.<sup>28</sup> Activist statesmen evinced not only a determination to curb social instability by sponsoring relief for the potentially volatile among the uprooted, but also a moral commitment to sustain the lives of the utterly helpless and enfeebled. This altruistic strain among Song officialdom found its purest expression in the rise of state-run foundling institutions. The state's centrality to these efforts nevertheless carried with it a latent vulnerability. When the Song dynasty collapsed in 1279, charitable organizations for the young were suddenly robbed of their dynamic leadership and access to financial resources. Lacking support from the Yuan and Ming authorities, programs devoted specifically to saving foundlings fell into abeyance until the seventeenth century, when a new array of activists took up the cause.

Song charitable work for the young also exhibited a tension between an impulse to bolster family rearing and the exigencies to develop new forms of institutional care. The former, embodied in the “granaries for raising sons” and adoption policies, was rooted in an underlying conviction that the kin unit, with its reciprocal relations based on mutual obligation, was best equipped to provide proper care and welfare for each member of society. The expansion of institutionalized rearing, on the other hand, was driven by the crisis of widespread abandonment. It evolved out of a recognition that relying solely on measures to prop up family rearing could do little to rescue cast away infants whose survival was dependent upon the immediate provision of sustenance.

The tension between these two approaches is captured in the work and thought of the Southern Song statesman, Huang Zhen. Huang reputedly founded and served as the

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<sup>28</sup> For a further discussion of a lineage of state interventionists among Song thinkers, see Hymes and Schirokauer, “Introduction,” 31-36. Marginalized persons were collectively referred to as *guan gua gu du* 鰥寡孤獨, or “widowers, widows, orphans, the childless and others without a provider.” This designation was used to denote the intended beneficiaries of the Song “poorhouse.” See *Song huiyao jigao*, 68/129.

director of the “charity bureau for the young” in Fuzhou, Jiangxi, but he also touted the merits of placing the child in an adoptive family and expressed a clear preference for preventative measures: “[having] the government take in and nurture an infant after it has been abandoned is not as good as providing security to the infant prior to abandonment.”<sup>29</sup> He contended that institutional care fostered dependency, noting that several children had grown up in his bureau’s facilities, continued to receive its material aid, but had not learned a trade. He went on to ask, “What will they do in the future? How will they support their parents?”<sup>30</sup> In Huang’s eyes, only the family could perform the crucial function of preparing the child for the assumption of adult responsibilities. Those who engaged in charitable projects for the young in subsequent times continued to be guided by the Song ideal of keeping the child within the family, while simultaneously grappling with social realities that made an expansion in institutional rearing a necessity.

### **The Resurgence of Child Relief Activity in the Qing**

After lapsing into a state of quiescence for nearly four centuries, the movement to save the lives of the young began to blossom once again in the early Qing period. In marked contrast to the Song initiatives, however, early Qing philanthropic organizations were launched and managed almost entirely by members of the extra-bureaucratic elite. The Qing state would eventually carve out a distinctive role for itself in the movement, but not until it was well underway. The shift from state initiative and management of charity in the Song to private leadership in the Qing can be attributed in large part to two broad developments in China’s economy and society in the intervening period.

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<sup>29</sup> *Yongle dadian* 《永樂大典》:juan 19781.

<sup>30</sup> Song, “Songdai guanban,” 29.

First, transformative developments in the Ming (1268-1644) economy amounted to what is frequently described as China's second commercial revolution. An influx of silver from the New World in the sixteenth century as well as the commutation of labor levies into cash payments under a new Single Whip tax system substantially monetized the rural economy while spurring production for the market. The late Ming-early Qing period experienced a dramatic rise in the interregional trade of raw staples, such as grain and beans, as well as an increase in the production of cash crops, especially cotton, silk, tea, and tobacco. The growth in trade in turn fostered both a considerable demographic expansion of existing cities such as Suzhou, Hangzhou, and Nanjing as well as the birth of new non-administrative, commercial towns (*zhen*). The wealth among members of these groups stood in stark contrast to the poverty-stricken conditions of the multitudes of landless laborers who had fled to the cities in search of a livelihood. In short, a widening degree of socioeconomic differentiation, another byproduct of the forces of burgeoning markets, was most evident in the new urban settings of the Lower Yangzi Delta region.

A second crucial development was the gradual formation of the gentry's 紳士 (*shenshi*) class, from the Song through the Ming periods. Members of the gentry order were sociopolitical élites whose status as such derived from holding a civil service degree rather than public office. While the civil service examination system had functioned as the primary route to political appointment since the early Song, the various ruling dynasties were reluctant to increase the number of administrative posts in proportion to the overall rise in population, resulting in an ever growing body of literate, degree-bearing individuals who failed to obtain positions in the bureaucracy. Those who held only the lower *shengyuan* degree, which rarely entitled one to office, along with retired

and expectant officials (i.e. those awaiting appointment) commonly assisted with the management of local affairs, such as the arbitration of civil disputes, the finance and administration of public works (e.g. bridges, dikes, granaries), and, as seen below, the sponsorship of relief projects.<sup>31</sup> Management of these activities served as one way in which the local gentry sought to distinguish themselves as just, benevolent 仁 (*ren*) men, thereby solidifying or even enhancing their status as leaders in the community.

### *Popular Philanthropy in Late Ming and Early Qing Times*

A renewed effort to succor unwanted babies surfaced as part of a broader movement in popular charity that began to gain traction in the late Ming. Unlike Song relief homes, the benevolent societies 同善會 (*tongshan hui*); 廣仁會 (*guangrenhui*); or 善堂 (*shantang*) that emerged at the forefront of the new movement were largely organized and financed by private actors, particularly merchants, lower gentry and the locally esteemed. In both agenda and scope, these associations also marked a departure from existing forms of private philanthropy, including irregular, individual giving and lineage-based charitable estates. Joanna Handlin Smith argues persuasively that underlying their formation were three interrelated historical forces: the growing influence of merchant wealth in local society, a new acceptance among literati of commerce as a legitimate undertaking, and the forging of closer ties between two historically distinct groups, merchants and gentry.<sup>32</sup> Benevolent societies provided a framework for local elites to enhance their moral standing through the donation of surplus wealth to the needy

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<sup>31</sup> Chang, *The Chinese Gentry: Studies on Their Role*, makes an important distinction between lower gentry, holders of the *shengyuan* degree, and upper gentry, earners of the *jinshi* and *juren* degrees. While nearly all *jinshi* and one-third of *juren* degree-bearers still secured official posts in the nineteenth century, very few “lower gentry” obtained office.

<sup>32</sup> See Smith, “Benevolent Societies: The Reshaping,” 309-330.

in a highly visible manner.<sup>33</sup> The burgeoning participation in these associations derived more from the social and spiritual needs of donors, Smith stresses, than the conditions of the destitute.<sup>34</sup> Whereas the earliest benevolent societies provided a wide array of services to the deprived, there gradually appeared institutional offshoots that focused exclusively on aiding the members of a specific group, especially solitary widows and foundlings.<sup>35</sup>

The first such association for foundlings on record was organized in the city of Yangzhou, a major center for the production and trade of salt. During the Chongzhen reign (1628-1644), in the waning years of the Ming, a merchant named Cai Lian assembled a cohort of fellow traders to form a “society for nourishing infants” 育嬰社 (*yuying she*), stipulating that each member contribute monthly dues of one *qian* and five *wen*\* cash.<sup>36</sup> The funds were used for hiring wet nurses to feed unwanted babies found by the side of the road. In the spring of 1655, the society was reorganized as the era’s first permanent “hall for nurturing infants” 育嬰堂 (*yuyingtang*) with the help of 閔象南 (Min Xiangnan), an affluent salt merchant who had expressed particular concern over the

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<sup>33</sup> Members of a benevolent society typically convened once seasonally or monthly. At these meetings, members first submitted donations and discussed how the funds would be distributed. The chairman then delivered exhortations in which he encouraged all to do more charitable work. See Leung, “Mingmo Qingchu,” 59.

<sup>34</sup> In addition to the lure of social prestige, participants were inspired by the idea found in popular morality books of accumulating karmic merit from doing good acts (i.e. aiding the needy). See Smith, “Benevolent Societies,” 312.

<sup>35</sup> Such services included burying the unclaimed dead, running gruel kitchens, aiding poor widows, and offering capital to petty merchants. Of note is that societies employed moral standards (i.e. filial piety, chastity) to differentiate those who would receive aid from those who would not. See Leung, “Mingmo Qingchu,” 59, 66).

\* A *qian* 錢 was equal to 1/10 of a silver tael. A *wen* 文 was equivalent to 1/10 of a *qian* or 1/100 of tael.

<sup>36</sup> Leung, *Shishan yu jiaohua*, 73.

relatively high concentration of foundlings in Yangzhou. 蔡 (Cai) and 閔 (Min) purchased a building to serve as the association's headquarters, and took turns serving as director, before switching to a system in 1659, in which the post rotated among members on a monthly basis much like benevolent societies.<sup>37</sup> That the hall evolved into a longstanding institution is testified by an account of one 魏禧 (Wei Xi), an unsuspecting local merchant who passed by its premises on a winter day in 1677. He recorded that he was startled to behold an assemblage of over 100 wet nurses with infants wrapped in swaddling clothes. 魏 (Wei) witnessed the calling out of the caregivers' names, as it happened to be one of the days on which the hall was distributing wages as well as sets of clothes for their charges.<sup>38</sup>

As shown in studies by Fuma Susumu and Angela Leung, the early spread of foundling halls in the Qing was facilitated primarily by the burgeoning economic power of non-state elites who dominated bustling urban centers. Following its founding in 1655, the Yangzhou hall was seized by like-minded gentry and merchants as an institution worthy of emulation. Halls began to sprout up on an ad hoc basis in places such as Gaoyouzhou (1656), Yizheng, Wugang zhou, and Beijing (1662), Jiaxing (ca. 1663), Tongzhou (1664), Hangzhou (1666), and Rugao (1668), the vast majority of which were situated in the commercially vibrant Lower Yangzi Region. Fuma notes that foundling halls had been established in nine of eleven prefectural capitals in the two Lower Yangzi provinces of Jiangsu and Zhejiang by the year 1676, stressing that it was without

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 73.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 73; see Wei Xi 魏禧, 1973, Wei Shuzi wenji 《魏叔子文集》 Taipei: Shangwu yinshuguan yingyin qingchu yitang: 10; 31-32.



exception local gentry and traders, rather than provincial governors or prefects, who were instrumental in their origination.<sup>39</sup> Over the following decades, new halls for the abandoned appeared in lower-level cities (e.g. department and county seats) in increasing numbers. According to Leung, at least 98 foundling homes had been set up throughout the empire prior to the Yongzheng emperor's important decree on the subject in 1724 (see below), and 51 of the total were located in Jiangsu and Zhejiang provinces.<sup>40</sup>

As these organizations proliferated, the Qing state came to identify efforts to rescue and sustain lone newborns as a sphere of benevolent activity deserving of official sanction and support. The governor-general of Fujian-Zhejiang and the governor of Jiangsu issued directives respectively in 1671 and 1676 that called on the various localities within their jurisdictions to set up foundling homes. The latter official proclaimed that each “ought to construct a building, hire wet nurses, and would need food, drink, course clothing and medicine, in the same manner as Jiang, Yang, Su and Song.”<sup>41</sup> The most historically significant proclamation, however, was issued by the Yongzheng emperor in 1724. Identifying the benevolent work of a poorhouse and foundling home in the capital as an expression of his heart's desire, the emperor decreed that “provincial governors should direct local officials to seek donations from those fond of charitable work” in an effort to extend the presence of these two types of institutions to all urban centers and densely populated areas. As a testament to imperial kindness, the sovereign

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<sup>39</sup> Fuma, *Zhongguo shanhui*, 192-193.

<sup>40</sup> Leung, *Shishan yu jiaohua: Ming-Qing*, 76.

<sup>41</sup> Fuma, *Zhongguo shanhui*, 194. Here “Jiang, Yang, Su and Song” undoubtedly refer to Jiangning 江寧, Yangzhou 揚州, Suzhou 蘇州, and Songjiang 松江, four prefectures in which foundling homes had been established.

announced that the court would also distribute both honorary wooden tablets and official funds to these organizations.<sup>42</sup>

The more immediate effect of the central government's directive and provision of moral encouragement and financial support was the galvanization of an even broader contingent of local elites into action. Twenty new halls for nurturing infants originated throughout the empire in the year 1724 alone. And the number of foundling homes continued to appear at a quickening pace throughout the mid- and late- Qing periods. According to Angela Leung's tally, some 875 relief organizations for the young were set up between the years 1724 and 1912, when the dynasty collapsed.<sup>43</sup> But the Yongzheng edict, along with a similar decree issued by the Qianlong emperor in 1741, also had the effect of establishing a framework of "official supervision and gentry management," upon which philanthropic enterprises would be organized.<sup>44</sup> The Qing state had in effect circumscribed its role in charity to that of overseer and supporter, leaving the details of day-to-day administration and fundraising to community leaders. And yet, in spite of the ad hoc basis upon which the halls were organized, they exhibited a striking degree of similarity in internal structure and operating procedures.

### *The Organization of Qing Halls for Nurturing Infants*

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<sup>42</sup> Leung, "Mingmo Qingchu," 61. For the full text of this edict, see *Da Qing Shizong Xian (Yongzheng) huangdi shilu* 大清世宗憲(雍正)皇帝實錄. 台北: 華文書局總發行, 1964: 卷 19, p. 9.

<sup>43</sup> See Appendix 1 (附表一 育嬰堂) in Leung, *Shishan yu jiaohua*, 259-284. The table consists of a complete listing of foundling homes established in the Qing, arranged chronologically by the year in which each was founded. Thus it can be determined that of the total number (973) of Qing foundling institutions, 90% (875) were launched after the edict of 1724. This listing does not include orphanages set up by foreign missionaries.

<sup>44</sup> In 1741, the Qianlong emperor issued a pronouncement that renewed Yongzheng emperor's call for local officials to select honest, magnanimous individuals to assist with setting up foundling homes. The edict also instructed each county government to audit the homes from time to time and to report the year-end total of infants received as well as its account of income and expenditure to higher authorities. If neglect or embezzlement was detected, an investigation would be launched (*Jiangsu sheng zhi*, 584).

The community elites who set up foundling homes cast such an enterprise as an expression of their basic moral duty to preserve endangered life. They viewed the act of forsaking a child, thereby putting its survival at risk, as a perversion of the moral order that they felt bound to uphold. The opening statement of a report issued by the Shanghai Benevolent and Relief Hall, parent organization of a Bureau for Keeping Infants, in 1893 provides a glimpse into the thinking of philanthropic actors committed to this mission:

The great virtue of Heaven and Earth is creating life. If one understands Heaven and Earth's virtue of favoring birth, then one must enable those which are born to live, and thereby follow to completion their life [course]. Given that the birds and beasts, fish and trees cannot bear to harm their begotten, let their eggs die of starvation, or kill their seedlings, would it not be even more the case when it comes to the safeguarding of newborn babies?<sup>45</sup>

The sponsors of this charitable organization insisted that a parent's willingness to protect his or her newborn was intrinsic to the natural order of things. Such behavior need not be learned, but rather emanated from the ways of heaven and earth, as evidenced by the predispositions of beings of lesser moral capacity than man. These philanthropists nevertheless recognized that harsh social realities could very well undermine the benevolent tendencies of the natural order: "...there are still many poverty-stricken families who abandon and fail to raise their infants, blotting out Heaven and Earth's inclination to favor the creation of life."<sup>46</sup> Thus, the authors asked rhetorically, how could the hall's organizers bear not to enable them to live? In short, they had endowed themselves with an obligation to reinstate the virtuous principle of protecting and sustaining young life that had waned under the strain of poverty-induced desperation.

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<sup>45</sup> HBRJT 1893, preface (序): 夫天地之大德曰生苟體天地好生之德則必俾活生者咸遂其生禽魚竹木猶不忍損生孳卵戕其萌芽矧呱呱赤子可不為安全計乎.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 彌眾貧家生計窘迫恆有棄嬰孩而不育者殊拂天地好生之意.

Guided by such an outlook, philanthropically-minded members of the community set about attending to the practical measures for launching charitable institutions for foundlings. An account of one such organization in Songjiang, a prefecture situated southwest of Shanghai, exemplifies the steps in this process while also clarifying the state's role in it. United by the intent to set up hall for nurturing infants, a group of eighteen local gentrymen from seven counties in the prefecture first raised a sum of 4000 strings of copper coins in donations in 1810.<sup>47</sup> Next, they formally petitioned the magistrates of Huating and Lei counties for the right to begin construction on the hall. After official permission was granted, the organizers submitted a draft of the hall's operational guidelines to the local authorities for approval. The majority of the text's bylaws, which passed from the county magistrate up to the provincial governor for review, were approved, though a clause stipulating that government functionaries (i.e. county clerks) play a role in the hall's everyday management was rejected.<sup>48</sup> The key point here is that community élites actively sought the support and approval of local officials, even requesting their involvement in the hall's day-to-day operations. While the government was reluctant to participate in this capacity, records show that it would become the hall's single largest donor (see note 62). The state had in essence reaffirmed that its role in charity was to be limited to that of supervisor and subsidizer.

The actual administration of a Qing foundling home was shouldered by a group of unsalaried officers 司事 (*sishi*), on the one hand, and stipendiary on-site managers, on the

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<sup>47</sup> Fuma, *Zhongguo shanhui*, 231-232.

<sup>48</sup> Officials who reviewed the regulations contended that appointing clerks from the county yamen might lead to corruption. The provincial governor's remarks on this matter are recounted in Fuma, *Zhongguo shanhui*, 232.

other. A report issued by the Shanghai hall for nurturing infants in 1725 distinguishes the functions of each group.<sup>49</sup> The account makes clear that, above all else, the voluntary officers took it upon themselves to ensure that the organization remained financially solvent. Presiding over the Shanghai foundling home were four yearly officers 司年 (*sinian*) who gave “largely towards yearly expenses,” spearheaded fundraising drives throughout the city and its hinterland, and even reached into their own pockets if the hall’s annual income did not match expenditures. Below this core group were some 18 monthly officers 司月 (*siyue*), who contributed to the hall’s supply of fuel and water. The yearly and monthly officers also convened at the hall on the first and the fifteenth of the month. On these days, they dispensed wages and either praised or censured wet nurses for their performance, after verifying the identities of children under their care.

As the officers regularly had private affairs to tend to, they hired two individuals to serve as resident managers. One took charge of the hall’s various registers, the receiving of foundlings, the assignment of infants to wet nurses, and the intake and disbursal of hall funds.<sup>50</sup> When a foundling was brought to the institution, he examined the four limbs and five senses for abnormalities, checked the body for sores or scares, and took its handprint. The impression and any peculiarities, as well as the date and time of arrival at the hall, and birth date and time (if discernable), were recorded meticulously in

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<sup>49</sup> The Shanghai *yuyingtang* was set up in 1710. One of the hall’s clerks prepared the report for the sub-prefect of Shanghai in 1725, the year after the Yongzheng decree. It forms part of an updated and enlarged chronicle of the hall that was put together in 1845 (“Report of the Foundling Hospital at Shanghai”, 177-95).

<sup>50</sup> The hall maintained a total of five registers: (1) a donors’ register; (2) a foundlings’ reception book; (3) a hired wet nurse register; (4) an adoption register; and (5) an infants’ sick register. See *Ibid.*, 186.

the infant register for identification purposes.<sup>51</sup> The infant was then issued an identity ticket and assigned to one of the wet nurses. The other manager was responsible for investigating the rearing conditions of infants after they had been placed in foster care.<sup>52</sup> After reaching a wet nurse's living quarters, the inspector scrutinized the nursling's physical appearance and took cognizance of the caregiver's performance, recording his findings in the infant's register. These notes served as the basis for the officers' verbal assessment of the care givers' performance at times in which wages were distributed.

Given the hall's primary objective, the selection and maintenance of a healthy and dedicated pool of wet nurses constituted one of its central undertakings. To initiate the process, a guarantor – either the spouse or a neighbor of the prospective wet nurse – had to proceed to the hall and pledge for her. Following this, the hall's stipendiary officers certified that she was able-bodied, could produce milk and had no sons or daughters of her own. Finally, her name was entered into the hall register; a contract, designating her wages, was drawn up; and an infant and identity ticket was assigned to her.<sup>53</sup> Those who provided foster care were required to bring the foundling and identifying documents to

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 185; Other halls also followed this practice Fuma, *Zhongguo shanhui*, 195; Ruan, *Chifa yuyingtang*, 297. Leung notes that it was not uncommon for parents to place a note listing the baby's name and "eight characters" (*bazi*), indicating the year, month, day and time of birth, in its bosom just prior to abandoning it. Leung surmises that this practice derived from a hope of reclaiming one's child in the future, if one's economic conditions improved. Such information would as be also useful for arranging the child's marriage.

<sup>52</sup> Like many early Qing foundling homes, the Shanghai hall contracted wet nurses to rear the infants in their own homes. From the mid-Qing onward, halls were increasingly equipped with residential quarters for care givers, indicative of a tightening of bureaucratic control over operations (Leung, *Shishan yu jiaohua*, 90).

<sup>53</sup> "Report of," 185-6. The ticket, which verified the identity of the caregiver and her charge, was to be presented when the former claimed her pay. They included the infant's birth date and handprint as well as the wet nurse's name and address. The Hangzhou hall relied on similar methods. See Fuma, *Zhongguo shanhui*, 195.

the hall on designated days, either once or twice monthly, to receive their stipends.<sup>54</sup> In addition, the bylaws of the Shanghai and Hangzhou halls specified forms of conduct from which wet nurses must refrain: being neglectful in nourishing children, transferring infants with payment to others, exchanging infants among themselves, and sending their own children to the institution while simultaneously receiving payment for their services.<sup>55</sup> Engagement in any of these acts constituted grounds for dismissal, with the possibility of being dragged before the district magistrate to face additional punishment.

If the sponsors of Qing halls were concerned primarily with preserving the forlorn baby's life, they clung to their predecessors' view that securing its place in a decent home was the most desirable long-term solution. This point is evidenced by detailed accounts of adoption procedures as well as high rates of adoption on record (see Table 1.1). While simply legitimating boys into adoptive families was deemed sufficient, officers were decidedly more circumspect when it came to the transfer of young girls: they wished to ensure that the latter would not be raised as prostitutes or be bought and sold as concubines or servants. Families interested in adopting from the hall were first required to submit a formal petition. If unfamiliar with the kin group, the officers set about to uncover details of its background and circumstances, confirming that it was of sufficient means to raise a child and not of "lowly and mean" 下賤 (*xiajian*) status.<sup>56</sup> This often necessitated bringing forth neighbors or relatives to serve as guarantors. If approved, the hall clerks drew up an adoption ticket in duplicate, one serving as the bond to be kept in

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<sup>54</sup> If the weather was poor, an officer would be dispatched to the wet nurse's home to examine the rearing conditions and allocate payment ("Report of," 185; Fuma, *Zhongguo shanhui*, 195, 201, 235).

<sup>55</sup> "Report of," 185; Fuma, *Zhongguo shanhui*, 195-196.

<sup>56</sup> "Report of," 187. These criteria were typical of Qing halls. See Leung, *Shishan yu*, 92, Fang, "Qingdai yuyingtang," 118.

the institution, the other as an agreement of transfer to be handed over with the child to the adoptive family. Each document was notarized with the official seal of the sub-prefect, thereby making the relationship legally binding.<sup>57</sup>

In contrast to the aforementioned policies and practices, the funding arrangements among Qing halls evinced a pronounced degree of eclecticism. Donations from local gentrymen, in the form of both subscriptions and irregular gifts, along with fixed grants from rice and salt merchants played a particularly seminal role in the founding and operation of foundling homes in the early Qing (1655 – 1723).<sup>58</sup> After the Yongzheng edict of 1724, local officials stepped up earlier levels of support for charitable activities, imparting official lands, channeling tax revenues, and urging locals to make donations to halls.<sup>59</sup> The central government also emerged as an active donor, allocating annual subsidies to halls throughout Zhejiang province and seven homes in other locations, during the Qianlong and early Jiaqing reign periods (1736-1800).<sup>60</sup> Increasingly beset with financial difficulties, though, its level of support diminished sharply thereafter. Irrespective of the source of income, the officers of Qing halls commonly used a portion of the funds to acquire corporate properties, which could be rented out for a steady source of revenue.<sup>61</sup> In sum, this picture strongly suggests that it was the sustained partnership

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 186.

<sup>58</sup> Subscriptions entailed the submission of fixed sum by hall members 會員 or friends 會友, on an annual or monthly basis; ad hoc gifts took the form of garments, oil lamps, mosquito nets and of course cash.

<sup>59</sup> Fang, “Qingdai yuyingtang,” 115.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 115.

<sup>61</sup> For instance, the Suzhou hall, the largest of its kind in the Lower Yangzi, and the Songjiang hall possessed some 12,000 *mu* and 3580 *mu* of farmland, respectively. Other hospices, such as those in Funing and Dehua, purchased buildings and leased their residential quarters. See Ruan, *Chifa yuyingtang*, 295; Fan, “Qingdai yuyingtang,” 116.



between bureaucrats and local elites as well as a highly diversified financial base that enabled these institutions to flourish from the mid Qing through much of the Republican era, a span of more than 200 years.<sup>62</sup>

*From Cities to Towns: Extending Charitable Services in the Late Qing*

Though the hall for nurturing infants 育嬰堂 (*yuyingtang*) remained the main pillar of philanthropic work for the young throughout the Qing, a deepening commitment among local elites to save imperiled infants prompted the formation of two institutional variants. It will be recalled that Qing foundling homes, requiring a certain level of economic resources, sprang up overwhelmingly in prefectural capitals and larger county seats. As the movement gained traction, however, some philanthropists began to direct their attention to the problem of discarded newborns in areas with less concentrated populations. Out this concern were born “halls for receiving infants” 接嬰堂 (*jieyingtang*) and “halls for keeping infants” 留嬰堂 (*liuyingtang*), on the one hand, and “infant preservation societies” 保嬰會 (*baoyinghui*), on the other. It bears stressing that these associations served to supplement, rather than supersede, the work of the foundling homes described above.

The halls for receiving and keeping infants functioned essentially as relay stations, taking in and succoring deserted infants for a brief period before transferring them to a foundling home located in a major metropolitan area. Tending to be situated in smaller county capitals and market towns, they first appeared at the turn of the eighteenth century,

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<sup>62</sup> Fuma’s study of the Songjiang hall points up the institution’s highly eclectic approach to raising revenue. In 1869, the hall’s income consisted of rent on corporate property (63%); grants from officials (20%); donations from “philanthropists” (13%); and contributions from the rice guild (3%). See Fuma, *Zhongguo shanhui*, 240.

but spread particularly widely during the late Qing period (1800-1911).<sup>63</sup> Somewhat akin to the emergence of standard market places researched by William Skinner, these halls sprouted up as satellite installations of extant foundling homes, often within a 100-kilometer radius of the latter. A foundling home might be encircled by as many as half a dozen or more relay stations, all bound together as a discrete unit.<sup>64</sup> Wang Weiping has identified at least 26 such independently-functioning networks.<sup>65</sup> Illustrative of the ongoing expansion of child relief work, some of these were even extended into a three-tier structures: foundlings entered an “office for receiving infants” 接嬰所 (*jieyingsuo*) located in a town, wherefrom they were conveyed to a 接嬰堂 (*jieyingtang*) in the county seat, and then finally to the 育嬰堂 (*yuyingtang*) in the prefectural capital.<sup>66</sup>

While a relay station’s scale of operations tended to be rather limited at its outset, records point to a trend toward institutional expansion over time. The earliest stations, some consisting merely of a small structure within a temple complex or benevolent hall, typically transferred foundlings shortly after their arrival. The 接嬰堂 (*jieyingtang*) of Qingpu County, Jiangsu, initially sheltered a maximum of five infants at any given time. After reaching full capacity, the hospice selected a clear day to load the nurslings onto a boat bound for the main hall in the capital of Songjiang prefecture. But with the facilities

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<sup>63</sup> The first *liuyingtang* on record was set up in Nanxiang town 南翔鎮 in 1701, to serve as a relay station for Suzhou foundling home. A tally of relay stations in Leung’s appendix shows that whereas 15 appeared between 1701 and 1800, at least 75 came into existence between 1800 and 1911. See Leung, *Shishan yu*, 260-84.

<sup>64</sup> The Songjiang relay network was one of the largest, with eight *jieyingtang* linked to the prefectural hall.

<sup>65</sup> Wang and Huang, *Zhongguo gudai*, 259.

<sup>66</sup> Taking the example of the Songjiang transfer system, we see that foundlings from four *jieyingsuo* were first transferred to the *jieyingtang* in Qingpu county 青浦縣, and then on to the hall in the prefectural seat.

of the Songjiang hall strained to accommodate a steadily rising number of foundlings, the Qingpu 接嬰堂 (*jiyingtang*) added new feeding rooms in 1871, increasing the potential number of beneficiaries to twenty.<sup>67</sup> The 接嬰堂 (*jiyingtang*) in Nanhui County, lacking sufficient resources to provide sustained on-site care, also originally sent its foundlings to the hall in Songjiang's prefectural seat. Faced with an increasingly unmanageable number of waifs, though, the prefectural hall eventually began to contract the services of the Nanhui agency, distributing fixed subsidies to the latter so that it could provide long-term rearing.<sup>68</sup> Finally, in 1872, Nanhui's 接嬰堂 (*jiyingtang*) was formally converted into a full-fledged 育嬰堂 (*yuyintang*), making it unnecessary to send its charges to the prefectural hall.

The rise of a second type of organization, “infant preservation societies” 保嬰會 (*baoyinghui*) was similarly rooted in the growing concern for foundlings in outlying areas as well as in the longstanding Neo-Confucian ideal of keeping the family intact. Following the approach of “granaries for raising sons” in the Song, societies sought to bolster the ability of poor families to rear their own infants. Their origins can be traced back to Yu Zhi, a 生員 (*shengyuan*) degree-holder from Qingcheng Township in Wuxi County, Jiangsu. Troubled by the rampancy of abandonment and infanticide in his vicinity, Yu summoned a group of fellows in 1843, asking each to contribute 360 文 *wen* (cash) annually to create a fund for infants at risk. Destitute mothers of newborns who

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<sup>67</sup> Fuma, *Zhongguo shanhui*, 259. Fuma notes that the size of Zhangyan town's *jiyingtang*, an organization dating back to the Daoguang era (1821-50), was likewise expanded in 1881 to ease the flow of infants to Songjiang hall.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 259. The financial foundations of *jiyingtang* appear to have been just as diversified as those of *yuyintang*. Prior to receiving subsidies from the prefectural hall, the Nanhui relay station drew on rent from corporate property, public donations from corvée labor, and surtaxes on transport grain.

lived within 10 *li* of the society's headquarters were eligible to receive a monthly subsidy of one 斗 (*dou*) of rice and 200 *wen* for a period of five months after the birth of a child.<sup>69</sup> It was felt that a natural deepening of parental love during this term would make guardians reluctant to kill or abandon their young thereafter. If unable to support their infant at the conclusion of the five-month term, parents had the option of sending him or her to a foundling home.

Programs modeled on Yu Zhi's society proliferated in particular during the period of reconstruction that succeeded the Taiping Rebellion (1850-64). Angela Leung posits that the colossal destruction of human life during the uprising prompted activist gentry, who tended to associate a flourishing population with societal well-being, to intensify efforts to safeguard the lives of newborns.<sup>70</sup> Moreover, Jiangnan local elites recognized that with a greater portion of the surviving population reduced to impoverishment, the impulse to resort to infanticide or abandonment would be all the more prevalent. As 保嬰會 (*baoyinghui*) flourished in the post-Taiping years, two developments came to distinguish them from Yu Zhi's organization. First, due to a growing pool of applicants, associations were compelled to draw upon a diversified financial base of official and private funds, much like foundling homes and relay stations. In addition to membership fees, societies now relied on revenue from silk, salt, tobacco, and other local commodity taxes, subsidies from the 釐金 *lijin* commercial levy, and rent and interest from corporate

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<sup>69</sup> Leung, *Shishan yu*, 194; Fuma, *Zhongguo shanhui*, 278.

<sup>70</sup> Leung, "Relief Institutions," 254. The extent of depopulation in the region during the Taiping occupation was, by all accounts, massive. According to Perkins, *Agricultural Development*, 212, the populations of Jiangsu and Zhejiang provinces declined from 44.1 million and 30.1 million respectively in 1851 to 26.3 million and 17.9 million in 1873.

lands, buildings and capital.<sup>71</sup> Second, there was a tightening of bureaucratic procedures for verifying the eligibility of prospective beneficiaries and for distributing aid.

The story of one Mrs. Gu's quest for aid points up the growing formalization of administrative procedures among post-Taiping "infant preservation" initiatives. Facing straitened circumstances, Mrs. Gu, the 26 year-old wife of Chen Afu, sought support from the Shanghai "infants preservation bureau" 保嬰會 (*baoyingju*), an organization founded in 1874. In order to qualify, she had to register with the bureau either just prior to, or within a half month of giving birth.<sup>72</sup> The bureau required Mrs. Gu's family to enlist a person of local standing, such as the *dibao*, or local constable, to serve as a guarantor. After the guarantor submitted a request for support on her behalf, the bureau immediately dispatched one of its inspection officers 司察 (*sicha*) to Chen Afu's home in Xinxueqian to confirm the birth of their child. Upon verifying the facts, the officer distributed an initial grant of 2000 *wen* as well as a cotton-padded jacket, cotton skirt, and two unlined garments for the infant. A formal document 領單 (*lingdan*) was drawn up and handed over to the family to serve as an accumulative record of receipt for future allotments. Thereafter, the family was eligible to receive a monthly subsidy of 400 *wen* for a period of 11 months as long as they demonstrated that their infant was still alive.<sup>73</sup> While the amount and duration of support varied among organizations, the registration

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<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 267.

<sup>72</sup> If she missed the deadline for submitting a request, she would be ineligible to receive support from the *baoyingju*, and would have to turn to one of two local benevolent halls, the *puyutang* or *jishantang*, for help.

<sup>73</sup> Fuma, *Zhongguo shanhui*, 286. This account appeared originally in a draft of the agency's regulations (*baoyingju gui*).

process and regulatory use of guarantors and inspectors described above appear to have become standard features of post-Taiping “infant preservation” programs.<sup>74</sup>

To sum up, each of the three Qing institutions examined above – 育嬰堂 (*yuyingtang*), 接嬰堂 (*jieyingtang*), and 保嬰會 (*baoyinghui*) – evolved out of a continuously expanding movement to protect the lives of vulnerable infants. Their activities belonged to a Qing philanthropic tradition grounded in moral considerations: sponsors cast their actions as a manifestation of a moral obligation to sustain those who had suffered the loss of family support. The origins of all three organizations lay in the activism of the community elite. In the case of each, the state acted largely in a supportive capacity – distributing official resources and urging others to initiate and give towards such endeavors – consistent with the principles of cooperation outlined in imperial proclamations. While charitable programs devoted to saving infants would continue to function down to the end of the Republican era, the social disarray unleashed by the Taiping rebellion (1850-64) evoked in Lower Yangzi officials a palpable concern over the plight of older, rootless children. As seen below, the swell of these anxieties and the initiatives they spawned signaled the beginning of a fundamental reorientation of Chinese relief for the young in the coming decades.

### **The Movement to Rehabilitate Displaced Youths**

Regional officials and local elites based in the Lower Yangzi area found the rampant social and economic dislocation left by the Taiping uprising alarming on several

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<sup>74</sup> Leung’s “Relief Institutions,” 258, sample of five post-Taiping *baoyinghui* shows that allotments typically ranged between 400 *wen* and 600 *wen*, and were distributed for periods from six months to one year. Records from the *baoyinghui* in Nanxun town 南潯鎮, Zhejiang as well as the North Shanghai “bureau for keeping infants,” show that each followed these administrative procedures. See Fuma, *Zhongguo shanhui*, 294, and Shi, *Shanghai renji*, 24.

levels. In their eyes, the problems created by the insurrection were not limited to the more visible signs of material destruction. Of even graver concern was the disruption and continued threat to social stability in the post-rebellion years, which, according to their ethos, was tied inextricably to a breakdown in the Confucian moral order. A basic source of unease for Jiangsu provincial authorities stemmed from problems associated with the militarization of local society during the revolt. In particular, it was feared that disbanded soldiers 游勇 (*youyong*), who had been dislodged from their native communities, and boat people, who had initially armed themselves in self-defense, would join the lawless ranks of brigands, pirates and smugglers.<sup>75</sup> Rootless and removed from the regime of family life, ex-soldiers were seen as especially prone to become involved in illicit activities. Worsening economic conditions for commoners, another outgrowth of the protracted disturbance, similarly generated anxiety, for it was felt that the poor were predisposed to a legion of depraved activities that undermined local stability: opium cultivation, gambling, fortune telling, and viewing licentious plays as well as participation in raucous religious fairs and incense-burning societies.<sup>76</sup> These kinds of practices, it was believed, tended to lure commoners away from productive work and might even serve as a front for more threatening forms of unsanctioned behavior.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Ocko, *Bureaucratic Reform*, 34-35. The statesman Zeng Guofan had built up a large militia of recruited braves (*yong*) from his native Hunan province to fight the Taiping rebels. After the uprising was quashed in 1864, Zeng officially disbanded his army, but many recruits remained in Jiangsu and retained their weapons.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 38-51; Rankin, *Elite Activism*, 123.

<sup>77</sup> Ocko, *Bureaucratic Reform*, 44, 48 notes that Ding and other officials viewed incense-burning societies (*shaoxianghui*) with particular suspicion, as the latter's pilgrimages traversed provincial and county borders, thus enabling them to conceal rebel groups, facilitate the spread of heterodox beliefs, and protect criminals.

Signs of debilitation such as these inspired a vigorous, multi-pronged effort among state agents and community leaders alike to replenish societal and moral order. The provincial governor of Jiangsu, Ding Richang, marshaled the assistance of local gentry in a campaign to disarm the boat people, entrusting with the former with the crucial task of gathering and storing weapons, and issuing receipts to their bearers. Ex-soldiers too were compensated for returned arms and offered free transport to their native places. In an effort to weed out remnant bandits and pirates from respectable commoners (*liangmin*, lit. “good people”), Ding advocated a renewed drive to enroll ex-soldiers and boat people in the system of household registration 保甲 (*baojia*).<sup>78</sup> The campaign to restore public welfare also included measures to eradicate many of the more objectionable and potentially subversive customs and activities mentioned above. The provincial governor issued bans on religious processions and pilgrimages, spearheaded a drive against opium cultivation, sought to close down theaters, and instructed printing offices to recall and burn salacious books. In his quest to bolster public morality, Ding also revived the village lecture system, ordering the homilies be delivered in each rural township once every five days, rather than the erstwhile practice of twice per month.<sup>79</sup>

The social disarray endemic to the lower Yangzi valley prompted a resurgence of philanthropic activity, as well. Regional officials took the lead in reestablishing many of

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<sup>78</sup> Ocko, *Bureaucratic Reform*, 36-37. Set up in the early Qing, the *baojia* system was designed as a control apparatus at the sub-administrative level. All households within a given area were to be registered and grouped into units of ten. Residents were expected to report any criminal behavior to their unit head, who would in turn relay the information to the local authorities. See Hsiao, *Rural China*, 43-83.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 59-60. Set up in the early Qing, the *xiangyue* program consisted of a series of discourses on such subjects as filial piety, maintaining harmonious social relations, complying with laws, etc., each designed to ingrain principles of proper familial and social conduct in rural inhabitants. See Hsiao, *Rural China*, 185-205.



the relief organizations that had been laid to waste during the rising.<sup>80</sup> Modeled on the benevolent hall, with local gentrymen assuming roles as managers and fund-raisers, newly organized reconstruction bureaus 善後局 (*shanhouju*) provided shelter and sustenance to various groups bereft of family support. But these agencies also undertook a number of other projects aimed at restoring social stability and a semblance of normalcy to the areas disrupted by the uprising. They carried out the repair of public buildings, roads, and bridges, the maintenance of dikes and canals, and organized fire prevention efforts and security patrols for the local community.<sup>81</sup> These services were underwritten by a combination of 衙門 *yamen* (official) funds, rent on corporate property, private donations, business assessments, and *lijin* tax revenue. In short, local bureaucrats decidedly turned to gentry-managed philanthropic associations to carry out recovery efforts, underlining the persistence, and even strengthening, of official-elite collaboration in this period.<sup>82</sup>

### *Rethinking the Wayward Child in the Post-Taiping Period*

Amid the growing anxiety over forces which threatened to destabilize local order, many of which had been aggravated by the rebellion, state agents and gentry activists began to think of rootless youths in a new light. A report issued by a group of Shanghai philanthropists in 1866 depicted a social problem which had hitherto elicited scant attention among the urban élite in China:

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<sup>80</sup> Ocko, *Bureaucratic Reform*, 52. Wright, *The Last Stand*, 135-36, cites specific cases of official leadership in postbellum relief.

<sup>81</sup> Rankin, *Elite Activism*, 95.

<sup>82</sup> Bernhardt, *Rents, Taxes*, 122-23, discussion of the flowering of semiofficial, or “gentry-official,” bureaus in post-Taiping years shows that this pattern of cooperation obtained in many facets of local administration.

...several hundred child refugees, the majority of which come from rural areas, beg for food in the city and its suburbs...when asked about their parents, they reply that they have been killed, kidnapped or have died of illness, cold or starvation... These sufferers pass through many places, drifting about. Their clothes and shoes are in tatters. Their hair is disheveled; their faces soiled. They appear almost non-human.<sup>83</sup>

The account goes on to note that even those fortunate to survive amid such harrowing conditions will become accustomed to the “good-for-nothing” habit of begging. Their downward trajectory, the authors warn, will continue from there: “with each passing day they will become debauched. Like this, they will end up as bandits.”<sup>84</sup> In short, the transition from young, drifting mendicant to depraved outlaw was all too natural in the eyes of elites with a Confucian moral outlook. Underscoring the importance of family as the primary unit of socialization, the report identified a lack of parental discipline as the root of the problem. The only way to avert their slide into the depths of the criminal underclass was for “conscientious people” (i.e. the philanthropists, themselves) “to take the place of their birth parents” and show them a path to self-reliance.

These concerns induced the state to call on local notables to introduce and expand basic education and vocational training programs for minors without guardians. In fact, charity schools 義學 (*yixue*) had begun to spring up as sites for equipping disadvantaged children with rudimentary learning as early as the turn of the eighteenth century.<sup>85</sup> These institutions were designed to transmit basic reading and writing skills as well as orthodox values and correct practices (i.e. filial piety, honesty, family rites, etc.) to poor and

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<sup>83</sup> Yu, 1869: 935: 城廂內外乞食難童以數百計, 大都異鄉各籍...詢其父母, 或被戕或被櫛或病死或凍餓死...所苦者輾轉漂泊, 衣履不完, 蓬首垢面, 殆無人狀.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid: 929. 既倖而得存, 而積慣乞丐, 習成頑劣, 日益放縱, 此匪同歸.

<sup>85</sup> Leung, “Elementary Education,” 384 -403. Leung’s study shows that 83 charity schools were founded in the Jiangnan region between 1702 and 1820. In 1713, an imperial edict stated that they were set up expressly for poor children.

orphaned children between the ages of eight and fifteen *sui*, free of charge.<sup>86</sup> But the schools were initially part of the broader project to bolster cultural cohesion among the populace, an enterprise, Leung stresses, that lay outside the realm of relief work.<sup>87</sup> Charity schools did not provide any of the basic services and material resources (e.g. shelter, food, clothing, medicine) typically offered by philanthropic associations of the time. Though education and social assistance were thought of as categorically distinct endeavors in eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century China, some foundling homes had begun to send their older wards to the free schools, if one were situated nearby.

This distinction began to blur when Jiangsu provincial authorities initiated a campaign to bring education into the fold of relief work in the reconstruction era. In 1867, governor Ding Richang instructed each county within his jurisdiction to set up a minimum of four charity schools, that is, at least one for each of its townships 廨 (*xiang*).<sup>88</sup> Clearly this was part of the governor's larger effort to bind loose elements among the populace into the unraveling social fabric. Though it is difficult to ascertain the extent to which Ding's order was followed, scattered evidence suggests that charities did begin to add education programs to their range of services in these years. Benevolent halls in Zhenjiang and Suzhou, Jiangsu set up affiliate charity schools in 1869 and 1871, respectively.<sup>89</sup> Some foundling homes now provided instruction for their charges at

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<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 392; Ocko, *Bureaucratic Reform*, 55.

<sup>87</sup> Leung points out that these institutions were listed in the "schools and academies" section, rather than the one titled, "charitable deeds," in local histories. For further discussion, see Leung, "Elementary Education," 388, 401.

<sup>88</sup> Ocko, *Bureaucratic Reform*, 55. Ocko notes that prior to Ding's order few counties had more than one charity school; some had none at all.

<sup>89</sup> *Jiangsu sheng zhi*, 583.

attached charity schools, as well.<sup>90</sup> Others, such as those located in Hongjiang and Funing County, northern Jiangsu, sent a portion of their children to off-site charity schools. At Funing hall, an organization founded in 1871, boys who had not been adopted by the age of seven *sui* were given a test to assess their intellectual aptitude. Those deemed fit for further study were sent to a charity school during the day, returning to the hall to eat and sleep, until they reached 12 *sui*.<sup>91</sup> In sum, these initiatives – though implemented on a rather limited scale in this era – signal a key departure from the agenda of early and mid Qing foundling homes, whose regulations tended to be silent on learning.

If elementary schooling was being adopted to instill waifs with a solid moral grounding and basic knowledge for everyday living, then vocational education came to be seen as the cornerstone for fostering economic self-sufficiency. Job training was, in fact, the core feature of the Shanghai Bureau for Education and Rearing 滬城撫教局 (*Hucheng fujiuojū*), an institution that began operations in 1866 after taking in some 250 child beggars from the city streets.<sup>92</sup> All children first took a two-month course to learn several basic Chinese characters. The directors then surveyed their natural abilities and, based on these results, assigned each child to learn one of several trades taught by artisans at the bureau: seal carving, printing, tailoring, leather work, fan making, iron work, two kinds of weaving, and shaving.<sup>93</sup> After completing one to three years of vocational training, they were given seed money, basic tools and an introduction to work

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<sup>90</sup> Leung, “Relief Institutions,” 266. Nanjing hall, for example, maintained an affiliate school for resident children.

<sup>91</sup> Ruan, *Chifa yuyingtang*, 300.

<sup>92</sup> See *Fujiuojū zhangcheng* in Yu, *De yi lu*, 936.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 932-934.

at a small store or workshop.<sup>94</sup> The provision of these resources was aimed ultimately at deterring children from returning to the unscrupulous life of street begging, which was seen by the Confucian-trained élite as a gateway to more socially deviant forms of behavior.

The Shanghai 撫教局 (*fujiaojū*) was distinctive among philanthropic initiatives for the young not only by virtue of its objectives and the types of children it sheltered, but also in that it was borne of state initiation. A report by the bureau's directors pointed out that the Circuit Intendant\* had instructed them to set up and publicize the agency and had pledged official allowances to subsidize its operations.<sup>95</sup> The county government had also ordered the various 地保 (*dibao*),<sup>†</sup> or community constables, to round up all child refugees begging in the city and deliver them to the bureau. If any children were subsequently seen along the roads begging for food, the 地保 (*dibao*) would be held solely accountable.<sup>96</sup> In this period, though, foundling homes too began to institute vocational training for older children. When boys at the Funing home reached 12 *sui*, directors evaluated their talents and decided upon a befitting career for each. They were then sent away to pursue training under the guidance of a shop proprietor or master craftsmen.<sup>97</sup> Girls, meanwhile, learned how to spin hemp, make nets and sandals, and

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 933-934.

\*A Circuit (*dao* 道) was an administrative unit smaller than a province, but larger than a prefecture. Shanghai city belonged to the Su(zhou)-Song(jiang)-Tai(cang) Military Defense Circuit (蘇松太兵備道)

<sup>95</sup> Yu, *De yi lu*, 930.

<sup>†</sup> The *dibao* 地保, an unsalaried sub-bureaucratic agent nominated by community leaders and accredited by the county magistrate, was charged with a variety of tasks related to local control. See Hsiao, *Rural China*, 63-66.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 931.

<sup>97</sup> Ruan, *Chifa yuyingtang*, 300-301.

weave cloth. It was hoped that the boys of Funing hall would “strive to become self-sufficient” 僅可自摸生活 (*jinke zimou shenghuo*) and that girls would become suitable marriage partners on the basis of the cottage industry skills they had acquired.<sup>98</sup>

The post-Taiping initiatives discussed above were rooted in a changing idea of the child as an object of relief. Up to this period, philanthropists viewed the forsaken infant primarily as an embodiment of life which, in accord with the imperative to keep the moral order of Heaven and Earth intact, must be preserved. According to Confucian principles of hierarchic relations, natal parents bore a quasi-sacred obligation to protect and nurture their newborns. But penurious conditions could corrode the inherent sense of parental duty and enervate the guardian-child bond, sometimes leading to abandonment or infanticide. In such instances, the sociopolitical elite – as defenders of the moral order – felt obliged to intervene and, if possible, enable the imperiled infant to follow its natural life course. Amid the tide of social anxiety that swept the Jiangnan region on the heels of the Taiping uprising, however, there emerged a more complicated view of the parentless child. Troubled by rampant signs of societal unrest and moral decay, Qing officials and gentrymen began to see the waif as not merely a life to be saved, but also a social creature that must be guided and trained, lest he descend into the ranks of idlers and outlaws.<sup>99</sup> It is worth stressing, though, that programs dedicated to rehabilitating deprived children remained uneven in distribution and comprised a relatively small

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<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 301. When a young woman at the hall turned 14 or 15 *sui*, the directors selected a spouse for her. They paid her dowry (4000 *wen*) and provided some money for the purchase of a dress.

<sup>99</sup> My assessment of this development generally concurs with Angela Leung’s findings. Leung, “Relief Institutions,” 268-269, astutely draws attention to the new idea of the child as a “social being,” but appears to overstate the extent to which these ideas found institutional expression at this time. I argue below that a different set of historical forces powered the expansion of these ideas and institutions beyond the Jiangnan region in the early twentieth century.

portion of charitable initiatives in these years. Nevertheless, the emergence of new ideas on displaced youths and their relationship to society in post-Taiping Jiangnan presaged a broader shift in child welfare work in twentieth century China.

*Education Reform and Child Relief in the Republican Period, 1912-1935*

The two formerly distinct strains of social activism, education and public assistance, were fused together in a reform movement that coursed through China in the early twentieth century. Having blamed China's weak position squarely on the dynastic political system, reform-minded elites set about to replace the old system of rule with a republican government under Yuan Shikai's leadership in 1912. When the new government foundered in its infancy, though, a growing number of social activists, leading intellectuals, and writers began to locate the source of China's troubles not in its "outmoded" political system but rather in what they identified as its repressive cultural traditions and stultifying social structure. The call to reinvigorate the Chinese nation through the imposition of dynamic changes in these realms culminated in what has been termed the New Culture Movement (1915-23). One of the movement's subset of activities to which a new generation of intellectuals dedicated themselves was the campaign to reform public education.

The movement to create a "modern" system of public education in China can be traced back to the Qing government's promulgation of a reform package known as the New Policies in the first decade of the twentieth century. In 1903, the Qing court decreed that Confucian academies be converted into elementary and middle schools, with Western-style curricula. The new schools were to be supplemented at the higher level with technical and teacher training institutes. The court stipulated that at least one upper

elementary school be maintained by local authorities in each county, one middle school in each prefecture and one post-secondary school in each province. Additionally, lower primary schools were to be set up in every village.<sup>100</sup> The newly ascendant republican government affirmed its commitment to the project in 1912, declaring that teacher and practical training courses be formally incorporated into the curriculum of regular middle schools to meet China's social and industrial needs.<sup>101</sup>

Building on the central government's endeavor to create a formal system of public schools, a new generation of education activists and professional teachers immersed themselves in a variety of projects aimed at enhancing popular education and practical training. Disillusioned with the machinations of high-level politics, many of these activists felt that the key to restoring China's vitality lay in spreading literacy, extending education to rural areas, and promoting teacher training and vocational instruction. Insisting that vocational training constituted one of China's most pressing needs, former provincial education commissioner Huang Yanpei organized the Chinese Association for Vocational Education in 1918.<sup>102</sup> Meanwhile, a group of individuals – Guo Bingwen, Jiang Menglin, Tao Xingzhi, and Hu Shi – who had studied under John Dewey at Columbia University's Teachers College sought to introduce Dewey's ideas on supplanting passive learning with activities aimed at nurturing intellectual curiosity and

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<sup>100</sup> Pepper, *Radicalism and Education*, 60. At this time, primary schools were divided into lower (four grades) and upper (two grades) levels. In 1922, a decree stipulated that they be combined into a single six-year program of study.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 60.

<sup>102</sup> Boorman, *Biographical Dictionary*, 211. Huang, a well-known proponent of education reform, served as the education commissioner for Jiangsu Province from 1912 to 1914.



independent thinking in the child to China.<sup>103</sup> In 1919, at the height of the New Culture Movement, Guo, Jiang, Tao, Huang, and others formed the Society for the Promotion of New Education and launched a monthly journal, 新教育 *Xin jiaoyu* (New Education), as forums to discuss and disseminate their views on new learning to a broader audience in China.<sup>104</sup>

Among this group of reformists, Tao Xingzhi perhaps stood out as the most innovative and influential in education circles of the time. Heavily influenced by the ideas of both John Dewey and the eminent Ming dynasty thinker, Wang Yangming, Tao insisted that true knowledge could be acquired only through experience.<sup>105</sup> He attacked the conventional Chinese practices of rote memorization and gaining knowledge for its own sake, advocating a pedagogical approach grounded in the “unity of teaching, learning, and doing” 教學做合意 (*jiaoxuezuoheyi*). The instructor’s primary role, according to Tao, was to foster the child’s development through guiding the latter with hands-on exercises. Tao was given a broader platform for his ideas when he became editor of 新教育 and the first director of the aforementioned society for new education,

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<sup>103</sup> Guo and Tao strove to implement Dewey’s approach while serving respectively as president and dean of Nanjing Higher Normal School, one of the top teacher training institutions of the time. To this end, they recruited several others who had studied under Dewey to serve as instructors. See Keenan, *The Dewey Experiment*, 57-58.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 81; Pepper, *Radicalism and Education*, 90.

<sup>105</sup> Keenan, *The Dewey Experiment*, 93. Tao initially adopted the courtesy name, Zhixing 知行, out of reverence for Wang Yangming and his principle of the “unity of knowledge and action” (*zhixingheyi* 知行合一), that action without knowledge serves no purpose and that knowledge without action is of no value. Subsequently, Tao – placing greater emphasis on action/experience – reversed the order. See Boorman, *Biographical Dictionary*, 245.

reorganized as the Chinese National Association for the Improvement of Education, in the early 1920s.<sup>106</sup>

Tao subsequently directed his energy toward China's nascent mass education movement, setting up the National Association for the Promotion of Mass Education, with James Yan and Zhu Qihui, the wife of Xiong Xiling, in 1923 and organizing evening schools, reading circles and "each one teach one" programs, in which a newly literate person would teach at least one illiterate.<sup>107</sup> In 1927, Tao shifted his attention, once again, to rural education, founding the Xiaozhuang Experimental Rural Normal School outside of Nanjing city. The training institute was designed to impart to prospective teachers the skills needed to run a village school, and to acclimatize them to the conditions of rural life.<sup>108</sup> Though varied in form, each of these efforts were anchored in the conviction that China's reinvigoration was predicated upon the creation of an informed citizenry both capable and willing to undertake public duties, a transformation which would require extending education to every nook of society.

The push to popularize education also triggered the rise of a new species of relief organizations for parentless and penurious children. During the quarter-century period between 1910 and 1935, a series of juvenile institutions, styled variously as poor children's homes 貧兒院 (*pineryuan*), 苦兒院 (*kueryuan*), orphanages 孤兒院 (*gueryuan*), and charitable homes for the young 惠兒院 (*huieryuan*), 慈幼局 (*ciyouyuan*), sprouted up throughout China to take in and rehabilitate disadvantaged youngsters.

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<sup>106</sup> By 1924, the association claimed an active membership of 2400 teachers.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 91.

<sup>108</sup> Pepper, *Radicalism and Education*, 93; Boorman, *Biographical Dictionary*, 245.

Though these organizations were launched on an ad hoc basis, a sampling of thirteen such homes reveals three striking similarities among them.<sup>109</sup> First, irrespective of their formal name, many admitted a combination of orphans, half-orphans and children from destitute families between the ages of eight and fifteen *sui*, providing them with on site room and board as well as clothing.<sup>110</sup> Second, virtually all of these centers ran a six-year program of study, consisting of both academic and vocational training courses (e.g. woodworking, tailoring) designed to equip their wards to be self-sufficient. Whereas charity schools were tacked on to some late Qing 育嬰堂 (*yuyingtang*) as auxiliary programs, academic and technical training curricula arguably comprised the core feature of the new relief homes. Third, most of the children's homes relied on a combination of state and private resources: regularly distributed official subsidies, contributions from merchant firms, individual donations, and endowed property or funds. (For a direct comparison of these institutes, see Table 1.2.)

Records show that while gentrymen, local bureaucrats and commercial magnates continued to be instrumental in the initiation of these projects, education activists and a new crop of professionally trained teachers emerged as key players, as well. The case of the Jiangbei Charitable Home for the Young illustrates the collaborative participation among various groups in these activities. In 1926, three bankers – Tan Danai, Zhou Zuomin and Zhu Yisheng – raised a sum of 80,000 yuan to set up the home and finance its operations. The founders invited various members of the Huian county elite –近士

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<sup>109</sup> Here I am drawing primarily on a series of secondary accounts of individual institutions that belong to the *Wenshi ziliao* 文史资料 project. These materials are supplemented with data from provincial and municipal gazetteers. Full citations are provided below Table 1.2, at the end of the chapter.

<sup>110</sup> In nearly every case, children entered these institutions through a procedure whereby a relative or community member provided an introduction on their behalf, followed by formal registration.

(*jinsshi*) Tian Da'nai, 舉人(*juren*) Zhu Bangxian, and “big philanthropist” 大善人 (*dashanren*) Gu Qiulan – to serve on the Board of Executives 董會(*donghui*), but when it came to the home’s director 院長(*yuanzhang*), they chose recent Beijing Normal University graduate, Li Hongzeng.<sup>111</sup> And while all of the institutions in this sample adopted the new-style curricula, at least two drew directly from Tao Xingzhi’s projects. The Changzhou Poor Children’s Home, founded by education activist Feng Xiaoqing in 1922, recruited graduates from Tao’s Xiaozhuang Normal School to serve as heads of its education and general affairs departments.<sup>112</sup> Meanwhile, the co-founders of Nanjing Orphanage visited Tao at Xiaozhuang, requesting that he recommend graduates from his school to serve as instructors at their institution. At their invitation, Tao also made regular trips to the orphanage, where he surveyed its operations and lectured on the importance of imbuing youngsters with a love for labor and a cooperative spirit through hands-on training.<sup>113</sup>

The wedding of the new learning to child relief in this era, however, can be seen most clearly in the modus operandi of Xiong Xiling’s Fragrant Hills Charitable Home for the Young. Having obtained the 近士 (*jinsshi*) degree and appointment to the prestigious Hanlin Academy by the age of 24 in 1895, Xiong went on to establish an impressive career in politics during the final decade of Qing rule, culminating in his appointment as

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<sup>111</sup> Zhao, “Jiangbei Ciyouyuan,” 103. Though the examination system was abolished in 1905, many elites continued to derive social status and prestige from the old types of civil service degrees well into the Republican period.

<sup>112</sup> Luo, “Changzhou pineryuan,” 153.

<sup>113</sup> Wang, Nanjing gueryuan chuangjian shimo, 198.

Premier 國務總理 (*guowu zongli*) of the new republic in July, 1913.<sup>114</sup> But Yuan Shikai's overt repudiation of the principles of representative government prompted Xiong to step down from his post and withdraw altogether from national politics in February, 1914.<sup>115</sup> Thereafter, his appointment as the superintendent of capital area flood relief following the deluge in Zhili (Hebei) in September, 1917 marked the beginning of a new phase in Xiong's public career.<sup>116</sup> What began as an official duty to coordinate emergency relief evolved into an abiding passion for charitable work, as Xiong shifted his focus from a relatively limited group of young disaster victims to the plight of disadvantaged children in society at large.

Before examining Xiong's charitable home for the young, it should be pointed out that he too became an advocate for education reform after easing into semi-retirement. Trained in the classics and a generation older than Tao Xingzhi and his cohort, Xiong nevertheless joined these individuals to help found the Chinese National Association for the Improvement of Education and emerged as one of the organization's leading figures in the 1920s. In fact, the association was eventually merged into the department of kindergarten teacher training at the Fragrant Hills facility.<sup>117</sup> When Xiong was serving as the society's executive director in 1923, his wife, Zhu Qihui, in conjunction with Tao and fellow reformer James Yan, launched the aforementioned National Association for the

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<sup>114</sup> Boorman, *Biographical Dictionary*, 108.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 109.

<sup>116</sup> Xiong, "Xiangshan ciyouyuan fazhan shi," 44; Zhou, *Xiong Xiling zhuan*, 446, 557.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, 500. The association was absorbed into the Fragrant Hills home in October, 1930.

Promotion of Mass Education in Beijing.<sup>118</sup> As the chief fund-raiser for the latter organization, Zhu was named its first executive director. Most important, Xiong's and Zhu's professional affiliation and sustained contact with the younger generation of reformers figured prominently in the formation of the Fragrant Hills home's approaches to learning and child development; several of its programs, as seen below, were informed by the ideas of Tao Xingzhi and others who had brought Dewey's methods to China.

Xiong's relief mission underwent a fundamental transformation in spring, 1918. Though he set up the Beijing Charitable Bureau for the Young 北京慈幼局 (*Beijing ciyouju*) in fall, 1917, as a temporary shelter for uprooted children, some six months later, as the anticipated closing date drew near, Xiong decided he could not simply disperse the roughly 200 youngsters who had not been reclaimed by kin onto the city streets. With the help of Xu Shichang, president of the fractured Chinese republic, Xiong persuaded the former imperial household to grant the Park of Tranquility and Peace 靜宜園 (*Jingyiyuan*) in the Fragrant Hills, west of the capital, as a site to house a permanent institute.<sup>119</sup> The complex, rechristened the Fragrant Hills Charitable Home for the Young 北京慈幼院 (*Xiangshan ciyouyuan*), formally opened its doors to a body of 700 children in October, 1920.<sup>120</sup> Thereafter, admittance was officially extended to orphans and children from

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<sup>118</sup> It is worth noting that Zhu Qihui's nephew, Zhu Jingnong, was an important figure in the education reform movement of the 1920s. Among other undertakings, Jingnong headed a textbook project in support of the curriculum adopted by the Chinese school system in 1923, compiled a primer for James Yan's mass education program, and edited a supplement on rural education in *Shenbao*. See Boorman, *Biographical Dictionary*, 444.

<sup>119</sup> Xiong, "Xiangshan ciyouyuan fazhan shi," 45.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, 45. This total included the roughly 200 unclaimed flood victims as well as about 500 poor children from Manchu banner families, who were apparently admitted in exchange for the former imperial household's grant of parkland for the new facility.

poor families between the ages of four and fifteen *sui*.<sup>121</sup> Each youngster who entered the home was provided with free room and board, clothing, and medical care as well as instruction and study materials.

Xiong envisioned his institute as an amalgam of three conventionally distinct entities: school, family, and society. The child's experiences in these three realms were to be mediated through Tao Xingzhi's approach of learning by doing. Formal education began with kindergarten, in which children aged four to six *sui* were trained to observe social customs 禮儀 (*liyi*); learned crafts; and were taught the principles of family order.<sup>122</sup> Next, they entered the home's elementary school, which offered a six-year curriculum of standard academic subjects: Mandarin, geography, history, chemistry, English, music, drawing, etc.<sup>123</sup> But Xiong also required all primary school students to engage in one or two hours of manual work 勞作 (*laozuo*) each afternoon at one of the institute's industrial, agricultural or commercial workshops. This served as the foreground for the labor training they would receive in later years. Upon completing elementary school, boys who had shown academic promise were filtered into the home's four-year middle school, their female counterparts into its normal school.<sup>124</sup> The normal school focused primarily on teacher training for kindergartens and rural schools, but also

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<sup>121</sup> Xiong, "Beiping Xiangshan ciyouyuan," 4. The home's procedures dictated that a representative (i.e. relative, neighbor) of a qualified child must register at the organization's officer of directors, which would in turn dispatch an agent to the youngster's home to verify that his or her situation met the entrance requirements.

<sup>122</sup> Zhou, *Xiong Xiling zhuan*, 474.

<sup>123</sup> Xiong, "Beiping Xiangshan ciyouyuan," 6.

<sup>124</sup> The middle-school track was designed to provide academically gifted children an opportunity to advance to college. The *ciyouyuan* extended loans and grants to cover tuition and living costs for each of its university-bound students and arranged separate housing for them at Qinghua and Yanjing universities.

taught domestic skills such as cooking, sewing and family management.<sup>125</sup> Meanwhile, primary school graduates with poorer academic records entered the department of vocational studies 職業部 (*zhiyebu*), a four-year program comprised of knowledge-based classes in mornings and extensive training at one of the institute's thirty workshops in afternoons.<sup>126</sup> The program's central objective consisted in enabling adolescents to select a suitable career track and cultivating in them the practical skills that would lead to self-sufficiency.

Xiong maintained a firm belief in the family as the primary instrument of socialization, but took the classical view that ascribed unmitigated authority to the natural kin unit and turned it on its head. Except cases in which a parent had become ill or died, children were strictly forbidden from visiting their natal families during their term of residence at the institute. Xiong also stipulated that when children raised at the *ciyouyuan* had grown up, their marriages had to be approved by the home's director; this meant that birth parents and blood relatives were forced to disavow their customary right to arrange marital unions, one of the most essential prerogatives of the traditional Chinese family.<sup>127</sup> The logic behind these interdictions was rooted in Xiong's conviction that the family environments from which these children emerged were rife with vulgar habits. In

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<sup>125</sup> Zhou, *Xiong Xiling zhuan*, 477.

<sup>126</sup> Agricultural training grounds for boys included a vegetable garden, silkworm raising room, horticulture and apiculture areas, a forestry zone and a livestock feeding area. Industrial training grounds included chemical, steel, woodworking, pottery and wool dye workshops. Workshops for girls offered training in embroidery, sewing, cooking, weaving, spinning, printing, and engraving (*Ibid.*, 472).

<sup>127</sup> Xiong, "Beiping Xiangshan," 3.



his view, children who retained contact with their kin group were prone to pick up immoral customs and degenerative practices, a risk to be averted at all costs.<sup>128</sup>

Xiong hardly wished to do away with the institution of family; rather, he sought to reconstruct it on his own terms. He set up a “family headquarters” 家庭總部 (*jiating zongbu*) within the *ciyouyuan* to implement a new family life for children below the age of ten.<sup>129</sup> The youngsters were grouped ten apiece into “small families” 小家庭 (*xiaojiating*), each placed under the guidance and care of a nanny. They were trained to use fictive kin terms, such as ‘older brother,’ ‘younger sister,’ etc. when addressing their “siblings” and ‘mother’ when speaking to their nanny. Additionally, head nannies held “family meetings” each week to discuss successes and shortcomings within the unit. Xiong hoped that the youngsters would develop “feelings of filial piety and companionship that exceeded those among flesh and blood.”<sup>130</sup> Clothes and bedding materials were to be stitched by the children themselves, practices designed to impress upon them the principles of familial frugality and self-sufficiency. In sum, the 小家庭 (*xiaojiating*) was created to serve as a dynamic training ground in which children cultivated proper moral qualities, learned how to manage interpersonal relations, and developed a sense of commitment to an entity that transcended the self. Clinging to the view of the family as the basic building block of the social order, Xiong felt that the next generation’s absorption of these values and traits was an essential precondition for

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<sup>128</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>129</sup> Xiong, “Xiangshan ciyouyuan fazhan shi,” 63.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid., 64.

achieving the goal of enhancing the solidarity of communities and, in turn, fostering the integrity of a nation fraught with divisions.<sup>131</sup>

The endeavor to create a simulated family environment at the 慈幼院 (*ciyouyuan*) was pursued in conjunction with an undertaking to set up mock village communities at the complex and new rural settlements in society at large. Whereas youngsters aged 10 *sui* and below formed the 小家庭 (*xiajiating*), older children were treated as residents of one of the institute's eight "villages" 村 (*cun*), the term by which its dormitories were known. Each "village" was comprised of several "households" 戶 (*hu*) of four to twenty students. The *ciyouyuan* established a number of administrative positions and offices – mayor, village head, judge, assembly members; section chiefs in charge of cultural activities and public health; a mediation office, etc. – to assist with the management of affairs in the "village" and the community of the entire compound.<sup>132</sup> These posts were filled by child residents on the basis of assembly elections, enabling the youngsters to acquire hands-on experience in administration and the workings of democracy. Xiong referred to the institutions as "student self-government facilities" 學生自治的設備 (*xueshang zizhi de shebei*), an explicit allusion to the local self-government movement in early twentieth-century China.<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> Xiong elaborated on the connections between family education and civic training in a compendium of 180 articles, entitled *Ertong zhijia fa* 兒童治家法. In these, he placed emphasis on, among other issues, the ways of endowing children with a sense of societal responsibility and patriotism (Zhou, *Xiong Xiling zhuan*, 489).

<sup>132</sup> Xiong, "Beiping Xiangshan ciyouyuan," 9.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, 9. The local self-government movement in the late Qing and early Republican era involved the creation of sub-bureaucratic assemblies through which locally elected leaders could deliberate issues relevant to the community and assist in the administration of public services. Several statesmen insisted that the implementation of local self-government was a crucial step toward revitalizing the Chinese nation.

Xiong's scheme for revitalizing local society, however, was not limited to the initiation of applied training and education programs at the complex. The home also planned to set up a new village near Fragrant Hills to serve as a residential community for wards of the 慈幼院 (*ciyouyuan*) after they had grown up. Xiong envisioned a scenario in which the hamlet's residents "would form families and establish careers, completely organizing a new society" from the bottom up.<sup>134</sup> The community project would then be replicated in both north Jiangsu and the Suiyuan special region, two areas in which the 慈幼院 (*ciyouyuan*) retained landholdings. Filled with productive, socially responsible individuals from the Fragrant Hills home, the new villages could serve as models for rural renewal in China.

The various programs implemented at the *ciyouyuan* embodied the essence of Tao Xingzhi's concept of "the unity of teaching, learning, and doing" 教學做合意 (*jiaoxue zuo heyi*). Though manifest in nearly all of the home's activities, Tao's principle can be seen most clearly in two particular initiatives. One was what Xiong referred to as "design education" 設計的教育 (*sheji de jiaoyu*).<sup>135</sup> On the basis of this model of learning, children assumed an active role in the planning of all matters of community life. The students, for instance, designed flower terraces and planted flowers in each of the "village" gardens. Other examples included their lead in the repair and naming of roads within the complex and in the drafting of regulations for the library. Xiong specified that the home's teachers would stand at their side, providing guidance when necessary.<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> Xiong, "Beiping Xiangshan," 27.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

Second, Xiong insisted that vocational programs adopt a strictly hands-on, practical approach to learning. Children initially learned the arts of agriculture, industry and commerce – planting seeds, feeding domesticated animals, using farm tools, purchasing and selling commodities, operating factory machines, etc – by performing them under the guidance of instructors, only receiving theoretical instruction thereafter.<sup>137</sup> Moreover, Xiong advocated using the organizational structure of a company at each workshop. Each of the institution’s workshops appointed groups of shareholders, a board of directors, managers, etc. Whereas both instructors and students served as staff, the shareholders and directors were picked exclusively from among children with honest reputations. Wages and stock dividends, derived from the sale of products manufactured or grown by a given workshop, were issued in the form of a special currency which could be saved in the home’s bank or used to purchase clothes, shoes, study items, etc. from the staff of the 慈幼院 (*ciyouyuan*). These schemes were designed not only to impart crucial job skills, but also to help children adapt with ease to life at the workplace as well as to instill habits of frugality and a measure of familiarity with the process of buying and selling goods.<sup>138</sup>

To sum up, Xiong regarded the orphans and destitute children who entered the Fragrant Hills charitable home as anything but inert or helpless objects of relief. Rather, they were considered to be children every bit as capable of maturing into educated, self-reliant, and socially responsible members of the community as boys and girls from wealthy clans. The primary barrier to the cultivation of these potentialities in the

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<sup>137</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>138</sup> Xiong, “Beiping Xiangshan,” 14, 18-19.

parentless and the impoverished, in Xiong's view, was the distinctive absence of a stable and nurturing family setting. Seeking to repair this deficiency, the home initiated kin-, community-, and work-like units in which its wards would learn, through a combination of direct participation and proper guidance, how to behave responsibly in each of these contexts. Most important, Xiong and his colleagues did not view them simply as lone, pitiable creatures, merely in need of life-sustaining aid, but rather as youngsters to be raised and trained in a manner consistent with the task of building socially cohesive, self-sufficient rural communities, a key step in the drive to revitalize the nation as a whole. The act of rehabilitating the orphaned or poor child, in other words, was tantamount to restoring well-being to the social body at large.

Its innovative approaches to child relief notwithstanding, the Fragrant Hills home followed the conventional practice in Chinese philanthropy of relying on financial support from both governmental agencies and private actors. Proceeds from the sale of relief grain by the state-run Flood Supervisory Office, as well as interest on bonds held by the Ministry of Finance subsidized the home's construction and operations in its early years.<sup>139</sup> But a steadily expanding student body and range of programs forced Xiong to seek additional sources of funding. In 1923, he secured a pledge of support from the head of the Yangzhou Shipping Company, committing salt merchants in its employ to donate an annual sum of 20,000 元 *yuan*.<sup>140</sup> Through joint negotiations with the Ministry of Finance and Jiangsu Customs Office in 1925, Xiong also arranged for his organization to

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<sup>139</sup> Zhou, *Xiong Xiling zhuan*, 463. Xiong had personally called on the head of the Ministry of Finance, Pan Fu, to request the use of these funds. This and other arrangements suggest that Xiong's high-level contacts among the political and business elite were crucial to the home's long-term survival and expansion.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, 481. The monthly grants from salt merchants commenced in late 1924.

receive a monthly allocation of 3000 *yuan* from tax revenues generated at the Shanghai wharf.<sup>141</sup> A few years later, when several of its key sources of support had evaporated, the home turned to the newly ascendant Nationalist Government for assistance, securing an agreement from the central authorities to provide a monthly grant of 10,000 *yuan*.<sup>142</sup> In addition to these regular subsidies, the home was supported by a variety of ad hoc grants from relief organizations and donations from private groups and individuals.<sup>143</sup>

Despite its creativity and resourcefulness in securing funds, the Fragrant Hills home began to face menacing shortfalls by the mid 1930s. Thus, Xiong decided to scale back operations and to reduce substantially the size of the student body. Not long after these cutbacks were initiated, the Japanese army launched a major offensive into north China, further jeopardizing the sustainability of programs at the home. Mao Chanwen, who succeeded Xiong as director in late 1937, thus decided to relocate a few of the organization's remaining programs to non-occupied areas in southern China, leaving the kindergarten and primary school to be run by the Beijing Red Cross.<sup>144</sup> After the war, the numbers of children entering the Fragrant Hills complex increased markedly, but the dynamism that had distinguished its initiatives during the 1920s and early 1930s had long since faded. In 1949, the Fragrant Hills home was placed under the direction of the

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<sup>141</sup> Ibid., 481.

<sup>142</sup> Zhou, *Xiong Xiling zhuan*, 486-487. The Nanjing government began to allocate subsidies in 1930, but they were subsequently reduced and then, by 1934, eliminated altogether.

<sup>143</sup> Aid organizations included the Hunan Provisional Relief Association, the Western Hunan Aid and Comfort Office, and the Relief Affairs Commission, a division of the government's Department of Relief Affairs. For a listing of individual and group donors and the amounts given, see Zhou, *Xiong Xiling zhuan*, 481-482.

<sup>144</sup> Xiong married Mao Chanwen after his first wife, Zhu Zhiwei, passed away in 1931. When Xiong died in December 1937, Mao became the home's director (Li, "Beijing Xiangshan," 104-5. She would emerge as a major figure in the child welfare movement during the war to resist Japan.

Beijing Civil Affairs Bureau, the municipal agency set up by the new Communist government to coordinate social welfare. But by 1955 the organization was stripped of its charitable essence and, after undergoing several rounds of reorganization, eventually converted into a middle school.

## **Conclusion**

The child relief movement that took root in late imperial and early Republican China encompassed two distinct spheres of philanthropic activity. From the Song to the late Qing periods, the essence of the movement was encapsulated in the Chinese expression, 慈幼 (*ciyou*), a term which denoted the benevolent act of saving the lives of infants who suffered desertion or who were particularly exposed to the risk of infanticide. Though some philanthropists touted aid-based schemes aimed at deterring such acts, incessantly high rates of abandonment induced the majority to throw their support behind institutional care. The foundling home, known as 慈幼局 (*ciyouju*) in the Song and 育嬰堂 (*yuyingtang*) in the Qing, thus emerged as the predominant relief organization for the young, with the wet nurse, specially equipped to sustain new life, as its central figure. While the bulk of available resources were committed to ensuring the survival of babies, relatively little planning was devoted to their future; at best, it was hoped that they might be adopted into decent families. Moreover, the moral imperative to save young lives found an ever increasing degree of expression during the Qing, as evidenced by both the formation of networks for transferring foundlings and the spread of “infant preservation societies.”

The post-Taiping period of reconstruction marked the onset of a critical turning point in child relief work in China. As Lower Yangzi officials and local elites endeavored

to eradicate the many manifestations of societal breakdown and moral decay that they saw plaguing the region, some began to view rootless children as potentially destabilizing elements. Those committed to restoring order thus insisted that waifs be given the skills to earn a living, lest they be drawn into the swelling ranks of ne'er-do-wells. This line of thinking underpinned a campaign to greatly expand the number of charity schools throughout Jiangsu province; efforts to affix such schools and training programs to foundling homes; and the founding – albeit on a far smaller scale – of institutions dedicated exclusively to sheltering and training displaced juveniles.

However, it was not until the 1910s and 1920s, when the movement to reform public education was sweeping across China, that the more complex notion of the deprived child resonated with the ambitions of social activists on a national scale. On a concrete level, the coalescence of these ideas gave rise to a new set of relief organizations: orphanages, poor children's homes, and charitable homes for the young. Moreover, owing to key changes in China's political milieu, the objective of these organizations differed subtly from that of initiatives which appeared in the post-Taiping era. Whereas the earlier programs were designed to prevent children from degenerating into riffraff who might subvert local stability, those of the Republican era purposed to mold them into individuals who would take an active part in the rebuilding of communities, an effort that lay at the heart of national construction. In sum, Xiong Xiling and other leading philanthropists of his day redefined the core mission of 慈幼 (*ciyou*); in addition to preserving the lives of endangered newborns, it now encompassed the task of equipping juveniles with the tools – a basic education, job skills, and an ethical grounding – that would fit them for community life.



This study also suggests that the enterprise to assist the young in China was rooted, at bottom, in concerns over the dissolution of families. Late imperial elites deemed properly regulated families to be the basic building blocks of a sound social order. The family served as the indispensable unit of socialization for children, teaching them the skills for survival and the duties they had toward others. Gluing the family together, elites felt, was a bond between parent and child that carried a set of reciprocal obligations to support one another, especially in the vulnerable stages of youth and old age. Philanthropists thus placed primacy on forms of aid designed to bolster the parent-child tie and preserve the solidarity of the family. In the case of abandonment, where the bond had been effectively severed, though, they endeavored to formally incorporate the child into a family through adoption or marriage. When turning to the Republican period, we saw that Xiong Xiling contrived one of the more innovative approaches to restoring family order. Abandoning the notion that a child's natal parents were necessarily best suited to offer practical and moral guidance, he created surrogate family structures that would serve this function. The child relief movement in China thus grew less from an impulse to protect the individual rights of the deprived child, as it had in the West, than from a desire to facilitate his or her integration into the family and the community.

Finally, these findings enable us to develop a new way of conceptualizing the organizational dynamics of social assistance in China. The pioneering studies of Fuma (2005) and Leung (1997) have drawn a crucial distinction between Song and Qing charitable enterprises, stressing that whereas government officials assumed responsibility for initiating and administering the former, private associations took the lead in establishing and managing the latter. Furthermore, Leung (1995) observed that the Qing

government's resurgent commitment to philanthropy in the eighteenth century waned to the point of being fully eclipsed by the extra-bureaucratic elite's growing activism in the nineteenth: "In China it was the reduction of the state's moral lead in providing social assistance to children that allowed the final takeover of the child by the community."<sup>145</sup> The previous scholarship has thus clarified significant shifts from official to private leadership in philanthropy during the late imperial period, but such analysis, seemingly informed by Western-derived notions of separate and distinct spheres of state and society activity, has drawn relatively little attention to areas of interaction between the two.

This research, by contrast, reveals the centrality of sustained cooperation between state agents and extra-governmental elites in the administration of aid for the young from the early Qing onward. The collaborative approach was articulated clearly in imperial edicts of 1724, 1741, and 1866, wherein successive rulers pledged financial support and honorary recognition to local organizations that sheltered foundlings and the poor. Sovereigns thus cast themselves as a font of benevolence and compassion, while leaving the administration of these projects in the hands of community leaders. Indeed, private actors played a leading role in charitable programs grounded in a moral imperative to help the needy from the early Qing to the Republic. The state, on the other hand, tended to take the initiative in relief only in times when social stability was undermined by the force of manmade catastrophe or natural disaster. However, just as privately-established charities commonly drew on official subsidies to help finance their operations, the government likewise called on local gentry and merchants to provide managerial and

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<sup>145</sup> Leung, "Relief Institutions," 269. In fact, Leung asserts that the historical trend in China was the reverse of that in the West, where the modern welfare state supplanted the church as the "sacred protector of [the child's] life."

fundraising support for its initiatives for the displaced and dispossessed. As the following chapters demonstrate, this pattern of state-society cooperation in Chinese relief for the young obtained down to the middle of the twentieth century.

**Table 1.1: Adoption at Shanghai Hall for nurturing infants 上海育嬰堂, 1839-42**

Numbers of children at Shanghai hall

Year	Original number	New arrivals	Deceased	Adopted	End of Year total	Percentage adopted (excluding deceased)
1839	35	128	55	75	23	77%
1840	23	111	58	53	23	70%
1841	23	130	78	50	35	59%
1842	35	126	58	25	42	32%

Source: “Report of the Foundling Hospital at Shanghai” (1845) in *Chinese Repository* (translated from the original for the *Chinese Repository*) 14.4 (1845): 88

**Table 1.2: Sample of Republican-era child relief institutions**

Institution Name	Location	Year founded	Funding	Type(s) and age range of children	Curriculum
Suzhou poor children's home 蘇州苦兒院	Suzhou, Jiangsu Province	1911	Individual donations; grant from Jiangsu Civil Affairs Office, Chamber of Commerce	Boys from poor families; 10-16 <i>sui</i>	4 years academic, 3 years technical
Kaiguo jiyuan no. 1 poor Children's Home 開國紀元第一貧兒教養院	Nanjing, Jiangsu Province	1912	donations from local notables; fixed subsidy from government	Orphans	Primary – senior high school (academic); agrarian education at a specially designated farm near Nanjing
Zhejiang poor children's home 浙江省立貧兒院	Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province	1913	Provincial taxes, donations from society	Poor children and orphans; 7-13 <i>sui</i>	6 grades of academic education; vocational training: farming, tailoring, sewing
Huadi orphanage 華地孤兒院	Guangzhou, Guangdong Province	1913	Monthly grant from government; contributions from Nanyang Tobacco Company, individual donations	Mostly orphans without support, small number of girl slaves; 8 <i>sui</i> and older	6 grades of academic education; vocational training: rattan work, wood work
Anqing poor children's home 安慶苦兒院	Anqing, Anhui Province	1917	Contributions from rice guild; monthly grant from provincial governor	Mostly orphans from poor families, some half-orphans; 8-12 <i>sui</i>	standard academic subjects; normal school; vocational school
Changzhou poor children's home 常州貧兒院	Changzhou, Jiangsu Province	1922	Individual donations (esp. from overseas Chinese); rent on corporate property	Poor children and orphans; 10 <i>sui</i> and older	6 grades of academic education; two factories for training
Ji County fumin	Weihui	1923	Donation of land from	Orphans	?

orphanage 汲縣福民孤兒院	prefecture, Henan Province		widow of Ren Shaotang; sale of products		
Hunan rural orphanage 湘鄉孤兒所	Xiangxian city, Hunan Province	1923	Donations from “big clans;” subsidy from county government, corporate property	Orphans, half-orphans; 6-13 <i>sui</i>	Academic courses in morning; vocational courses in afternoon
Fujian benevolent home for children 福建惠兒院	Fuzhou, Fujian Province	1923	Donations of money, factory equipment and supplies from society; fixed subsidy from provincial governor	Poor children; 10 <i>sui</i> and older	6 years of primary schooling followed by vocational training: rattan work, raising silkworms, painting lacquerware, sewing
Quanzhou kaiyuan charitable children’s home 泉州開元慈兒院	Quanzhou, Fujian Province	1925	Funds from provincial and county treasuries; interest on endowment, individual donations	Orphans, half-orphans, street urchins; 10 <i>sui</i> and older	Primary school academic curriculum; training in woodworking, sewing and bamboo work
Jiangbei charitable home for the young 江北慈幼院	Huaian county, Jiangsu Province	1926	Interest on investments	Boys from poor families; 12-15 <i>sui</i>	Six year primary school academic curriculum; opened student- run shop and bank
Liling orphanage 醴陵孤兒院	Liling county, Hunan Province	1930	Raised funds from gentry and others in four nearby townships; land endowment; revenue from factories	Orphans, poor children; 7-12 <i>sui</i>	Four years of primary school : each day two grades engage in academic study, two grades in labor training (i.e. dying, sewing, clay work, rattan work)
Nanjing orphanage 南京孤兒院	Nanjing, Jiangsu Province	1934	Rent from corporate property; revenue from the home’s agricultural products	Orphans, poor children; 10 <i>sui</i> and older	Standard primary school curriculum; labor classes: weaving, barbering, cobbling; grew

vegetables and  
raised fish to  
promote self-  
sufficiency

Sources: (a) *Suzhou wenshi ziliao xuanji* 苏州文史资料选辑, 1983 (vol. 3), pp. 157-161; (b) *Anhui wenshi ziliao* 安徽文史资料, 1983 (vol. 7), pp. 147-152; (c) *Nanjing minzheng zhi* 南京民政志, pp. 327-330; (d) *Hangzhou wenshi ziliao* 杭州文史资料, 1983 (vol. 2), pp. 98-100; (e) *Hangzhou wenshi ziliao* 杭州文史资料, 1984 (vol. 3), pp. 78-87; (f) *Fangcun wenshi*, 1989 (vol. 2), pp. 34-39; (g) *Guangzhou shi zhi* 广州市志, 1995 (vol. 5), p. 509. (h) *Anqing wenshi ziliao* 安庆文史资料, 1983 (vol. 7), pp.179-187; (i) *Changzhou wenshi ziliao* 常州文史资料, 1983 (vol.7), pp. 151-153; (j) *Weilian wenshi ziliao* 卫辉文史资料, 1989 (vol.2) 91-92; (k) *Xiangxiang wenshi ziliao* 湘乡文史资料, 1989 (vol.4), 125-128; (l) *Gulou wenshi* 鼓楼文史, 1988 (vol.1), 25-28 (m) *Quanzhou wenshi ziliao* 泉州文史资料(vol. 16), pp. 58-67 (o) *Fujian zhenji xiaoxi* 福建振济消息 1940 (no. 12), p.4; (p) *Huian wenshi ziliao* 淮安文史资料, 1985 (vol. 2), 102-109; (q) *Lilin wenshi* 醴陵文史, 1988 (vol. 5), 86-89; (r) *Jiangsu wenshi ziliao xuanji* 江苏文史资料选辑, 1986, (vol. 18), 193-206.

## **Chapter 2: Saving the Young, Ordering the City: Child Relief in Republican Shanghai**

The degree of innovation and expansionism in child relief work during the first half of the twentieth century was unsurpassed by that of any other period of similar length in Chinese history, approached only by the dynamic spread of foundling homes in the late Song (1220-1278) and early Qing (1655-1722) eras. And though this activism did not produce a centralized apparatus to aid the young by the close of the Republican period, it did create the building blocks upon which such a system would be erected in the early People's Republic. This and the following chapter explore Republican-era developments through an examination of what I contend were the two primary forces that propelled and shaped efforts to reform child welfare in twentieth century China: modern urbanization and the social crisis nation-building efforts of the 1930s and 1940s. Urbanization refers here not only to the sizeable influx of migrants, refugees and fortune-seekers to China's cities, but also and perhaps more significantly to the growing attention among municipal leaders to social problems of a distinctively modern hue and the concomitant development of new administrative machinery to combat them.

Efforts to "modernize" administrative institutions in China's cities appeared on an ad hoc basis during the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but the central government's promulgation of the New Policy measures (1901-08) injected the urban reform movement with a degree of uniformity and vitality little seen prior to the turn of the century. Municipal administrators were becoming attuned to the ways that dense concentrations of people, especially the benighted, the displaced and the uneducated, undermined the semblance of orderliness they so craved. The pilfering of goods by petty thieves and hucksters, the harassment and unsightly spectacle of beggars and "pheasants" (i.e.

streetwalkers), and the rapid transmission of infectious diseases amid the squalid conditions of the urban underclass all came to be seen as threats to public wellbeing.<sup>146</sup> Responding to the central government's directives and drawing on foreign models for inspiration, early twentieth-century city officials embarked upon local reforms that included setting up public schools to popularize learning and civility 文明 (*wenming*), a modern police force that placed officers on the beat to bolster public security, and public health bureaus to promote hygiene and check the spread of communicable ailments.<sup>147</sup> The impulse to spread civility, curb disorderliness and promote health in the city would also ripple over into new levels of official participation in social assistance programs for disadvantaged groups, including parentless children.

The following discussion focuses on the ways that the sphere of child welfare within the greater municipality of Shanghai was expanded throughout the first half of the twentieth century. While Shanghai can hardly be considered a typical Chinese city, it was its unique characteristics that contributed to its stature as a leading center for child relief initiatives in Republican China, making it a useful site to investigate the connections between modern urbanization and the development of public assistance for the young. Since the middle of the nineteenth century, greater Shanghai -- the International Settlement, the French Concession, and the Chinese city -- had earned a reputation as a place where fortunes could be made, drawing large numbers of outlanders that ranged

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<sup>146</sup> Hershatter, *Dangerous Pleasures*, 47-49, notes that the lowest stratum and largest subgroup of prostitutes in Republican Shanghai were known as "pheasants." Stigmatized as a morally and physically dangerous lot, they could commonly be seen soliciting potential customers on the street despite police bans against such activities.

<sup>147</sup> Early twentieth-century urban reform efforts, including the creation of new police forces, public health agencies, and "civilizing" initiatives, are discussed at length in Stapleton's *Civilizing Chengdu*, study of Chengdu; Strand's *Rickshaw Beijing*, examination of Beijing; and Tsin's *Nation, Modernity and Governance*, work on Guangzhou.



from wealthy Chinese businessmen and foreign capitalists to migrant laborers. By the 1920s, it had become China's most populous urban center, all the while betraying an exceptionally pronounced disparity between the opulence of the city's elite and the wretched conditions of those who engaged in backbreaking labor, begging or petty thievery to survive. Responding to the overwhelming need and its potential to generate instability, Chinese leaders and Western expatriates had jointly built one of China's most vibrant local assemblages of volunteer organizations dedicated to aiding the destitute, the sick and the vulnerable by the end of the Qing dynasty.

This chapter shows that an abiding commitment by Shanghai's social and political elite to reforming the urban order not only underlay an ongoing enlargement of privately-administered child relief programs throughout the Republican period but also led to the birth and gradual growth of state initiative in this arena. Yet it must be stressed that the broadening reach of municipal authorities in assistance for the young progressed in an uneven manner, their hand becoming more pronounced in some areas while remaining virtually absent in others. Thus in order to bring into full relief the complex pattern of government intervention, this study identifies three categories of child dependents -- abandoned infants 棄嬰 (*qiying*), poor children and orphans 貧兒 (*pin'er*), 孤兒 (*gu'er*), and street urchins 流浪兒童 (*liulang ertong*), treating the sets of initiatives associated with each group in turn. While in reality disadvantaged youngsters often fit into more than one of these classifications, the analytical advantage to drawing these distinctions lay in its power to expose how the urban reformist agenda in Republican China was reconfiguring the balance of state-private participation in child welfare. By 1949, the landscape of public assistance in Shanghai had been altered distinctly from its state in

1912; local officials in the intervening years began to direct welfare operations deemed necessary for staving off disorder and instability while continuing to allow the city's far greater number of private charities to conduct relief services autonomously.

### **Abandoned Infants**

A general survey of relief for discarded newborns in Republican Shanghai would suggest that such activities were organized along the same lines of charitable enterprises that took root in late imperial times. Each of the city's four foundling homes operating on the eve of the Communist takeover in 1949 was launched and run by affiliations of local philanthropists. Three of the homes dated back to the Qing dynasty; the other was set up in 1912, the first year of the Republic. A closer examination, though, points up three subtle, yet historically significant shifts in the ideas and practices of social assistance for foundlings over the course of the Republican era. First, officials and child welfare advocates began to view the state as a partner in the endeavor to increase survival rates and regulate care for unwanted babies. Second, infant abandonment was no longer defined exclusively as a moral issue as it had been in the past; a growing body of commentators and critics came to think of it also as a distinct social problem 社會問題 (*shehui wenti*) that marred the image of the city and undermined the health of the social body. Third, there emerged a growing emphasis on the deployment of public awareness campaigns and a new regimen of public health and hygiene measures as tools for combating the problems of abandonment and persistently high infant mortality rates.

The state's budding interest in bolstering and regulating efforts to save the young could be observed at both the national and the local level. In May, 1928, not long after the Nationalist Government assumed nominal control over China, its newly created

Ministry of the Interior 內政部 (*Neizheng bu*) instructed every province, special municipality, and -- pending the availability of funds -- county government to set up an Economic Relief Agency 救濟院 (*jiujiyuan*), each of which was to include a foundling hospice 育嬰所 (*yuyingsuo*) and five other offices 所 (*suo*).<sup>148</sup> Though a subsequent national survey shows that these agencies were, in fact, distributed unequally and that many of them had simply been converted from previously charities with a simple change in name, the movement underlines the state's intent to standardize relief work.<sup>149</sup> The government also drafted statutes that prohibited infanticide and infant abandonment into the new criminal law code of 1929.<sup>150</sup> Over the following two decades, local officials in Shanghai were charged repeatedly with the task of publicizing these bans and helping to ensure that endangered infants could be successfully absorbed into one of the city's privately-run care giving facilities.

The act of saving abandoned infants in late imperial times, as seen above, was primarily thought of as a moral deed, in which sponsors were upholding "Heaven's virtue of favoring life." To be sure, local philanthropists in the Republican period continued to think of aid to the forsaken as an expression of kindness to humanity and mutual assistance, principles to which all ethical beings naturally subscribed. But the Republican era also saw a growing body of opinion in Shanghai's journals and newspapers which

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<sup>148</sup> Ke, *Shehui jiuji*, 110. The other offices included 1) a home for destitute old people, 2) an orphanage, 3) a disabled person's hospice, 4) a free medicine dispensary, and 5) a loan office.

<sup>149</sup> Cai, *Guojia shehui yu ruoshi qunti*, 109. The "economic relief agency regulations" stipulate that local governments select local, upstanding personages to head the agencies, which, it seems, were set up to serve as coordinating organs for the affiliate offices rather than as a formal part of the bureaucracy. See "Neizhengbu banbu ge difang jiujiyuan guize," in *Nanjing shili Jiujiyuan yange ji gesuo gaikuang*.

<sup>150</sup> Xu, "Qiyong, duotai wenti de yanzhongxing," 23. Statute 274 of the 1928 penal code stipulated a sentence of six months to five years for mothers and fathers found guilty of infanticide.

held that success in protecting infants was at the root of nurturing members of a “modern,” productive urban community and an able-bodied national population. Social critics and reformers identified the persistence of pernicious popular notions such as “preference for sons over daughters” 重男輕女 (*zhong nan qing nü*), public scorn and shame associated with out-of-wedlock births 私生 (*sisheng*), and poverty as the root causes of abandonment and infanticide.<sup>151</sup> They advocated the deployment of community-level propaganda campaigns to eradicate such outdated thinking as well as an expansion of care-giving programs for the sons and daughters of single working mothers and needy families.

The most striking development in infant relief in Republican Shanghai was a concerted effort among city officials and private organizers to provide better health care and medical treatment to neonates. Reports from foundling homes reveal that each adopted a host of new procedures aimed at both monitoring their charges’ health status and curing detected illnesses. These homes also established cooperative links with the city’s new “modern” medical facilities and professionals. The introduction of surveys by Chinese social scientists in this period brought an added level of scrutiny to medical care at these organizations, facilitating a broader discussion of its inadequacies as well as of potential correctives.<sup>152</sup> After conducting a study of the city’s foundling homes in the early 1930s, the local government proposed a number of reforms, including imparting

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<sup>151</sup> See Shanghai tebie shi shehuiju (hereafter STSS), “Shanghai yuying shiye tongji,” 301; Wang, “Zhongguo yuyingsuo xianzhuang zhi yi ban,” 311; and Xu, “Qiyong, duotai wenti de yanzhongxing,” 21-22.

<sup>152</sup> For two examples from the late 1920s, see STSS, “Shanghai yuying shiye tongji,” and Wang, “Zhongguo yuyingsuo xianzhuang zhi yi ban.” Two lengthier social science surveys of child welfare in late 1940s Shanghai are Guan and Li, *Quwei ertong fuli ge’an gongzuo* and Chen, Zhang et al., *Youguan Shanghai shi ertong fuli de shehui diaocha*.

medical knowledge to poorly educated wet nurses and dispatch doctors to the households of pregnant women to conduct checkups and offer advice on nutrition, to creating a citywide system of infirmaries for sick infants.<sup>153</sup> It is unclear whether any of these particular reforms were enacted, but records from Shanghai's long-established hospices for abandoned babies nevertheless testify to a heightened concern over hygiene and medical care in Republican times.

Although infants entered the homes in a variety of ways, all were particularly susceptible to disease and chronic health problems, borne out by high mortality rates. Some were discarded on the city streets and picked up by police officers, who, after searching for their guardians in vain, issued a formal request to one of the city's infant shelters to accept them.<sup>154</sup> Many others, as reported by administrators at Xinpuyu and Shengmuyuan foundling homes, were left by their parents at the front gates of the hospice.<sup>155</sup> Renji Crèche provided desperate mothers and fathers with an alternative route, allowing them to bring their newborn to its gatehouse, where it was registered and placed under the home's custodianship without a requirement to offer an explanation.<sup>156</sup> Statistics show that no matter how infants were brought to the home, the vast majority were admitted within three months of birth, a stretch when infants were particularly vulnerable to contracting a disease or sickness. In fact, a citywide survey found that 59

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<sup>153</sup> See STSS, "Shanghai yuying shiye tongji," 304.

<sup>154</sup> For examples of these requests, see Shanghai Municipal Archives (hereafter SMA) / R41-2-5253, R41-2-5262, and R41-2-5297.

<sup>155</sup> "Xinpuyutang sumiao wugao zhe de da guanyuan," *Shenbao*, July 21, 1943; "Xujiahui Shengmuyuan fangwen ji," *Shenbao* July 22, 1943.

<sup>156</sup> Xu, "Fangwen Renji yuyingtang bei qi ying'er de yaolan," *Minsheng zhoukan*, 6.

percent of those who entered Shanghai foundling homes during the year 1926 were ill upon arrival.<sup>157</sup>

Reflecting the growing emphasis on public health in Republican-era urban centers was an uncoordinated yet clearly discernable movement to “medicalize” care at Shanghai foundling homes. In addition to arranging for daily visits by physicians and maintaining on site dispensaries, the shelters implemented an assortment of new preventative measures. Both Xinpuyu and Shengmuyuan foundling homes were outfitted with “sick infant wards” 病嬰部 (*bingying bu*), in which infants deemed ill during an entrance screening were placed; quarantined from the healthier babies in the main ward, they were given additional nourishment and attention until they recovered. Infants at Renji Crèche were weighed and had their temperature taken each day. The results were duly recorded for a group of six doctors, some trained in Chinese medicine, others in Western medicine, who made daily inspection rounds at the home. Renji Crèche also maintained a permanent staff of nine nurses to provide around-the-clock care and hired one massage therapist on a part-time basis to treat youngsters with ailments such as boils. Finally, each foundling home made advance arrangements to have wards who had come down with serious illnesses 重病 (*zhong bing*) sent to a designated hospital, where they could receive attention from the city’s top trained medical personnel.

The focus on improving health care for abandoned newborns is apparent in the expanded use of supplementary forms of nourishment as well. In the 1930s, a Division of Natural Nutrition 天然營養部 (*tianran yingyang bu*) and a Division of Man-made Nutrition 人工營養部 (*rengong yingyang bu*) split the duties of rearing resident infants at

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<sup>157</sup> “Shanghai yuying shiye tongji,” 302.

the Renji Crèche. The former division relied on the services of eighteen to twenty wet nurses, each of whom was assigned to feed and look after two infants. In the latter, a separate contingent of eight care givers sustained a total of forty foundlings with milk powder, rice paste, and occasional offerings of fresh dairy milk.<sup>158</sup> After the War to Resist Japan, the entire home switched to the use of processed baby food. Meanwhile, the Infant Division at Xinpuyu Foundling Home hired wet nurses to provide on-site as well as foster care, but supplemented their charges' nutrition with milk powder products and fresh milk.<sup>159</sup> The care of newborns at the Shengmuyuan Foundling Home was entrusted entirely to twelve matrons 姆姆 (*mumu*), rather than wet nurses. For sustenance, the infants were given fresh, pasteurized milk drawn from the home's twenty four cows by a specialist each morning.<sup>160</sup> Nutritional supplements were added to ensure healthy development.

Despite the greater attention given to hygiene and nutrition, infant mortality remained a pressing problem. A survey sponsored by the Shanghai Social Affairs Bureau found that the collective infant mortality rates at the city's five foundling homes for the years, 1926, 1927 and 1928, were 52 percent, 50 percent and 43 percent, respectively.<sup>161</sup> A report issued by Renji Crèche on the eve of the Japanese invasion in 1937 provides some historical context for these figures. It reveals that the home's average annual mortality rate declined only moderately, from 54 percent during its early years, 1887-

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<sup>158</sup> SMA, Q115-16-68: *Renji tang baogao* (Ren Ji Tang Crèche Report), June 25, 1938; "Renji tang banli liushi yu nian gudian de cishan jiguan," *Shenbao*, October 8, 1943.

<sup>159</sup> "Xinpuyu tang wuhuabamen," *Shenbao*, November 25, 1946. Unlike the Renji home, which depended on donations of milk, the Xinpuyu hall owned ten cows to ensure its own steady supply.

<sup>160</sup> Gong, "Ciyou wei huai de Shengmuyuan yuyingtang," 23.

<sup>161</sup> STSS, "Shanghai yuying shiye tongji," 306.

1891, to 46.8 percent for the six-year period, 1929-1935.<sup>162</sup> Whereas official investigators blamed the frequency of death on a combination of the wet nurses' deficiency in medical training and inefficient distribution of resources at the homes, the halls attributed it to the fact that many of the infants taken in were abandoned by destitute parents only after they had become critically ill.<sup>163</sup> Though figures for subsequent years are difficult to locate, the added strain on the services of Shanghai's charitable organizations during the Japanese occupation no doubt made it increasingly difficult to lower infant mortality rates.

If the hospice was able to save foundlings from death, it then tried to find adoptive parents for them. Many of the homes in this era adhered to the Qing ideal of placing the child into family setting, the point of origin for integration into society. The adoption regulations issued by the Renji Crèche in 1941 closely resembled procedures established by Qing-era halls, requiring prospective guardians to fill out an application and to have a guarantor, a "clean" 清白 (*qingbai*) background, a suitable career and the financial wherewithal to raise the child, while also stipulating that adoptive parents must care for the infant in the same way they would their own child and that the adoptive child, in turn, ought to fulfill the obligations of a dutiful son or daughter.<sup>164</sup> In order to stimulate interest in adoption, the Renji Crèche held specified visitation periods of several hours

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<sup>162</sup> SMA, Q115-16-56: "Ben tang fushu jiguan yuyingtang chuangan gaikuang," July 1937.

<sup>163</sup> In fact, each of these factors may have contributed to the high death rates. One account indicates that 80 percent of infants admitted to Xinpuyu were sick at the time of arrival. See "Xinpuyu tang wuhuabamen," *Shenbao*, November 25, 1946. According to the Social Affairs Bureau's survey, 72 percent of all sick female infants – the vast majority of foundlings were female – at the city's five foundling homes succumbed to their illness during the three-year period, 1926 to 1928. See SSTS, "Shanghai yuying shiye tongji," 305.

<sup>164</sup> SMA, Q115-16-56: "Renji yuyingtang lingyang yinghai guize," February 7, 1941.



each weekday for guests.<sup>165</sup> The Shanghai Social Affairs Bureau's 1929 survey found that 64 percent of all living foundlings at the city's charitable organizations, during the previous three years, were legally adopted.<sup>166</sup> A subsequent account indicates that Renji Crèche still maintained an adoption rate of over 50 percent during the Japanese occupation, when the number of abandoned infants taken in shot up precipitously due to war-induced deprivations.<sup>167</sup>

One of Shanghai's other leading foundling homes, the Catholic-affiliated Shengmuyuan pursued the slightly different goal of enabling their wards to "establish families" 立家 (*lijia*) of their own.<sup>168</sup> When boys reared at the home turned six 歲 (*sui*), they were sent to a nearby institution, Tushanwan orphanage, to receive education and vocational training (see below). Young girls, meanwhile, first attended the organization's kindergarten and primary school, before being divided into groups to receive instruction in handicrafts and the domestic arts: embroidery, lace work, sewing, and household chores. Rather than facilitating adoptive bonds, the Shengmuyuan home assumed the parents' role in the traditional Chinese family system of selecting marriage partners for these girls. The nannies at the home maintained a policy of choosing spouses from among the wards of Tushanwan Orphanage, claiming that only those of similar background and

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<sup>165</sup> SMA, Q115-16-56: "Renji yuyingtang canguan guize" February 7, 1941.

<sup>166</sup> STSS, "Shanghai yuying shiye tongji," 306.

<sup>167</sup> Fifty-four percent of the 678 foundlings who entered Renji Crèche during the first eight months of 1943 were adopted. The other 46 percent included both living babies and those who died, indicating that the percentage of those adopted among the living was higher than the figure (54%) provided. The number of newborns who died is not provided. See "Renjitang banli liushi yu nian gudian de cishan jiguan," *Shenbao*, October 8, 1943.

<sup>168</sup> Shengmuyuan Foundling Home was set up by Catholic missionaries in the city's Xujiahui district in 1869. Though it remained affiliated to the Catholic Church, it was run jointly by foreigners and Chinese. In 1946, its board of directors consisted of four Chinese industrialists and educators and two French missionaries.

experiences would be capable of loving and supporting their female charges for the rest of their lives.<sup>169</sup> The Shengmuyuan's overall objective, much like that of homes which strove to find suitable adoptive parents, was to create a harmonious family setting for the young woman, complete with the reciprocal bonds of love and obligation.

Operating as privately-run organizations, the city's foundling homes continued to rely largely on donations from local residents to cover their care-giving and administrative costs.<sup>170</sup> But the rise of print mass media in Shanghai since the late Qing opened an important new avenue for raising funds. In 1937, alarmed by a recent decline in donations, the directors of Renji home concluded that they should both issue printed reports to all former individual donors to ensure that their "feelings of compassion would not cease" and take out newspaper advertisements for companies which contributed material goods or food to their organization.<sup>171</sup> Each of Shanghai's larger infant hospices also appealed directly to newspaper readers for financial support. In many cases, articles in the city's dailies describing the work performed by one of these halls concluded with an explicit plea for aid and a listing of bank branches and office locations where monetary offerings could be deposited and donated items and foodstuffs could be received.<sup>172</sup> Periodically, one of the organizations announced in newspapers the launch of a fundraising drive, during which readers were encouraged to visit its facilities and make

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<sup>169</sup> "Xujiahui Shengmuyuan yuying gongzuo," *Shenbao*, July 21, 1939.

<sup>170</sup> SMA, Q115-16-56, "Ben tang fushu jiguan yuyingtang." A 1937 report issued by the Renji home notes that in recent years the hall's annual revenue totaled some 18,600 *yuan*, consisting of roughly 10,000 *yuan* in donations and 8,000 *yuan* in rent on corporate properties and subsidies (*tie'kuan*).

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>172</sup> For an example, see "Xinpuyu tang xiang ge jie huying," *Shenbao*, March 2, 1944.

contributions. At the conclusion of the pledge drive, the donors received public recognition through the listing of their names and amounts in a follow-up article.

Working neither with a fixed source of revenue nor under a system of central coordination, Shanghai's foundling homes struggled to cope with the disruptions to urban life created by Japan's invasion and occupation in the late 1930s and early 1940s. A growing sense of economic desperation among local residents led to a steep increase in the number of infants deserted on the city's streets. Whereas Renji Crèche took in an average of 620 foundlings per year from 1929 to 1935, its wartime annual average soared to between 900 and 1000.<sup>173</sup> By 1943, Shengmuyuan Foundling Home reported an average daily intake of ten newborns, or over 3000 per year, noting a single-day high of 30 foundlings.<sup>174</sup> Previously, Shengmuyuan's directors had expressed pride in not having to depend on private donations, relying instead on subsidies from the French Church and the sale of products from the home's workshops.<sup>175</sup> But the loss of international support coupled with a growing strain on their services during the war compelled them to sell all twenty-four cows, to expand foster care initiatives, and to turn to local individuals and companies for support.<sup>176</sup> Like other foundling organizations, Shengmuyuan provided a list of locations where donations could be made and announced fund drives in *Shenbao*

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<sup>173</sup> SMA, Q115-16-56, "Ben tang fushu jiguan yuyingtang," July 1937; Xu, "Fangwen Renji yuyingtang bei qi ying'er de yaolan," 6; "Renjitang banli liushi yu nian gudian de cishan jiguan," *Shenbao*, October 8, 1943.

<sup>174</sup> "Xujiahui Shengmuyuan fangwen ji," *Shenbao*, July 22, July 23 and July 24, 1943.

<sup>175</sup> The home operated four workshops (lacework, embroidery, tailoring and clothes washing), in which older resident girls along with others who had left the home to establish families engaged in wage labor.

<sup>176</sup> The influx of foundlings, coupled with a rise in the price of goods, resulted in a jump in the home's average monthly outlays from 1000 to 2000 *yuan* in prewar times to 10,000 *yuan* in the 1940s. Whereas the home had previously turned over boys between the ages of 1 *sui* and 6 *sui* to foster care, now, owing to financial constraints, a group of young girls between 7 and 9 *sui* were placed in foster families, as well.

newspaper. On at least one occasion, the paper published in full a letter from the hall-director that explained the nature of the facility's work, capped with an earnest plea for assistance.

In the postwar period, the Shanghai municipal government strove to reassert its supervisory role in infant relief while simultaneously intensifying efforts to root out the source of abandonment. Upon taking administrative control of the city in 1945, the Guomindang authorities reestablished the Social Affairs Bureau to oversee all social welfare and relief matters. Though each foundling home was required to submit a report stating its mission, financial situation, and the names of its officers for registration purposes, the bureau showed little interest in involving itself in administering such services. In July, 1947, the Social Affairs Bureau worked with the city police force to publicize in each district a directive recently drafted by the municipal legislature that prohibited infanticide and abandonment and stated that offenders would be punished according to the law.<sup>177</sup> It was publicly announced that parents who lacked the ability to support their newborns should take them directly to the nearest foundling home. In accord with the circular, the bureau also ordered each of the city's foundling hospices to increase its capacity, though it did not specify any policies or the allocation of financial support for such expansion.

As the Republican era drew to a close, the same group of private charitable organizations that administered care for foundlings in the late Qing was deputized by the current authorities to continue doing so. Though the Guomindang government had

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<sup>177</sup> See SMA, Q6-9-469: "Shanghai shi Shehuiju guanyu canyihui she san zi di shiba hao juyi an yanjin qiying wenjian." For an example of the circular, see "Shanghai shi Jingcha ju shun ling" under the same file.

outlined a national plan for unifying and regularizing infant relief institutions by the late 1920s, the evidence from Shanghai shows that local foundling hospices continued to function largely beyond the orbit of the state's steadily growing social welfare apparatus.<sup>178</sup> But central and local authorities did strive to curtail the practices of infanticide and abandonment, defining them as criminal offenses and deploying city officials to notify residents of their illegality and the punishment violators would face. Police stations also provided ground-level support to the informal system of private relief for infants that had evolved in Shanghai, retrieving deserted babies from the city streets and delivering them to foundling homes. And though local officials occasionally undertook to survey, document, and identify ways to improve the work of Shanghai's infant hospices, the evidence from individual organization records and contemporary periodicals suggests that the state did not become directly engaged in the management or activities of these facilities. In short, institutional care for foundlings remained firmly in the hands of the city's private philanthropic associations down to 1949.

The tenacity of the old, diffused and decentralized structure of infant relief, though, should not obscure from view the broad-based changes in support for the abandoned that took root in urban China during Republican times. First, there was a trend toward the "medicalization" of care at Shanghai's charitable organizations, with each facility implementing new preventative measures to thwart the spread of disease, novel procedures for monitoring the health of those admitted, and arrangements for the city's new and modern medical facilities to provide treatment in the case of grave ailments. Second, foundling homes, still reliant overwhelmingly on private donations, now enlisted

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<sup>178</sup> The expansion of the Guomindang's social welfare system in the late 1930s and 1940s will be treated in detail in chapter 3.

the public press to drum up financial support, appealing directly to readers for contributions, listing specific locations where donations could be made, and enumerating the names of donors and amount given in urban dailies. Finally, during this period, new urban agencies and institutions such as the Social Affairs Bureau, police departments and city hospitals worked in conjunction with foundling hospices to save forsaken babies from languishing on the city streets. While care giving at privately-run foundling homes may still have been rooted in a charitable ethic of benevolence, the auxiliary work conducted by the new agencies sprung from a burgeoning imperative among municipal workers to improve Shanghai's image as a modern and "civil" metropolis through creating a healthier and more cohesive urban community.

### **Orphans and Poor Children**

Social assistance for children from parentless and destitute backgrounds comprised a second, decidedly faster expanding branch of child relief in early twentieth century Shanghai. Services for these youths, referred to collectively by philanthropists as 孤苦兒童 (*guku ertong*), or "orphaned and poor children," were undertaken by a set of facilities that remained functionally distinct from the port city's foundling homes. Though Shanghai's first orphanage, Tushanwan Orphanage 土山灣孤兒院 (*Tushanwan gu'er yuan*), appeared as early as 1864, this type of charitable institution proliferated in particular after the turn of the twentieth century. Between 1905 and 1947, at least nineteen new orphanages and poor children's homes sprung up within the greater

metropolitan area.<sup>179</sup> Like Shanghai's foundling halls, each of these institutes was founded and managed by either church organizations or private philanthropic associations (See appendix 2.1).

The rise of orphanages and poor children's homes in Shanghai may be thought of as a lesser known dimension of a burgeoning movement to equip urban youth with the practical knowledge and skills both to develop China's industrial sector and to attain a basic level of self-sufficiency. The more visible and better-documented side of this drive consisted in efforts to set up a nationwide system of public elementary, middle and vocational schools, led initially by the Qing court and then, following its demise, by a variety of provincial and local official agencies. But the new tuition-based schools were not particularly well-suited to meet the needs of youngsters who lacked family support and resources. Thus a variety of private actors, from education reformers to industrial and religious leaders, took it upon themselves to create facilities that would fully support and transfer occupational skills to these children. Bridging the two sides of this movement and underscoring their shared objectives was Huang Yanpei, a former Jiangsu provincial education commissioner who was hired to help with operations at the privately-run Shanghai Benevolent Industrial Institute 上海貧兒教養院 (*Shanghai pin'er jiaoyang yuan*) in the early 1920s.<sup>180</sup> The former education official explained the organization's mission:

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<sup>179</sup> SMA, C31-2-20-1. This total includes only those institutions that were still operating in 1949. By contrast, it will be recalled that only one foundling home (e.g. Xinpu yuyingtang) was incorporated during this period.

<sup>180</sup> In 1917, during a time between his tenure as Jiangsu education commissioner (1912-1914) and as supervisor to the institute, Huang traveled to Japan, where he became convinced that vocational training stood at the center of the effort to revitalize China. Upon returning to China, Huang founded the China Vocational Education Society and, refusing official appointment, devoted himself to a variety education reform activities. See Boorman, *Biographical Dictionary*, Vol. 2: 211-212.

In accord with the worldwide trend in education, we ought to pay particular attention to commoners. For those who have knowledge, we especially ought to emphasize work-study 工讀 (*gong du*) and promote career [training] so that industry and education are linked and science and life will be connected, and so that [those with knowledge] will have both strong physical and mental ability, will certainly apply their ability in a practical manner and will have creative and ambitious talent.<sup>181</sup>

Huang and other likeminded reformers insisted not only on adopting an educational approach that stressed hands-on, vocational training but also, in a definitive break with the past, on extending this learning to all commoners 貧民 (*pingmin*), including children from disadvantaged backgrounds. The spread of the new relief institutions in these times is a concrete expression of the will of private players to cultivate the talents of a constituency of youths who had little chance of finding a place in the public education system.

Though novel in their objectives, orphanages and poor children's homes adopted a managerial structure modeled closely on that employed by private charities and benevolent halls from the early Qing onward. Historical evidence also reveals that activist Western expatriates, especially Christian missionaries, embraced this format, pointing up a unity and coalescence, rather than division, among native reformers and foreign residents in Shanghai relief work. A seven-person Board of Directors 董事會 (*dongshihui*), including five Chinese and two French nationals with backgrounds in industry, education and the church raised funds, managed the budget, and shaped the broad approach of Tushanwan Orphanage.<sup>182</sup> A second example was the Shanghai

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<sup>181</sup> Zeng, "Jiu Shanghai pin'er jiaoyangyuan gaikuang," 245-246.

<sup>182</sup> SMA, Q6-9-168. Given that the orphanage was founded by Catholic missionaries in 1864, the various backgrounds of those sitting on its board of directors in the 1940s is striking. Among the five Chinese natives was the head of Datong Airlines, a general manager of Huangtong Textile Mill, the director of



Benevolent Industrial Institution, founded by the leaders of Chaozhou benevolent guild in 1920 and headed similarly by a six-member board of Chinese and Western directors. The board, in turn, appointed an institute director 院長 (*yuanzhang*) to manage the organization's daily affairs.<sup>183</sup> Below the director of each children's home was a staff of some ten supervisors in charge of one of the internal divisions, such as general affairs and education affairs, or one of the home's onsite workshops.

Similarities in managerial structure and programs of instruction notwithstanding, the differing ways in which the homes admitted youngsters reflected a pattern of institutional autonomy that persisted in much of Shanghai relief work throughout the Republican era.<sup>184</sup> Parents who wished to send their children to Shanghai Poor Children's Home 上海貧兒院 (*Shanghai pin'er yuan*) were required to submit an application as well as to name a guarantor and fill out an inspection form. Thereafter, the home dispatched an agent to investigate the child's living conditions and determine whether the family was sufficiently poor to meet the organization's requirements.<sup>185</sup> Procedures for entering the Shanghai Benevolent Industrial Institute were less formal: sons and daughters from impoverished families must simply be introduced to, and gain the approval of the organization's board of directors for admittance.<sup>186</sup> Meanwhile, the Tushanwan Orphanage accepted only parentless boys, though their paths to the home were diverse.

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Shanghai Charitable Association, the principal of Xujia Middle School, and the Provost of Xujia College of Literature. The two French board members were affiliated with the Catholic Church in Shanghai.

<sup>183</sup> Zeng, "Jiu Shanghai," 245.

<sup>184</sup> There was also a broad range in capacity of these organizations, from 70-80 children at a smaller institute to 400 at a larger one.

<sup>185</sup> "Shanghai pin'er yuan fangwen ji," *Shenbao*, September 8, 1942.

<sup>186</sup> Jiang Jingyu, "Cong canguan Shanghai pin'er jiaoyangyuan," 63; Zeng "Jiu Shanghai," 246.

Some were transferred from two of the city's foundling homes; some were sent by missionaries who operated in the Shanghai diocese; others were entrusted by family members who had stepped in provisionally to fulfill the role of guardian.<sup>187</sup>

Unlike the elementary and middle schools that emerged in this era, the privately-run children's institutes were designed to provide sustenance and full support to the destitute and orphaned youngsters they admitted. The totality of this aim is reflected in the layout of the complex and the various facilities that made up the orphanages and children's homes. Situated on 63 *mu* of land in Shanghai's western district, Xujiahui, the operations of Tushanwan Orphanage were housed in three multi-story buildings and three single-story structures. On the western part of the campus sat Ci'yun elementary school and the onsite residence halls for children, laborers and staff members. The orphanage's workshops were located in the eastern portion.<sup>188</sup> The Shanghai Benevolent Industrial Institute was set up on 40-*mu* piece of property. Classrooms, dormitories, a kitchen, a cafeteria, a clinic and wash rooms occupied the western grounds. In the north, there was a tract of farmland used for growing vegetables for the institute; an exercise field for the children could be found in the southern part, adjacent to a second vegetable plot in the southwest. An assembly hall, used presumably for ceremonies and meetings held by the directors, stood at the center of the entire complex.<sup>189</sup>

Though the children's institutes were structured as full-care facilities, the cornerstone of their operations was a "semi-work, semi-study" 半工半讀 (*ban gong ban*

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<sup>187</sup> SMA, Q6-9-168. During the course of the War to Resist Japan, the orphanage took in an additional 250 children from impoverished families.

<sup>188</sup> SMA, Q6-9-168.

<sup>189</sup> Zeng, "Jiu Shanghai" 244.

*du*) program. These organizations were set off from the other types of charitable and relief establishments of the time, including foundling homes, by restricting entry to those between the ages of 6 歲 (*sui*) and 16 歲 (*sui*), that is, school-age children (See Appendix 2.1). After being admitted to Tushanwan, new wards were typically placed on a six-year track of study at its Kindness Elementary School (Ciyun xiaoxue) that replicated the curriculums of public primary schools. Here, the first four years were devoted strictly to academic coursework. The curriculum of the fifth and sixth grades, though, combined classroom study with the learning of crafts. Students took classes in mathematics, history, Chinese, biology, geology, English and general knowledge 常識 (*chang shi*) in the mornings and evenings and undertook preliminary training in the arts of carving, woodwork and ironwork in the afternoons.<sup>190</sup> At the conclusion of the primary school phase, each adolescent was assigned, on the basis of an assessment of their natural abilities and individual dispositions, to a single trade for a three-year period of career training.

The vocational program at Tushanwan orphanage was designed to furnish job instruction at a level on par with apprenticeships at the city's factories, while also shielding their wards from the abusive conditions endured by minors at manufacturers.<sup>191</sup> The orphan's career training took place at one of five onsite workshops that was dedicated to a particular trade: printing, bookbinding, woodwork, metal hardware, and

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<sup>190</sup> SMA, Q6-9-168, Tushanwan baogao (April, 1946); "Tushanwan gu'eryuan xunli," *Shenbao*, July 26, 1943. The format outlined above refers to that in place prior to 1941, when, perhaps due to war-induced constraints, the term of upper elementary education was shortened to one year and the apprentice period to two years.

<sup>191</sup> According to a survey conducted in 1929, some 27,000 child workers comprised 9% of Shanghai's industrial labor force, yet legislation to protect these minors was never passed. See Honig, *Sisters and Strangers*, 30. As discussed in the section below, mistreatment and harsh conditions in factories pushed large numbers of children to flee their apprenticeships and join the ranks of homeless minors on the streets.

drawing.<sup>192</sup> By all counts, the workshops were professionally run operations, employing some 113 skilled laborers alongside the orphan trainees, accumulating a total of 19 awards for the quality of their products over the years, and generating nearly one half of the orphanage's annual budgetary income through sales.<sup>193</sup> Among the operations, the printing workshop was deemed the most complete and successful. Equipped with lead-plate, color and lithograph print machines, this facility churned out the journal, 聖光報 (*Sheng guang bao*) (Sacred news) and other periodicals, English and French language textbooks as well as monographs on religion, history, and culture.<sup>194</sup> The hardware workshop, to take one other example, produced religious figurines, bronze bells, and finely crafted utensils such as knives, spoons, cups and plates.<sup>195</sup> Those who completed their training at any one of these workshops were considered fit to enter the city's work force.

Shanghai Benevolent Industrial Institute built a work-study program around similar goals, though the uniqueness of the program's format further underscores a degree of organizational autonomy. Administered by the institute's "Preparatory Division" 預科 (*yu ke*), the first stage of study lasted four years and consisted of academic courses such as Mandarin, math, general knowledge, and natural science. Throughout the final year, however, each child was required to undergo 12 hours per week of rudimentary training in record keeping, agriculture, woodwork and

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<sup>192</sup> SMA, Q6-9-168, Tushanwan gu'er yuan guize.

<sup>193</sup> SMA, Q6-9-168, Tushanwan gu'eryuan shenqing buzhu, shouru, zhifu. See below, p. 25 for details regarding the orphanage's revenue base.

<sup>194</sup> "Tushanwan gu'eryuan xunli," *Shenbao*, July 26, 1943.

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid.* The workshops' products were sold as far away as Southeast Asia and Africa.

metalwork.<sup>196</sup> A second four-year phase of the program, said to resemble a middle-school educational experience, was run by the institute’s “Fundamentals Division” 本科 (*benke*). Students were channeled into either a farming, woodwork or ironwork section, based on their individual experiences in these lines of work. As the adolescents progressed through the Fundamentals Division’s program, greater weight was placed on hands-on training. The schedules presented in the following table convey the institute’s shifting emphasis from academic study to tutelage in the vocational arts, especially when considering the Preparatory Division’s curriculum as a baseline.

**Table 2.1. Distribution of Instructional Hours at Shanghai Benevolent Industrial Institute’s Fundamentals Division**

Trade/ Workshop	Grade Level	Total hours of instruction/ week	Hours of vocational training	Grade Level	Total hours of instruction/ week	Hours of vocational training
Farming	1, 2	42	18	3, 4	42	26
Woodwork	1, 2	42	18	3, 4	48	33
Ironwork	1, 2	42	18	3, 4	48	36

Source: Zeng Peilin 1983. “Jiu Shanghai pin’er jiaoyangyuan gaikuang,” pp. 246

Beyond merely equipping those in their custody with practical job skills, the directors of Shanghai’s children’s homes and orphanages made a point of ensuring that they secured employment. Waifs who finished the training programs at the Tushanwan facilities were presented with a choice of two paths for pursuing a vocation. The orphanage gave them the option of staying on as laborers at the workshops so that they could save some seed money in preparation for establishing a family and financial independence. Those who remained drew a regular wage 100 to 120 yuan plus a subsidy of two *dou*, or about thirty-five pounds, of rice per month and, indicative of their new

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<sup>196</sup> Jiang, “Cong cangan Shanghai pin’er jiaoyangyuan,” 62; Zeng, “Jiu Shanghai,” 246.

status, were referred to as 老司務 (*lao si wu*), or “old hands.”<sup>197</sup> If the youth sought employment in the city, however, the heads of the orphanage took it upon themselves to provide him with a formal introduction to a local manufacturer or company. The provision of job introductions appears to have been a standard practice among Tushanwan institute’s peer organizations as well. Graduates of the vocational training program at Shanghai Benevolent Industrial Institute, for instance, were placed similarly in such operations as the Municipal Telephone Bureau, an electric company and ship building factories.<sup>198</sup>

Virtually all institutions for penurious and parentless children in Republican Shanghai proclaimed, in independent statements, that their chief objective was transforming their wards into self-reliant 自立 (*zili*) persons. Indeed, the sight of onsite workshops and a classroom scene in which children clutched a large diagram of a machine with operating instructions in their hands – visible testimony to this mission – led one visiting reporter to comment, in surprise, that the institute hardly resembled the conventional image of a charitable organization.<sup>199</sup> Here it is important to stress that the leaders of these homes, unlike child-saving advocates in the West, did not articulate their mission as one of seeking out and rescuing youngsters from oppressive circumstances.<sup>200</sup> Rather, Chinese philanthropists framed their activities as an effort to facilitate the child’s

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<sup>197</sup> Ibid., July 25, 1943. Among the 113 laborers earning wages at Tushanwan’s workshops in 1943, about one third lived at onsite residential halls; the others commuted. From this source, it is unclear as to whether all of the regular employers were orphans who had gone through the facility’s training programs.

<sup>198</sup> Zeng, “Jiu Shanghai,” 244.

<sup>199</sup> Jiang, “Cong cangan Shanghai pin’er jiaoyangyuan,” 62.

<sup>200</sup> For a concise discussion of the early twentieth-century child welfare movement in the West, see Katz, “Child-Saving,” 413-424.

transition from lone dependent to an active member of the city's sprawling industrial workforce. In short, they saw the task of promoting wellbeing in collectivist rather than individualist terms, expressing the wish that their wards would one day be capable of "supporting themselves in the bustling city of Shanghai" and the hope, through curbing poverty, of bringing benefit and stability to local society.<sup>201</sup>

But, as suggested by the frequently invoked principle of placing "joint emphasis on academic study and labor" 工讀並重 (*gong du bing zhong*), the leaders of Shanghai's child institutes aimed to do more than simply unlock their wards' productive potential. The study component of the training at these homes was to be directed toward fostering their development into citizens 公民 (*gongmin*) through the acquisition of literacy, basic knowledge and a moral foundation.<sup>202</sup> The Chinese term 公民 (*gongmin*), which appears in many of these homes' first-hand accounts, may be rendered literally as a 'public person,' connoting an individual equipped with the learning, skills and sense of civic responsibility needed to function properly in the urban community.<sup>203</sup> Put in a slightly

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<sup>201</sup> Tui Sheng, "Lixiang zhong zhi gu'er yuan," 44: "...俾各治其事各食其力於繁華塵囂之上海..."

<sup>202</sup> With regard to promoting education and morality and making children into citizens at the homes, see Jiang, 1929, "Cong cangan Shanghai pin'er jiaoyang yuan," 63; "Shanghai pin'er yuan fangwen ji," *Shenbao*, September 8, 1942; "Tushanwan gu'er yuan xun li," *Shenbao* July 26, 1943. The latter report noted, "From morning to night they continue to study subjects such as citizenship, economics, history and geography, accounting, foreign languages, etc., so that in the future, after they have completed their studies, they will be fully equipped with the common knowledge and the moral foundation of national citizens" (早晚仍繼續教學各科技本知識如公民,經濟,史地,簿計,外國語等等,使便將來學成後具備充分的國民常識與道德基礎).

<sup>203</sup> Here it's important to draw a distinction in emphasis between two Chinese terms that are commonly translated as 'citizen': *gongmin* 公民 and *guomin* 國民. Whereas *gongmin*, as indicated above, is suggestive broadly of members of a community involved in public matters, the term *guomin* denotes members of a nation, that is, nationals. For much of the first four decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the emphasis in child relief was placed on creating *gongmin*. After the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese war in 1937, those involved in the child welfare movement wrote increasingly of encouraging the development of *guomin* for the nation.

different way, a report on Shanghai Poor Children's Home 上海貧兒院 (*Shanghai pin'er yuan*) noted that its program placed equal emphasis on developing the children's manual and mental adroitness 手腦並用 (*shou nao bing yong*).<sup>204</sup> At odds with the old Confucian view that the social order is to be divided neatly and naturally between those "who labor with their minds" at the top and those "who labor with their hands" below, philanthropic activists ascertained that the effort to build a secure and productive society in the era following the fall of the *ancien régime* required setting even those from marginalized backgrounds on the path to becoming informed, morally grounded and technically proficient players in the community.<sup>205</sup>

As private philanthropies, children's homes and orphanages were compelled to draw on a varied batch of irregular revenue sources. Like Shanghai's foundling hospices, most children's organizations relied, in part, on the collection of donations and rent from corporate properties to fund their operations. In some cases, those on the Board of Directors subscribed monthly dues or directly solicited contributions from clubs or companies based in the metropolis. But institutes such as Tushanwan orphanage also adopted the less personalized approaches discussed above of using space in newspapers to make appeals for donations, to publicize collection points in the city, and to list the names and amounts of those who contributed.<sup>206</sup> Additionally, several of the children's homes relied on the sale of goods produced in their workshops, a resource typically not

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<sup>204</sup> "Shanghai pin'er yuan fangwen ji," *Shenbao*, September 8, 1942.

<sup>205</sup> The phrase is attributed to one of the major Confucian thinkers in early China, Mengzi (Mencius, 379 – 281 BCE), and would serve to legitimate the hierarchical ordering of Chinese society in accord with the state orthodoxy from Han times down to the end of the Qing dynasty.

<sup>206</sup> See "Tushanwan gu'er yuan xianzhuang," *Shenbao*, March 27, 1943; "Tushanwan gu'er yuan xunli, (part V)," *Shenbao*, July 29, 1943; "Shanghai pin'er gongyi yuan huanying ge jie qianwang cangan," *Shenbao*, May 23, 1944; "Pin'er gongyi yuan zhaoshou gu'ku ertong," *Shenbao*, July 24, 1946.



available to foundling hospices, to help subsidize rearing and training costs. In fact, a financial report issued by Tushanwan Orphanage reveals that earnings on items manufactured at its workshops constituted the largest proportion (47.3%) of its budgetary income for the year 1947, followed by private donations (29.7%), rent paid by workshop laborers who resided at the complex (17%), rent on corporate landholdings (5%), and tuition from a small group of day students (.4%).<sup>207</sup> Without a fixed allocation from local authorities or any other organizations, Shanghai's other homes for orphaned and destitute minors similarly developed a multi-pronged approach for meeting their operational costs.

Summing up, the task of relieving and supporting children of parentless or penurious background in the municipality was relegated to the domain of private charity for the duration of the Republican period. While charitable homes for the young were required to register with the city government's newly set-up Shanghai Social Affairs Bureau 社會局 (*Shehui ju*) for the first time in 1946, local authorities appeared disinclined to play even a limited role of facilitating admittance to or suggesting policy reforms for these institutions, as they had with regard to local foundling hospices. The most significant development was the new bureau's creation of a regular channel through which children's homes could apply for state subsidies.<sup>208</sup> In addition, a case from 1948 in which Tushanwan Orphanage requested the bureau to arbitrate a labor dispute between its management and a former ward who had been employed at its onsite printing workshop suggests that the state agency came to be recognized by volunteer associations

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<sup>207</sup> SMA, Q6-9-168, "Tushanwan gu'er gonyi yuan jingfei shouzhi qingkuang." These percentages are based on an averaging of the monthly totals of income received by the institution during the entire year of 1947.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid., see "Tushanwan gongyi yuan wei jingfei kunan poqie xuyao buzhu shenqing," February 14, 1948. According to this document, the Shanghai Social Affairs Bureau could make funds from the national-level Social Affairs Ministry available to local, private-run relief organizations.

as a legitimate supervisory organ for relief in the city.<sup>209</sup> These developments notwithstanding, the state continued to show its reluctance to become involved in the establishment and management of services for those designated as orphans and poor children, preferring to leave these tasks in the hands of community elites. By way of contrast, the following sections show that municipal authorities became directly engaged in the efforts to save, rehabilitate, and train a distinct and growing contingent of homeless juveniles found lingering on Shanghai's streets.

### **Rehabilitating Child Refugees and Street Urchins**

The battle for Shanghai during the fall months of 1937 gave rise to a demographic movement of monumental proportion. Though the Japanese army had captured much of the city and its surrounding areas by November, 1937, the walled-off International Settlement and French Concession were left under the control of Western authorities down to 1941 and thus spared of much of the fighting and destruction suffered by the former walled city and the suburbs. Consequently, up to one million Chinese refugees from Shanghai's outlying districts poured into these safe havens. The massive influx of displaced persons into the "lonely island" 孤島 (*gu dao*) – as the Western enclaves were known in this period – triggered a major emergency relief effort orchestrated by the city's philanthropic leaders, charities, and native place associations.<sup>210</sup> While over half of the

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<sup>209</sup> Ibid., "Wei biye gu'er li yuan zhengzhi jintie yinqi," July 16, 1948. The report states that former orphan and native of Ningbo, Zhu Ronghua, entered the orphanage at the age of 8 *sui*. Upon deciding to leave the workshop at the age of 25, Zhu demanded an extra 3 months of pay, claiming that the orphanage's wages remained below those offered by factories in the city. The orphanage stressed that it could not afford to match pay rates in the private sector, given that a large portion of its sales revenue was used to cover costs of raising orphans like Zhu. Nevertheless, the orphanage director requested that the Social Affairs Bureau investigate the facts and reach a decision on the matter.

<sup>210</sup> Responding to the humanitarian crisis of 1937, three newly formed federations – the Shanghai Federation of Charities Disaster Relief Committee, the Shanghai Municipal Relief Committee, and the

outsiders were taken in by relatives and friends, a total of 390,000 displaced persons found relief in newly set up refugee camps and the Jacquinet Safety Zone, a sprawling shelter established in the Chinese city 南市 (*Nanshi*). Nevertheless, conservative estimates held that some 75,000 homeless refugees were left struggling to survive on the city streets in December, 1937.<sup>211</sup> As the crisis set in, Shanghai's local elite began to discern the special needs of two of the most vulnerable subgroups of vagabonds -- child refugees 難童 (*nantong*) and street urchins 流浪兒童 (*liulang ertong*), each of whom had received little prior attention.

Broadly speaking, the refugee camps were divided into those that took in entire families and those that sheltered minors who were bereft of kin. For example, the Shanghai International Relief Committee's 上海國際救濟會 (*Shanghai guoji jiuji hui*) Number One and Number Two Camps sheltered a combined total of 1,817 children in June, 1938, the vast majority of whom had entered with their families; only seventeen were classified as "orphans."<sup>212</sup> Meanwhile, about 1,500 orphans were receiving care at nine camps specially designated for child refugees in August, 1938. By the following April, one of these shelters, the Number One War Zone Child Refugee Camp 第一戰區兒童收容所, cared for 650 children, the majority of whom had been orphaned, rescued from battle zones, and sent by police or charitable organizations.<sup>213</sup> Irrespective of their

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Shanghai International Relief Committee – sprung into action to coordinate relief efforts alongside the city's long-serving native place associations and small-scale charities. See Dillon, "Politics," 188-190.

<sup>211</sup> For a detailed discussion of and statistics on the refugee population, see Henriot, "Shanghai and the Experience of War," 222-236.

<sup>212</sup> Lin Zhongzhi, "Shanghai nantong shenghuo de yiban," *Shanghai funǔ*, 14-15, July 1938.

<sup>213</sup> "Zai diyi zhanqu ertong shourong suo," *Shen bao*, March 25, 1939.

target group, the rise of these camps and dozens of others like them demonstrated the capacities of experienced local philanthropists to respond effectively to crisis conditions through the provision of emergency support to the city's large floating population.<sup>214</sup>

But as the military conflict and occupation dragged on from months to years, the emergency response would give way to a semi-institutionalization of relief services for dispossessed refugees. Though the Shanghai Institute for Relieving Child Refugees 上海救濟難民難童教養院 (*Shanghai jiuji nanmin ertong jiaoyangyuan*) was founded initially to provide short-term assistance, its organizers later recognized the need to transform it into a permanent care-giving institution. Subsequently, two other private organizations, the Shanghai Home for Child Refugees 上海災童教養所 (*Shanghai zaitong jiaoyangsuo*) and the Christian Home for Refugee Children 基督教難童教養所 (*Jidujiao nantong jiaoyangsuo*) as well as a postwar government-run institute 上海救濟院難民難童教養所 (*Shanghai jiujiyuan nanmin nantong jiaoyangsuo*) were founded for the purpose of rearing, educating and training on a long-term basis youngsters who had been uprooted from their native places and family life amid the military conflict.

A survey of the aforementioned Shanghai Institute for Relieving Child Refugees in this period reveals not only how organizations such as this dispensed much needed aid, but also how the task of reforming lost youths came to be linked in the minds of philanthropists to efforts to solidify China's fragmented social body and save the imperiled nation. By May 1939, a year after its founding, the institute had absorbed a

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<sup>214</sup> See Henriot, "Shanghai and the Experience of War: The Fate of Refugees," 228. As many as 161 refugee camps were organized during the early phase of the war, however, the number declined sharply over the following months as organizers sought to repatriate the families they could. For a discussion of the social networks of key players in Shanghai's wartime relief activities, see Dillon, "Politics of Philanthropy," 186-95.

total of 301 children, each of whom was between the ages of five and fourteen *sui*.<sup>215</sup>

While the largest number hailed from adjacent Jiangsu (139) and Zhejiang (48) provinces, others came from as far away as the southern coastal provinces of Guangdong (39) and Fujian (15), a testament to the scale of societal displacement caused by battle.<sup>216</sup> In sharp contrast to the high proportion of baby girls who entered the city's foundling homes, male youngsters made up the majority of those admitted to the refugee institute, comprising 80 percent of the total.

An essay by one of the home's wards, Wu Zhenhuan, reveals that his path from personal tragedy to institutional care was facilitated by a makeshift relief system that had evolved to cope with the great surge in dislocated peoples.

The loud, abominable sound of cannon fire propelled us toward the 'lonely island' 孤島 (*gu dao*). I recall the particular night in which canons kept firing. My father, my mother and I fled in a direction we did not know. Not long after, many large airplanes filled the sky and dropped one bomb after another. At that time, my father and mother died, leaving only desolate me. As I sat crying on a slope of farmland, a large truck suddenly approached and picked up all of the people crying on the side of the road. It drove very quickly, taking to a refugee camp, where I unwittingly led the life of a refugee for a year. One day a man came to the camp; he brought the pitiable group of us [i.e. a number of child refugees] here, the Shanghai Institute for Relieving Child Refugees. From that day forward, food, clothing and shelter have been provided to us.<sup>217</sup>

Personal accounts left by other juveniles placed in the home similarly recalled that one of the city-wide relief organizations' refugee trucks that patrolled the city and its hinterlands, picked up displaced persons, and then transported them to a refugee camp in the foreign enclaves. After children resided there for an interval of undetermined length, one of

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<sup>215</sup> The institute was in the process of expanding its capacity to 500 at this time.

<sup>216</sup> *Shanghai jiuji nanmin ertong jiaoyangyuan xinwu luocheng jinian ce*, 49.

<sup>217</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

several philanthropic associations might facilitate their transfer to a permanent care giving facility such as the Shanghai Institute for Relieving Refugee Children.

Upon arrival at the institute, youngsters were placed in a “part work, part study” program typical of charitable organizations for the young dating back to early Republican times. They were first enrolled in a standard six-year elementary school curriculum, taking “culture” 文化 (*wenhua*), or knowledge-based, classes in their first four years and a mix of academic and industrial arts classes in the fifth and sixth grades. The four students in each graduating class who demonstrated the highest level of academic achievement and superlative moral conduct were chosen to attend one of the public middle schools in the city so that they might blossom into “talent for the nation, enabling them to become great persons of accomplishment.”<sup>218</sup> Most graduates, though, entered a three-year term of production education 生產教育 (*shengchan jiaoyu*) in one of the services or handicrafts sponsored at the home: hair-cutting, sewing, straw weaving, weaving socks, shoe-making, and embroidery. Resembling the practice of orphanages, a “Work Introduction Committee” was set up to establish contacts in Shanghai’s commercial and industrial circles, and help place skilled graduates from the institute in suitable positions in the city.

The training of child refugees, however, was not limited to formal instruction in the classroom and the workshop. From the waking hour until bed time, they maintained a highly regimented schedule and were expected to adhere to strict disciplinary codes of behavior. They were taught to greet and bid farewell to their instructors with situation-specific expressions, in accord with the time of day or other special occasions. Before

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<sup>218</sup> Ibid., 3. “*bing wei guo shucai, shi chengwei shiye zhi weiren.*” 並為國樹材, 使成為事業之偉人.

mealtime, they assembled in teams in the home's ceremonial hall, lining up behind designated group leaders for a roll call by the supervisory staff. They were permitted to begin eating at the sounding of a bell, with the team leader standing by, supervising, adding rice if necessary, and waiting to eat until all of his or her teammates had finished their meal. Another bell was rung in each of the ten dormitories at eight o'clock in the evening, prompting the children to line up at the number that designated their sleeping berth for a bedtime roll call. Observing the institute's code of conduct was encouraged through the dispensation of various rewards; transgressions of acceptable behavior were to be deterred through the application of sanctions, ranging in severity from verbal reprimands to the loss of free-time activities.

The organizers of the institute also placed primacy on public hygiene and the physical health of its charges. One of the co-founders, Yu Jingqing, explained that the institute applied the "broader meaning" of 教導 (*jiaodao*) (instruction and guidance), which consisted of developing healthy physiques and an equal emphasis on cultivating mental and manual skills rather than merely the "narrow meaning," that is, improving literacy and moral conduct. All children were given a physical exam at the time of entry as well as monthly check ups by resident nurses and annual ones by a physician. Yu stressed not only the importance of disease prevention, through the administering of regular shots and vaccinations as well as the daily inspection of dormitories, but also the task of cultivating habits of cleanliness and hygiene in the children.<sup>219</sup> They were each given their own towel, toothbrush, cup and wash basin (identified by student numbers) and taught to wash their faces and brush their teeth each morning and after every meal.

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<sup>219</sup> See *Ibid.*, 7-12.

The younger children learned these practices, as well as gurgling, showering and trimming their nails, from older children and nannies.<sup>220</sup> Maintaining personal hygiene was not only designed to thwart the spread of disease in cramped quarters, but also considered a core part of their healthy development into citizens 公民 (*gongmin*).

In sum, the institute's mission was to mold uprooted youngsters into new citizens of a Republic whose survival was at stake. On one hand, this entailed imparting to them the education and technical skills necessary for earning a livelihood and the proper habits for developing strong, healthy bodies. But this also meant that instructors had to take on a parental role, instilling in their charges the discipline and proper social etiquette that would serve as the foundation for becoming law-abiding citizens who acted properly in a public setting. With the fate of Shanghai, and China at large, hanging in the balance, the organizers of this institute and others like it saw rootless children as a special group whose survival and development was especially crucial for the future state of the nation. For philanthropist Yu Jingqing, the task of creating well-being for the child was tantamount to the project of replenishing national vigor: "At present, each enfeebled child refugee not saved amounts to one less vital element for the future of the nation."<sup>221</sup>

Like child refugees, street urchins were bereft of parental support and guidance. But the causes of homelessness among those labeled street urchins were considerably more varied. Of the estimated 5,000 urchins roaming the streets of Shanghai on the eve of Japan's invasion in 1937, some had lost the support of their parents; others had left their

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<sup>220</sup> Ibid., 29-35. Students showered every other day in the summer and once weekly in other seasons. They also clipped their nails on a weekly basis and received haircuts each month. The boys heads were shaved, most likely to prevent the spread of lice.

<sup>221</sup> Ibid., 7: "Xianzai shao jiu yi ge ruoxiao de nantong, ye jiu shi jianglai guojia shao yi ge shenglijun, 7" .



families due to abuse or fled apprenticeships owing to mistreatment by employers treatment; some had dropped out of school; while still others had been separated from kin as a result of natural or manmade catastrophe. Thus, it might be best to think of child refugees and street urchins as two partially overlapping groups. Though street urchins – referred to alternatively as 街童 (*jietong*) (street children), 乞童 (*qitong*) (child beggars), or 犯童 (*fantong*) (child criminals) – could be found lingering on the streets of Shanghai in prewar times, a dramatic increase in their numbers and troubling activities after Japan’s invasion prompted urban elites and reformers to initiate specific institutions to relieve and rehabilitate them on a scale previously unseen.

Though their paths to homelessness differed greatly, the vast majority of street urchins in Shanghai became affiliated in time with older hustlers known as 爺叔 (*yeshu*).<sup>222</sup> About forty 爺叔 (*yeshu*) operated throughout the city, each laying territorial claim to a particular neighborhood, street, wharf or bridge and exercising control over a group of youngsters that could range from thirty to three hundred in size.<sup>223</sup> The 爺叔 (*yeshu*) offered protection and taught illicit methods for acquiring cash and goods to the children who pledged allegiance to him; in exchange, the children were expected to turn over most of what they acquired. The most common methods for obtaining money and items of necessity included peddling goods such as evening papers and pornographic magazines, begging, helping coolies push rickshaws over bridges, snatching hats and

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<sup>222</sup> The Chinese graphs for *yeshu*, 爺叔, denote grandfather and uncle respectively, suggestive of a bond of fictive kinship between child and adult. Alternative terms for these figures were *lao touzi* (老頭子) and *axu* (阿叔).

<sup>223</sup> Dan, “Liulang ertong zai Shanghai” in *Gong xin*, (1) 15, pp. 294-295.

purses, pick-pocketing, stealing wares from markets, robbing homes, and swindling.<sup>224</sup>

The tie between 爺叔 (*yeshu*) and street urchins constituted a typical patron-client bond, albeit a highly exploitative one, in which youngsters assumed nearly all of the risk for little reward. Such ties were born of the young vagabonds' difficulties to subsist on their own in a largely unfamiliar, hostile environment. Here, they sustained themselves with leftover food, covered their bodies in old, tattered clothing, and slept on cement beneath the eaves of houses, next to garbage cans in alleyways, in the cargo holds of steamships, or any place that offered slight protection from the elements.<sup>225</sup>

A number of private relief institutions and reformatories sprung up in Shanghai in the late 1930s and early 1940s in order to cope with the growing numbers of homeless children who relied on criminal activities for survival. One such organization, Jingye Institute 淨業教養院 (*Jingye jiaoyangyuan*), was founded by the Shanghai-based Buddhist society, 淨業社 (*Jingye she*), in June, 1940.<sup>226</sup> During its first two and half years of existence, the reformatory took in a total of 250 street urchins from 12 to 18 *sui*, the majority of whom were sent by the Child Protection Division 兒童保障科 (*Ertong baozhang ke*)\*, an organ set up by the Shanghai Municipal Council, or by charitable associations after being detained for petty crimes. Among them, nearly half (49%) had

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<sup>224</sup> Ibid., 295; Dong, "Liulang ertong jiaoyang wenti" in *Zhonghua jiaoyu jie*, 1949, 3 (4), p. 12.

<sup>225</sup> Dan, "Liulang ertong zai Shanghai," 295.

<sup>226</sup> Other organizations set up in wartime Shanghai expressly to shelter street urchins (*liulang ertong*) included *Jietou ertong zhiye jiaoyangyuan* 街頭兒童職業教養院 (f. 1938), *Shanghai ertong baoyuyuan*, 上海兒童保育院 (f. 1939), and *Shanghai fuyouyuan* 上海福幼院 (f. 1942).

\* The Child Protection Division was founded in December 1938, with the objective of safeguarding parentless, abused and exploited children (including girl servants) from further mistreatment. The division placed minors who had been detained and convicted by the courts in charitable organizations for the young and monitored their treatment through follow-up inspections and interviews so that they may "make a fresh start (*zi xin*)". For an account of its undertakings, see "Shanghai ciyou shiye gaikuang," *Shen bao*, April 3, 1939.

been convicted for “stealing” 偷竊 (*touqie*); others had been charged with “snatching hats” (11%), “selling copper rings” \* (11%), “pick-pocketing” (7%), “swindling” (5%) and “stealing bicycles” (2%). The remainder (15%) was identified by the institute as “child beggars who had not committed crimes.”<sup>227</sup> In its report, the reformatory stressed that each of these offenses was “purely economic in nature” and rooted in the child’s perennial struggle to survive on the city streets. The rise of rehabilitative centers like Jingye Institute occurred at a time when mounting public concern over juvenile delinquency was expressed in a number of local press reports on the subject.<sup>228</sup>

The autobiographical account of one (unnamed) child at Jingye Institute offers a glimpse of how conditions on the streets in these years drew homeless children into a life of petty crime. The youth noted that his<sup>+</sup> father, a gambler, had been convicted for selling opium and died in jail. When his mother became sick and addicted to opium, the child was placed under the care of his relatives, but their abusive treatment compelled him to run away from home. Shortly after he appeared on the streets, alone and hungry, a group of older homeless children took him under their wing, teaching him how to steal things and how to avoid being detected by the police. He notes that though he had been detained and brought before a court in the French Concession “three or four times,” he was

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\* “Selling copper rings” refers to a commonly-practiced scam of the time. For details, see Dan, “Liulang ertong zai Shanghai,” *Gong xin*, 295.

<sup>227</sup> *Liulang ertong jiaoyang wenti: Zhengye jiaoyangyuan di yi ci baogao*, 7-8. An article in *Shenbao* observed that “the strong become thieves, the weak become child beggars.” See “Jiji tuijin liulang ertong jiaoyang gongzuo” in *Shenbao*, October 20, 1943.

<sup>228</sup> For example, see “Liulang ertong fanzui shi,” December 4, 1939; “Ertong de fanzui wenti,” December 9, 1939; “Ertong fanzui wenti,” May 15, 1940 and “Ertong baozhang ke shishi: tongfan ganhua jiaoyu,” September 24, 1944 in *Shenbao*.

<sup>+</sup> The account does not indicate the sex of the individual in question; since the majority of institute’s occupants were boys, I use the male pronoun throughout for the purpose of consistency.

released each time because of his age, and thus grew utterly fearless of the authorities. One day, though, he and three companions boarded a bus bound for Jing'an Temple in the International Settlement. Two of his friends snatched a passenger's purse and disembarked without detection. But the crime was soon discovered, prompting the bus driver to proceed directly to a police station near the temple, where each passenger was intensely interrogated. Unable to bear the pressure, the child broke down, admitted to being the "chief culprit" in the incident, and was sentenced by the court to serve six months in the prison's "reformatory" 改良所 (*gailiang suo*). At the end of his six-month term, unlike many of his peers who were released only to return to their hardscrabble existence on the city streets, he was brought by a representative of the Child Protection Division to Jingye Institute, where he "began a new, meaningful life."<sup>229</sup>

This narrative, included in the institute's report, touches on several points that the organization's founders and supporters wished to emphasize. They felt that the first and most important step of their work was to remove the child from a degenerate social environment. Out on the streets, the homeless youngster had grown so accustomed to seeing and partaking in sordid affairs that his "original innocent nature had been almost completely lost."<sup>230</sup> To make matters worse, the corrupted child did not simply operate by himself, but, in his quest to survive, was compelled to lure other street urchins down the same deviant path. The judicial system, in their view, not only was ill-equipped to help these juveniles mend their ways, but its punitive approach even pushed them to commit more serious crimes. Thus their organization would serve as a special space – cut off

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<sup>229</sup> *Liulang ertong jiaoyang wenti*, 9-14.

<sup>230</sup> *Ibid.*, 57.

from the punishing realities of the street, the court and the detention center – where instructors could guide them to recognize their past faults and carve out a new life for themselves. In a supplementary essay, two scholars asserted that the Jingye Institute was not a “regular” relief organization for the young, but rather a “laboratory that reformed street urchins by setting an example 感化 (*ganhua*) and cultivated them into new citizens.”<sup>231</sup>

On the surface, the Jingye Institute appeared to pursue the same dual format of academic and technical training adopted by many of the relief organizations described above. All children took three 45-minute academic classes (Mandarin, mathematics, and general knowledge) each morning. The thrust of “reform education” 感化教育 (*ganhua jiaoyu*), though, lay not in imparting knowledge and advancing literacy, but rather in rebuilding their moral character by teaching children to acknowledge openly their faults 錯過 (*cuoguo*) and rectify them. Drawing on a mix of Buddhist methods for redemption and the pedagogical approaches championed by Tao Xingzhi and John Dewey, teachers were expected to help children recognize their past failings through moral suasion, but also enable the children themselves to assume an important role in the corrective process in line with the reformist principle of uniting “teaching, learning and doing.”<sup>232</sup> They were taught to establish their own regulations, relying on group pressure to discourage poor conduct, promote good behavior and, in the process, cast aside their bad habits of yore. The home also adopted Tao’s “little teacher” 小先生 (*xiao xiansheng*) program,

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<sup>231</sup> Ibid., 45.

<sup>232</sup> For explanations of the relevance of Dewey’s and Tao’s teachings to the Jingye Institutes program of learning, see *Liulang ertong jiaoyang wenti*, 60-61 and *Ai xin qu*, 41, respectively.

entrusting select children to guide their peers in daily activities. Zhao Puchu,\* the director of the institute, summed up the organization's approach to learning: "our education objectives lay in rectifying our children's shortcomings from the past and teaching them how to 'be an upright person' 做人 (*zuo ren*)."<sup>233</sup> In Zhao's view, teaching literacy and book learning were of secondary importance to the task of restoring the child's benevolent nature and moral qualities so compromised by conditions on the street.

The institute's staff viewed the role of vocational schooling in similar terms. Each afternoon, the children undertook four and half hours of practical training at one of the institute's seven workshops.<sup>234</sup> On one hand, such training was seen as a critical step on the path to becoming self-sufficient. However, the major function of "production education" consisted not in the training of skills or economic remuneration, but rather in "cultivating good habits, a proper attitude, and a sound character from labor and hard work."<sup>235</sup> Though the institute worked assiduously to find employment for its wards in local companies and factories, this did not mark the end of its relationship with the individuals it had taken in.<sup>236</sup> The report stressed that the organization had a responsibility to conduct follow-up, on-the-spot inspections and interviews to determine

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\* Zhao Puchu emerged as one of the most notable lay Buddhist figures and philanthropic activists in 1930s and 1940s Shanghai. In addition to his position at the Jingye Institute, he founded and headed the Chinese Buddhist National Salvation Association and served on some of the most prominent relief committees during and after the war. He would eventually play a significant role in early PRC relief efforts in the city.

<sup>233</sup> Ibid., 62: "*Women rending women de jiaoyu mubiao, zai hu zenyang jiuzheng women de haizimen guoqu de quedian, jiao tamen zenyang de zuo ren, dushu shizi que shi zai ci yao de.*" 我們認定我們的教育目標，在乎怎樣糾正我們的孩子們過去的缺點，教他們怎樣的做人，讀書識字卻是在其次。

<sup>234</sup> The seven trades taught at Jingye were shoemaking, bamboo work, rattan work, tailoring, making Western clothes, net making, and raising rabbits. See "Liulang ertong de leyuan" in *Shenbao*, April 4, 1944.

<sup>235</sup> *Liulang ertong jiaoyang wenti*, 50.

<sup>236</sup> During the institute's first two and half years of existence, it arranged employment for about 45 children. See Ibid., 29.

whether their moral character and conduct continued to improve, to observe their relations with employers, and to gauge whether or not the change in environment caused them “to their revert to the old, bad habits” of the past.<sup>237</sup> In short, the provision of technical skills was not adequate in and of itself for establishing a new life in society; just as crucial was whether the child’s restored moral sense of right and wrong held up in his or her new surroundings.

The Jingye Institute was distinctive among its peer organizations for the degree to which it focused on the complexities of the disadvantaged child’s inner world. Life on the street, the institute’s report observed, severely derailed the children’s moral development, diminished their sense of self-worth, and robbed them of their innocence. Spat at, cursed, and looked down upon by nearly every adult, the street urchin developed a self-abased disposition and came to believe unwittingly that one’s own character was inalterable.<sup>238</sup> The institute firmly rejected the use of threats and corporal punishment for reforming the child, contending that such methods would only further alienate youngsters who had been subject to a hostile environment. Rather, it was necessary to persuade children patiently to speak of their experiences and to repent their errant ways of the past.<sup>239</sup> This, the report noted, was not an easy task; it required instructors to live with the wards, maintain a kindly and patient attitude toward them at all times, and be by their side to help them

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<sup>237</sup> Ibid., 30. If deemed necessary, the institute would continue to provide material aid to its former wards in the form of bedding, clothing and shoes.

<sup>238</sup> Ibid., 16, 21. Admission of one’s transgressions followed by vows to correct them was deemed the key method in Buddhism of amending human faults.

<sup>239</sup> Illustrative of this approach, former ward and “little teacher” Ma Tiegui recalled that when children were caught fighting they simply were called to the front office to be persuaded of their wrongdoing but were neither punished nor reprimanded.

whenever needed.<sup>240</sup> After breaking down psychological barriers and gaining the children's trust, instructors strove to build up their self-confidence, to persuade them to acknowledge their past failings, and to exhort them to follow the Buddhist principles of the six harmonies\* 六和 (*liu he*) which served, in their view, as the basis for “becoming an upright person” 做人 (*zuo ren*).

The sponsors of Jingye Institute also stressed the troubling implications of the rise in street urchins for urban order and the nation at large. They recognized that, though these children were compelled to engage in criminal acts to survive, such undertakings hardly served as a quick fix or temporary solution to their predicament. The oppressive conditions of street life eroded the child's sense of shame and his or her ability to distinguish what was morally right from wrong; without intervention, the child would continue down a wayward path, committing more serious crimes and thus “incurring immense damage to society in the future.”<sup>241</sup>

As one of the home's lay Buddhist affiliates, Li Yuanjing, remarked, “Today's street urchin is tomorrow's chief sinister figure.”<sup>242</sup> But of even greater significance, in the author's estimation, were the consequences for the nation. Especially alarming to the institute's organizers was that these children, the “so-called ‘future masters of the nation,’ ” not only end up leading a debased existence on the street, but also that they were inclined to lure other children along the same aberrant path. Each additional youth

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<sup>240</sup> *Liulang ertong jiaoyang wenti*, 18.

\* These include harmonious speech (口和), intention (意和), contact (身和), discipline (戒和), discernment (見和), and benefit (利和). For a description of each of the six harmonies, see *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>241</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>242</sup> *Ibid.*, 56: “*Jinri de liulang ertong jiu shi ta ri yuanduijuxing.*” 今日的流浪兒童就是他日元慙巨兇. This view was shared by Dong Bin, an education activist discussed below.



led astray, they lamented, translated into an added, if less visible loss of the nation's vigor 元氣 (*yuanqi*). Thus the chances of restoring order and enabling China to rebound as a strong county hinged on acting quickly to remove these children from the streets, reforming them, and providing them with viable outlet for the future.

While the chaos unleashed by Japan's invasion sharpened public focus on the antisocial behavior of homeless children in Shanghai, the street urchin would remain firmly fixed within the sights of social welfare activists long after the Japanese withdrew their forces. Civil war between the Communists and Nationalist government (1946-1949) as well as runaway inflation in the postwar years continued to pull families asunder and leave large numbers of lone youngsters struggling to survive on the boulevards and in the alleys, whether through begging or crime. In 1949, education proponent Dong Bing reported that in "the current time of unending war" the number of street urchins – "hungry, sallow-faced children in tattered clothing, extending their hands to collect alms or snatch items" – in the city was increasing with each passing day.<sup>243</sup> Dong and others who expressed anxiety over the ubiquity of uprooted youths in postwar Shanghai echoed a refrain that had gained currency during the occupation, claiming that a failure to cope with the problem would result in growing societal instability and allow "the young sprouts of our nation/race to die off."<sup>244</sup>

Thus rehabilitative programs for homeless children in the city were sustained and expanded after the war, while simultaneously emerging as a distinct sector within the

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<sup>243</sup> Dong, "Liulang ertong jiaoyang wenti," 12.

<sup>244</sup> Ibid., 13. See also "Shanghai shaonian cun: liulang ertong da jiating" in *Shenbao*, May 23, 1946 and Zou, "Liulang ertong de wenti," 8, for a discussion of linkages between caring for homeless children, stemming social disorder and national salvation.

newly discussed arena of child welfare 兒童福利 (*ertong fuli*). Among the four privately-run reformatories for street youths that remained operational in postwar Shanghai was Jingye Institute; benefiting from a 100-*mu* land grant, it relocated to outlying Dachang Town in March 1946 and under the new name Boys Town 少年村 (*Shaonian cun*) furthered its approach to life education 生活教育 (*shenghuo jiaoyu*) through the adoption of a student self-government apparatus -- replete with village head, police force, court, etc. – to foster a spirit of cooperation as well as the knowledge and discipline to abide by the law in their “small citizens.”<sup>245</sup> Not long after Boys Town introduced these programs, a group of leading philanthropists and education proponents organized the Shanghai Advisory Committee for Child Welfare (SACCW) to coordinate and advance welfare work on a municipal wide basis. With financial support from the city government and the United Nations Relief and Reconstruction Association (UNRRA), SACCW undertook a range of tasks from probing the living conditions of the young through case studies and establishing centers to meet the nutritional and educational needs of underprivileged children, to sponsoring training programs for orphanage instructors, all with the intention of establishing a set of standards for care giving. Particularly noteworthy was the inclusion of a special section in a SACCW committee work report, issued in May 1948, on assistance for homeless, delinquent children, the type who wound up at Boys Town.<sup>246</sup> While services for juvenile delinquents emerged as an essential segment of the nascent

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<sup>245</sup> The new appellation Boys Town was taken from that of an institution founded by Catholic priest Edward Flanagan in Nebraska in 1921 for at-risk children. See “Shaonian cun,” *Shenbao*, April 4, 1946. The self-government set-up at Boys Town was not unlike the program Xiong Xiling at Fragrant Hills in the 1920s. See chapter 1, pp. 49-54

<sup>246</sup> See “Benhui gongzuo baogao” in *Ertong yu shehui*, (May), 61-64.

field of child welfare attended by private actors during the 1940s, they too clearly comprised the main pillar of the state's growing involvement in child relief after the war.

### **Relief and the State in Postwar Shanghai**

The expulsion of Japanese forces and return of Guomindang civil authorities to Shanghai in late summer 1945 would have crucial implications for the place of government in relief services for the urban poor and dispossessed in the years to come. If the new era was marked by a desire among municipal officials to regulate and extend state support to social assistance programs on a broad level, the government's actions betrayed a distinct interest in removing the city's vagrant population from the streets and setting them on the path to personal renewal. Charged with the central task of coordinating these and all other activities within the emergent sphere of social welfare was the newly reincorporated Shanghai Social Affairs Bureau (SAB), but both the municipal police and public health bureaus were called upon to assist in their endeavors. While efforts undertaken by these agencies to establish a set of standards for relief and philanthropic organizations for the young harkened back to the municipal government's reform proposals of the early 1930s, it was the state's hitherto uncharacteristic initiative in creating programs for one particular group of dependent children that bears special historical significance and thus merits further consideration.

Mirroring the coverage in newspapers and periodicals of the street urchin problem was a heightened recognition among local officials that the numbers of these youngsters shot up after the war and a growing consensus that the state must step in to address the issue. In September 1947, the Shanghai Consultative Assembly requested the municipal government to commission the police bureau to intensify efforts to pick up homeless

children from the city streets, register them, and turn them over to the SAB for placement in local charitable institutes.<sup>247</sup> The municipal government reported that though police stations proceeded to carry out sweeps within their precincts, the large numbers of youths detained began to place an excessive burden on the array of privately run shelters that had already reached full capacity.<sup>248</sup> In a memorandum, the city administration noted regretfully that the SAB's limited budget disenabled it to fund the expansion of facilities dedicated to rearing street urchins and child refugees. In short, the largely private relief infrastructure that existed at the time could not accommodate the intentions of the new authorities to substantially reduce vagrancy. Caught between the urban administration's ideals and limitations of volunteer charities, the SAB responded by making the only adjustment it deemed viable, announcing that the only state-run institution of its kind, the Shanghai Children's Receiving Home 上海市兒童教養院 (*Shanghai shi ertong jiaoyang yuan*), would accept an additional 200 children.<sup>249</sup>

The institutional origins of the Children's Receiving Home can be traced back to the founding of its previous incarnation, the Shelter for Adult and Child Refugees 難民難童收容所 (*Nanmin nantong shourongsuo*) in November 1945. It was set up and run by the SAB in Caohejing, a suburban neighborhood roughly 10 *li* (or 3 miles) south of the Chinese city, on a 90-*mu* plot that had once housed a Red Cross Society refugee camp but

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<sup>247</sup> SMA, Q109-1-259. The assembly stressed that the sweeps were to be but a temporary measure during the winter months, when there was a palpable rise in numbers of vagrants, and should be followed by the drafting and implementation of a comprehensive relief plan for the homeless young after the spring thaw.

<sup>248</sup> SMA, Q109-1-259-10.

<sup>249</sup> *Ibid.*, 10. The capacity of home was expanded from the then total of 1300 to 1500.

was requisitioned by the Japanese during the war to serve as grounds for horse stables.<sup>250</sup> Consistent with the returning authorities' key mission of re-imposing order on the city, about 1500 "roaming hooligans, pickpockets and beggars" ranging in age from 3 to 71 *sui* were rounded up and placed in the shelter where it was hoped they could be "made into useful things."<sup>251</sup> Pejorative descriptions of the inhabitants as the "dregs 渣滓 (*zhazi*) of society" underscored an official view of the organization in its early phase as more a reformatory for remolding deviant individuals than a charity house for succoring the downtrodden and needy. But under the stewardship of shelter director Zhou Zuwang, a graduate from Beijing Normal University with a background in social work, there evolved fundamental changes in the institution's composition, attitude towards its wards, and approaches to reforming them.<sup>252</sup> By early 1947, Zhou determined that differences in the educational needs of adult and child dependents as well as the greater extent to which bad habits had become entrenched in the former on the street called for separating the two groups, signaling important shifts in policy and methods in the months to come.<sup>253</sup>

Director Zhou's outward recognition of these discrepancies culminated in the official decision to convert the shelter into an all-children's facility, renamed Children's Receiving Home, in June 1947. The reorganized institute transferred all adults to other agencies for continued training and began to limit admission to youths between the ages 5

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<sup>250</sup> Ye, "Shanghai shi ertong jiaoyang suo," 9.

<sup>251</sup> SMA, Q6-9-866; Zhou, "Shanghai shi jiuji nanmin nantong shourongsuo," 82. Concretely, this meant furnishing the able-bodied with the skills needed for employment. Within a period of two years, over 2000 of the shelter's wards were released or introduced to work.

<sup>252</sup> Zhou was appointed director by the SAB at the time the shelter was set up in November 1945. Working below Zhou were 90 teachers and staff, many of whom had studied the methods of U.S. education.

<sup>253</sup> SMA, Q6-9-988.

and 15 歲 (*sui*). Though dwarfing Boys Town in size, the social makeup of the home now consisted similarly of street urchins, the ranks of whom included pickpockets (30%), beggars (30%), petty thieves (20%), and orphaned, poor, mischievous and problem children (20%).<sup>254</sup> Whether subsisting previously as “child beggar heads,” their acolytes, or hawkers, most were described as having maintained an aimless and freewheeling existence amidst the unchecked squalor, disease, and vice of the urban underbelly.<sup>255</sup> Admission to the home entailed being thrust into an ethos of structure and uniformity utterly absent from life on the street. Entrance procedures required the new ward to register, have the head shaved, shower and be disinfected, undergo a physical checkup and finally be sent to the Psychological Reform Office for evaluation. The child would then be issued three sets of clothes and begin a fixed eating plan of three meals daily.<sup>256</sup>

A shift less obvious than the home’s change in name and target group was the replacement of a “hard” or more rigid approach to curbing undesirable conduct with “soft,” rehabilitative methods for reform. This transition points up an official acknowledgment of the special needs of children as well as a growing acceptance of psychology as a realm through which positive behavior could be induced. In the shelter’s early period, administrators showed little interest in distinguishing resident minors from among the larger pool of homeless dependents. All were thought to represent a menace to society and thus ought to be subjected to the same recipe of methods for behavioral

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<sup>254</sup> These rough percentages are supplied by Ye Qusheng, in his study of the home (Ye, “Shanghai shi ertong jiaoyang suo,” 9). For a more detailed set of statistics on the children entering the home, see Appendix 2.2 (Reasons for Entering Shanghai Municipal Children’s Receiving Home, March 1948- March 1949).

<sup>255</sup> Identified but not explained in historical records, a “child beggar head” was presumably a younger version of the *yeshu* figure described above.

<sup>256</sup> “Jiang Jingguo fangwen nantong zhumin nuli xue jineng,” *Shenbao*, January 29, 1947.

correction. It was not until Director Zhou expounded upon the dissimilar educational requirements of adults and juveniles in his January 1947 statement that the institute's staff began to jettison the assumptions that underlay the use of largely uniform and coercive mechanisms for deterring indolence and deviance among the young.

The hard approach of the early years found expression in a repertoire of disciplinary structures and punitive measures designed to render these “wild children” 野孩子 (*ye haizi*) docile. The youngsters were incorporated into seven military-style groupings known as battalions 大隊 (*dadui*), each of which was assigned to a dormitory and formed its own band corps outfitted in light grey uniforms, black running shoes and white gloves.<sup>257</sup> Each morning the units assembled to perform sets of rigorous military exercises, prompting one visitor to remark, “Their drills are well-coordinated and in-step, with earnest spirit and nimble action on par with regular military police.”<sup>258</sup> A detailed body of rules was put in place to regulate eating and drinking, raising and lowering the flag and most aspects of daily life in the dorm, classroom and workshop, spelling out severe punishments for those who chat, laugh or are absent without reason.<sup>259</sup> The punitive tack during this period could also be seen in the way the shelter's own small court dealt with infractions. Those convicted of what were deemed the most serious breaches – stealing items, swindling, or plotting to flee – were locked up in a dark room for two weeks.<sup>260</sup>

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<sup>257</sup> Ibid.

<sup>258</sup> Ye, “Shanghai shi ertong jiaoyang suo,” 10; Yan, “Canguan Shanghai ertong jiaoyang suo,” 9.

<sup>259</sup> SMA, Q6-9-888.

<sup>260</sup> “Jiang Jingguo fangwen nantong zhumin nuli xue jineng,” *Shenbao*, January 29, 1947.

But a new set of rehabilitative methods, rooted in the principle of empathy rather than austerity, came to eclipse the older views on reforming youngsters when the shelter was converted in summer 1947. The softer course that took hold at this time was premised on the notion that the troubles of street urchins, whom had been forsaken by family and society, stemmed from a steady exposure to ridicule that led, in turn, to self-abasement. It was this loss of a sense of self-worth that rendered them shamelessly willing to partake in antisocial forms of behavior. Sensitive to their personal histories, administrators sought to dispel fear and doubts in new arrivals by leading them around the premises and gradually introducing them to children in their age group.<sup>261</sup> Thereafter, instead of punishing and instilling fear in the youngster, the home's Psychological Treatment Clinic and Case-study Office employed modern social science methods such as psychological evaluations, self-descriptions and visits and interviews with known relatives in an effort to identify and then patiently root out poor habits.<sup>262</sup> At the same time, the new approach entailed countenancing correct deportment with positive encouragement and the distribution of appropriate awards. And explicitly rejecting the severe regimentation of the past, staff members asserted that a new summer camp for the children in 1947 would supplant military-style organization with Boy Scout training to cultivate their creative abilities and to foster self awareness and self motivation.<sup>263</sup>

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<sup>261</sup> For a broader discussion of the psychological trauma inflicted from life on the streets, see Ye, "Shanghai shi ertong jiaoyang suo," 10 and Jin, "Women de xia lingying." Jin argues that fear caused by corporal punishment led to high rates of flight from the shelter, and thus that lowering recidivism would depend on positive reinforcement rather than punitive measures.

<sup>262</sup> The director imported many of these ideas from the social sciences via exchanges set up with academic departments at local universities.

<sup>263</sup> Jin, "Women de xia lingying".



The adoption of this softer approach notwithstanding, the Children's Receiving Home continued to place primacy on developing a structured lifestyle for its wards through its education agenda and vocational training programs. The formal component to learning, known as compulsory education 國民教育 (*guomin jiaoyu*), took place at the home's aspiringly-named New People's Primary School 新民國小 (*Xinmin guoxiao*), located on site and accredited by the city education bureau. Here, all of the institute's charges 15 歲 (*sui*) and under, totaling roughly 1200 at any given time, enrolled in a set of courses identical to China's public school curriculum. Eschewing methods of rote learning, the education program was designed to bring out the children's individual talents.<sup>264</sup> Initially, those who were gifted academically had the opportunity to pursue further study at a public middle school, but at the urging of a group of activist pupils and teachers, municipal education officials approved the addition of such a facility to campus in fall 1947.<sup>265</sup>

While the home's instructional agenda conformed to the structure and standards of those found in secondary educational institutions throughout China, it exhibited too a particularly progressive philosophy and approach to learning known as "life education" 生活教育 (*shenghuo jiaoyu*). Drawing on pedagogical models developed by such aforementioned reformists as John Dewey, Tao Xingzhi and Xiong Xiling (see chapter 1), teachers endeavored to follow the broad tenet of a "unity of instructing, learning and doing," regarding all daily activities as valid areas of study, while also adopting the "little

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<sup>264</sup> Zhou, "Ertong jiaoyang gongzuo." Beginning in the fifth (next to last) year of primary school, vocational training classes were added to the curriculum to stimulate interests in a particular trade.

<sup>265</sup> See SMA, Q6-9-895 for a description of the petition and government's approval to set up the school.

teacher” program of entrusting more advanced students with the task of helping to train their peers.<sup>266</sup> But it was the launching of a summer camp in 1947 that signified a particularly concrete commitment to the principles of life education. The camp established some 14 organizations, clubs, and athletic groups, each of which belonged to one of three categories: self-government, culture, or recreation. For example, the camp’s self-government bodies, bearing an unmistakable resemblance to Xiong’s Fragrant Hills student groups, included among others a Children’s Senate for cultivating democratic habits, a Children’s Court to nurture their concept of the rule of law and custom of appeal, and a Children’s Public Health Team to discuss the promotion of practices designed to improve public sanitation.<sup>267</sup> These institutions, which were subsequently expanded to operate on a year-round basis, were designed to plant the seeds of citizen activism and community engagement in ways that past learning techniques rooted in submissiveness to authority and plagued by passivity failed to do so.

The dual emphasis on ensuring that street urchins received a level of schooling on par with national standards and habituating them to undertake responsibilities associated with group living 團體生活 (*tuanti shenghuo*) and community service was capped with a third, practical of component learning: vocational instruction. As further testament to the newfound faith in the social sciences, administrators selected a prospective trade for each child based on the Psychological Reform Office’s assessment of his or her family background, personal temperament and physical strength.<sup>268</sup> At any given time, about 600

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<sup>266</sup> Zhou, “Ertong jiaoyang gongzuo,” 11.

<sup>267</sup> SMA, Q6-9-895.

<sup>268</sup> Zhou, “Ertong jiaoyang gongzuo,” 12

dependents, the majority of whom were 15 歲 (*sui*) or older, were enrolled in one of 14 onsite training programs that ranged in length from three months to five years and in scope from the industrial and performing arts to service jobs in the public sector and techniques of growing and harvesting crops and animal husbandry on a 40-*mu* plot of land under the direction of a graduate from Jinling University's Agricultural School.<sup>269</sup> Whatever skill set they pursued, the underlying objective was to place trained graduates on a track to lifelong self-reliance 自立 (*zili*) through honest work, which along with a newly developed voluntaristic spirit toward community tasks served as the hallmarks of their transformation from aimless drifters to full fledged citizens.

The incorporation of Shanghai Children's Receiving Home, the first government-run institute of its kind in the city, was indicative of a rising concern among local officials over threats to public wellbeing within the urban sector of Republican China and, more specifically, recognition of the importance of juvenile reform efforts in countering such threats. Shanghai was commonly extolled as China's most advanced, "modern," and cosmopolitan city in Republican times by resident and visitor alike. Aware of this reputation, city officials and local notables were acutely aware of the ubiquity of hucksters, petty thieves and panhandlers, including young "hooligans" whom could be seen fighting, harassing passersby, scalping tickets, and loafing about in playgrounds, the wharf and near the train station, scenes they worried tarnished the city's image in the eyes of Westerners and thus would lead to ridicule and shame.<sup>270</sup> In short, the activities of the homeless not only proved detrimental to the maintenance of public order but represented

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<sup>269</sup> Ye, "Shanghai shi ertong jiaoyang suo," 9.

<sup>270</sup> SMA, Q109-1-261; SMA, Q109-1-259.

an affront to the elite's sense of local pride and national dignity as well. The crowding and squalor among street dwellers also served as fertile ground for the transmission of infectious diseases, a dynamic borne out by the fact that 95% of children at the state-run home were diagnosed with trachoma at the time of entry.<sup>271</sup> Furthermore, city officials, having articulated the necessity of improving public health, stressed that once an epidemic emerges within the ranks of the homeless it spreads easily and threatens the wellness and even lives of the urban population at large.<sup>272</sup>

Eradicating, or at least reducing, these menaces would require creating new people out of children on the city streets. State agents not uncommonly employed plant-related analogies to discuss the process of shaping the young vagabond's character. Prior to entering the halls of Children's Receiving Home, waifs were regarded much like their adult counterparts as the ungovernable "weeds of society." Yet rootless youths were seen as more pliable than older vagrants and full of the same potential found in all of China's children, the "young sprouts of the nation" that must be protected jointly by the government and parents. The key to unlocking the potential of homeless youngsters lay in creating a fresh environment, radically different from the unforgiving streets and alleys, in which they could thrive. Likening the relationship between the children's home and its inhabitants to that of a hothouse and the flowers it nurtures and shields from the elements, the preface to a special issue of the officially-sponsored journal, 社會月刊 (Social Affairs Monthly), emphasized that that the establishment of such an atmosphere was

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<sup>271</sup> "Xi wei pa er shou, jin ren zongduizhang youmin xiyisuo yinxiang ji," *Shenbao*, August 2, 1946.

<sup>272</sup> See SMA, Q109-1-261: *Ruhe chuli benshi nanmin, youmin ji jietou liulang ertong, bi an shehui zhixu an*.

crucial to turning street urchins into “reservists for social construction.”<sup>273</sup> The home was not only dedicated to cultivating good habits (cleanliness, self-discipline, honesty, hygiene, etiquette, etc), but also to helping the children recognize their creative abilities and instilling them with the “courage to begin anew as morally upright beings”<sup>274</sup>

While the adoption of rehabilitative methods for reforming rootless juveniles could be observed in some of the city’s child relief organizations during the early years of Japan’s occupation, what was particularly striking about the postwar period was the degree to which the state took the lead in promoting and executing these approaches. Especially attuned to the ways homeless youths may impede or, conversely, contribute to social stability and national cohesion, urban authorities discerned that the task of rectifying their anti-social behavior could no longer be left only to philanthropists and compassionate persons; it must be seen as part of the great enterprise of “strengthening the race,” and thus required government leadership.<sup>275</sup> In addition to rehabilitative services administered by Children’s Receiving Home, other municipal agencies were called upon for support: the police bureau undertook increasingly the assignment of rounding up troubled youths and placing them in institutional care just as the SAB endeavored to document and promote a set of standards for organizations dedicated to

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<sup>273</sup> Wu, “Women ruhe chuli liulang ertong,” *Shehui yuekan*, 2.

<sup>274</sup> “Jiang Jingguo fangwen nantong xumian nuli xue jineng,” *Shenbao*, January 29, 1947.

<sup>275</sup> Wu, “Women ruhe chuli liulang ertong,” *Shehui yuekan*, 2. The new sense of official responsibility was underscored in an address by Shanghai mayor Wu Zonggan to the wards of Children’s Receiving Home in October 1946: “The fact that each of you roamed the streets in the past is our fault, a result of us not managing things correctly...I, in my capacity as mayor of Shanghai, ought to assist and raise you.” See “Liulang de yi chun: ba bai nantong jin fei xi bi,” *Shenbao*, November 1, 1946.

remolding juvenile delinquents into citizens through the publication of 社會月刊.<sup>276</sup> In contrast to earlier periods, when there emerged a glaring gap between the rhetoric and action of official responsibility in local relief work, postwar Shanghai gave birth to a genuine government-led movement to support and reform the homeless young. As the following chapters show, these developments marked the beginnings of a trend toward the expansion of state-managed child relief that persisted across the revolutionary divide of 1949 and pick up greater speed thereafter.

In spite of this tendency, Shanghai authorities continued to rely heavily through the final years of the Republic on the capacity of private associations to marshal material and human resources for much needed support. With the exception of registering with the SAB, religious and other volunteer organizations devoted to sheltering street urchins such as Boys Town, 上海兒童保育院 *Shanghai ertong baoyuyuan*, and 上海福幼院 *Shanghai fuyouyuan* functioned just as they had during the war. Moreover, newspaper reports stressed that the limited size of the municipal government's budget for Children's Receiving Home made outside aid indispensable. In addition to collecting 200,000 *yuan* from "large philanthropists" 大慈善家 (*da cishan jia*) for the construction of dormitories, the state-run home received a continuous flow of donations in the form of food and clothing as well as daily-use items such as medicine, soap, and writing implements from

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<sup>276</sup> One-third of the wards of Children's Receiving Home had been picked up and delivered by the police (roughly one third was transferred from charitable associations and one third applied directly to be admitted, with smaller numbers sent directly by the courts or SAB). Statistics are not available for privately-run homes. Meanwhile, the editors of *Shehui yuekan* not only devoted an entire issue to street urchins, but also pointed out that Director Zhou's extensive report on Children's Receiving Home within was designed specifically to serve as a reference guide for Children's Paradise, a facility set up by the Guangzhou municipal government as well as a child welfare institute established by the Nanjing city authorities.

various circles in society at the behest of the hall-director.<sup>277</sup> In sum, the city authorities' greater participation in these years appeared to derive more from local officials' recognition of the potentially pivotal role played by displaced youths in the city's unwinding social fabric and the inability of private organizations to absorb their swelling ranks than from an overall scheme to set up a government-run welfare apparatus.

## **Conclusion**

This survey has explored the ways that a growing dedication to urban reform transformed the landscape of child relief in Republican Shanghai. At the turn of the twentieth century, social assistance for the dependent young was channeled entirely through private philanthropies and religious organizations. The dispensation of aid was seen primarily as a moral act. But the movement to develop a more “modern” urban infrastructure and civil 文明 (*wenming*) public in Shanghai and other cities during the final years of Qing rule and the decades to come spilled over into the arena of relief work, complicating a set of purely ethical-based motives that had hitherto underlain it, altering the old pattern of state-society involvement, and shaping the tenor of reform within the organizations that carried it out. Though the early wave of urban renewal schemes showed little interest in welfare reform, focusing instead on building public schools and parks as well as a modern police and public health apparatus, leading philanthropists and municipal officials alike came to view the circumstances of society's most desperate and marginalized figures as a crucial site for building a healthier, more secure and more integrated urban community. Given the long range consequences of their development,

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<sup>277</sup> “Jiang Jingguo fangwen nantong xumian nuli xue jineng,” *Shenbao*, January 29, 1947.

dependent children were deemed particularly deserving among the vulnerable of the care and guidance that would allow for their physical, mental and moral rehabilitation.

The adoption of a new urban reformist agenda was, along with the crisis begotten by Japan's military invasion, crucial to setting the stage for the state's direct participation in relief work for the disadvantaged young in Republican China. While the government's encroachment signaled a noteworthy shift from previous times, when initiative and leadership in social assistance rested almost exclusively with volunteer organizations, the Shanghai case reveals that Republican authorities remained down to 1949 disinclined to develop a centrally-administered system to supplant the array of local charities, indeed leaving the bulk of relief work to be handled by private actors. How then are we to explain the contours and dynamics of the public-private alliance in relief that took form during the first half of the twentieth century? Treating the evolution of services for the three groups identified above -- foundlings, orphans and poor children, and street urchins -- separately enables us to assess the lengths to which the state became involved in each and, in turn, helps to shed light on its prerogatives in relief work.

The evidence from Shanghai suggests that official participation in child welfare affairs was conditioned and circumscribed largely by the local authorities' quest to nurture societal stability in a metropolitan area particularly susceptible to demographic pressures. Guided by this central concern, municipal agencies were inclined to intervene most aggressively in facets of social assistance deemed pivotal to curbing manifestations of disorder -- from criminal activity and disease to vagrancy -- while allowing philanthropic organizations to continue administering independently most other aspects of relief. Across the spectrum of child welfare activity, the task of aiding orphaned and



impoverished minors 孤苦兒童 (*gu'ku ertong*) stood as the one in which Shanghai city officials proved least disposed to become engaged. The campaign to register and make supplemental funds available to qualifying orphanages and poor children's homes through the Social Affairs Bureau in 1946 marked the upper limits of government activism down to 1949, yet barely strayed from the state's role in pre-Republican times as supervisor and subsidizer of charitable work. Notably, the implementation of these regulations sprung more from an attempt by reinstated Guomindang officials to assert their authority after the war than from a shift in policy toward parentless and destitute minors.

The enterprise of saving and supporting abandoned infants 育嬰事業 (*yuying shiye*) occupied a middle position on the sliding scale of state involvement in Shanghai's child relief services. Though privately-run foundling homes remained the backbone of this undertaking, their practices as well as the problem of infant abandonment in the city began to draw the scrutiny of the newly established Social Affairs Bureau in 1930. After conducting investigations of these homes, agents from the bureau issued a set of reform proposals designed to improve institutional care giving and lower mortality rates, all set forth in a degree of specificity scarcely articulated by local authorities in the past. Bureau workers also developed a plan in which police and public health officers work together to identify and aid poverty-stricken pregnant women who might otherwise be liable to discard or kill their newborns. These designs prefigured an even greater degree of government initiative in this arena following the war, when district level civil servants were charged with publicizing the ordinance prohibiting abandonment and corresponding punishments and police officers with patrolling streets to retrieve any deserted babies and

facilitate their transfer to local foundling hospices. The adoption of such measures reflected a turn in the official conceptualization of infant abandonment from a moral transgression to an act that undermined Shanghai's reputation as a modern, civil metropolis and eviscerated the social foundations necessary for building a strong nation. Though this shift in thinking was not embraced by bureaucrats alone, its disturbing implications most significantly pressed local authorities to participate directly in the effort to deter the enfeeblement and premature death of infants on a scale previously unseen.

It was, however, the project to rehabilitate and train young refugees and street urchins that would emerge as the branch of child relief in which the Shanghai city government exhibited initiative most vigorously. Homeless children did not begin to appear as a distinct category in public discourse on relief work until the mid 1930s, but as the war threw the city into a state of chaos and desperation philanthropic activists quickly became attuned to the potential instability caused by this group, and created a new set of institutes to meet their material needs, provide vocational training, and, just as importantly, reform their character. When Guomindang civil administrators returned to power in 1945, they too sensed that the large numbers of rootless youngsters imperiled order in the city, prompting a series of actions that would challenge the long-established pattern of state-society relations in social assistance. Realizing that charitable homes were ill-equipped to tackle this problem adequately on their own, local officials not only directed police officers to round up young vagabonds but also established the first state-run child welfare facility in the city. Here the government drew on many of the rehabilitative techniques employed by private institutions during the war to reform its

charges, becoming a major player in child welfare in the process. Nevertheless, the developments delineated above convey but one part of the story of the state's encroachment in social assistance in Republican China; to grasp this process more fully, we now turn to an examination of the ways Japan's invasion and occupation impacted the conceptualization and organization of relief work for the young.

### Appendix 2.1: Shanghai Orphanages and Poor Children's Homes, 1864-1949

Institution Name	Year Est.	Address	Affiliation	Type of children	Age Range	Totals/ Capacity
土山灣孤兒院 Ton-Se-We Orphanage	1864	Xujiahui, Puxi Road No. 448	Catholic	orphans	6-16	178/334
若瑟孤兒院 Yang Ging Pang St. Joseph's Orphanage	1874	Sichuan S. Road No. 39	Catholic	orphans	2-16	2-16
上海孤兒院 Shanghai Orphanage	1905	Chinese city, Gaojia Rd. No. 113	Private	orphans	6-16	45/49
上海貧兒院 Shanghai Poor Children's Home	1908	Chinese city, Jumen Rd. No.504	Private	orphans/ poor children	6-16	94/151
上海貧兒教養院 Shanghai Benevolent Industrial Institution	1920	Jiaozhou Rd. No. 397	Private	orphans/ poor children	6-16	63/70
中華基督教撫育工兒院 Chinese Christian Nursery and Day School	1920	Jiangwan Dist., Z No. 20	Protestant	orphans	6-16	73/170
聖若瑟孤兒院 Ze-Ka-Wei St. Joseph's Orphanage	1921	Xujiahui Huinan Road. No. 41	Catholic	female orphans	6-16	25/50
伯特利孤兒院 Bethel Orphanage I	1928	梵皇渡路 297 號	Protestant	orphans	6-16	107/186
伯特利孤兒院 Bethel Orphanage II	1928	Chinese city, Zhizaoju Rd. 639	Protestant	orphans	6-16	97/97
斯高工藝院 Scotch Industrial Home	1934	Yangshupu, Hangzhou Rd. No. 740	Catholic	orphans/ poor children	12-16	70/70
以馬尼亞孤兒院 Emmanuel Home	1937	Yuyuan Rd. Lane 668, No. 18	Protestant	orphans	6-16	280/280
上海貧兒童工藝院	1937					

Shanghai Industrial Home for Poor Children		Zhonghua Rd., No. 801937	private	orphans/ poor children	6-16	63/80
上海幼幼教養院 Shanghai Children's Reformatory	1938	Kaifeng Rd, Lane 9, No. 210	Private	orphans/ poor children	7-18	250-300
一心教養院 St. Joseph's School	1941	Chinese city, Guohua Rd., No. 236	Catholic	orphans/ poor children	6-16	175/300
伯大尼孤兒樂園 Bethany Orphanage	1942	Jiaotong Rd., No. 1933	Protestant	orphans	6-18	187/246
浦東第一兒童教養院 Pootung No. 1 Children's Home	1943	Pudong, Zhoujia duxi nanlonghua jiao 1943	Private	orphans/ poor children	6-16	36/50
中國慈幼院 China Orphanage	1946	Jiangwan, nichengjie, No.3 workshop	Private	orphans	6-16	80/103
晨星孤兒院 Morning Star Orphanage	1946	Hongkou, Emei Rd. No. 365	Protestant	orphans	6-16	54/54
慈善團養濟院 Yang Ji Yuan	1946	Chinese city, Ye Rd. No.281	private	orphans/ poor children	6-16	82/106
基督教中國布道會 兒童樂園 Chinese Evangelize Mission Children's Paradise	1947	Jiangwan	Protestant	orphans/ poor children	6-12	68/68
上海貧兒工讀院 Shanghai Poor Children's Institute	1947	Jiangwan, Xinshi Road	private	orphans/ poor children	6-16	82/82
上海貧兒工讀院 Shanghai Poor Children's Institute	1947	Jiangwan, Xinshi Road	private	orphans/ poor children	6-16	82/82

Source: SMA, Q6-9-168

Note: This list includes only orphanages and poor children's homes that were still operating in May, 1949. Institutions that ceased functioning prior to the Communist takeover of Shanghai are not listed.

### Appendix 2.1 Reasons for Entering Shanghai Municipal Children's Receiving Home, March 1948 – March 1949

Reason	Boys	Girls	Total
Begging (乞丐)	287	1	288
Vagrancy (流浪)	506	19	525
Pick-pocketing (扒手)	33	1	34
Gambling (賭博)	0	0	0

Licentiousness (荒淫)	1	0	1
Smoking (吸煙)	1	0	1
Voluntary Admittance (自投)	410	44	454
Other (其他)	34	1	33
Total	1271	66	1337

Source: SMA, Q1-12-1721

Note: The above figures were calculated by averaging the end-of-month totals for the period stretching from March 1948 through March 1949, with the exception of May 1948 which is missing from archival records.

### Chapter 3. From Warphan to Citizen: National Salvation, Unified Resistance, and Child Training in Wartime China (1937-1945)<sup>278</sup>

#### Introduction

Spanning the years 1937 to 1945, the second Sino-Japanese War, or the War to Resist Japan 抗日戰爭 (*Kang Ri zhan zheng*) as it is known in China, ranks among the most devastating societal disturbances in modern Chinese history. Japan's quest to become Asia's single dominant power gave rise to ghastly episodes of brutality and widespread social dislocation. By the time hostilities ceased, the conflict had produced an estimated 21 million Chinese casualties and rendered homeless between 60 million and 95 million people, including some 2 million children deprived of parental support.<sup>279</sup> In concert with the extensive physical destruction and suffering was the making of a psychological crisis of mass proportion. As Japan enlarged its area of control to include north, east, and part of central China in the late 1930s, many Chinese expressed their deepest fears of a permanently fractured nation and of the Chinese people becoming a second-class race to Japanese overlords.

Given its duration and the severity of its impact, the war in China remains a relatively understudied topic. Much of the scholarship on the conflict has focused on its role as a staging ground for a monumental shift in the arena of national politics. Some studies have chronicled the Guomindang's (Chinese Nationalist Party) collapse as a legitimate political force under the weight of rampant corruption, misguided military and

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<sup>278</sup> Use of the term "warphan" in this chapter refers not only to children whose parents perished in the conflict, but also child refugees separated from their families and youngsters placed in institutional care by guardians who struggled to provide for them due to the economic disruptions of the war years.

<sup>279</sup> The lower figure of 60 million is cited in the postwar publication, *China Handbook, 1937-1945*, 833, whereas recent studies have settled on the larger estimate of 95 million refugees. See MacKinnon, "Wuhan, 1938: War, Refugees," 47-48.

economic policies, and general incompetence, whereas others have analyzed the Chinese Communist Party's ability, by contrast, to harness anti-Japanese patriotism, develop an effective party organization and ideology, and dramatically expand its membership in these years, placing it on a path to victory in the postwar period.<sup>280</sup> And while other works have examined the politics of collaboration and begun to address various aspects of social life including popular culture and mass mobilization, few have explored how the war's legacy fits into the broader currents of historical change and continuity in modern China.<sup>281</sup> A notable exception is Stephen MacKinnon's recent monograph, *Wuhan, 1938: War, Refugees, and the Making of Modern China*, in which the author delves into the ways the war experience had a lasting impact on the formation of popular mentalities, civic unity, and the institutionalization of social services in the decades to come.<sup>282</sup>

In line with MacKinnon's point about public services, this chapter shows how the social crisis precipitated by the war gave rise to a fundamental restructuring of child relief in China, overshadowing earlier attempts at reform and prefiguring many of the key transformations under Communist rule in the 1950s. Broadly speaking, these changes

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<sup>280</sup> For analysis of the Guomindang's demise, see Lloyd Eastman, 1984, *Seeds of Destruction: Nationalist China in War and Revolution, 1937-1949* and Ch'i Hsi-sheng, 1982, *Nationalist China at War: Military Defeats and Political Collapse*. Discussions of the CCP's successes in the war years can be found in Chalmers Johnson, 1962, *Peasant Nationalism and Communist China: The Emergence of Revolutionary China 1937-1945* and Mark Selden, 1971, *The Yen-an Way in Revolutionary China*.

<sup>281</sup> On collaboration, see John Boyle, 1972, *China and Japan at War, 1937-1945: The Politics of Collaboration*; Gerald Bunker, 1972, *The Peace Conspiracy: Wang Ching-wei and the China War, 1937-1941*; and Timothy Brook, 2005, *Japanese Agents and Local Elites in Wartime China*. Studies of popular mobilization and other topics of local history can be found in Hung Changtai, 1994, *War and Popular Culture: Resistance in Modern China, 1937-1945* as well as the following edited volumes: David Goodman Ed., 2000, *Social and Political Change in Revolutionary China* and Stephen MacKinnon et. al. Ed., 2007, *China at War: Regions of China, 1937-1945*.

<sup>282</sup> MacKinnon argues that the war created conditions for the mass "mobilization of the populace," imbued the Chinese with a "survivor mentality – a psychic numbness to violence and ability to endure oppression without protest," and produced the prototypes for future public health and social welfare apparatuses.

occurred on two levels. First, the sheer numbers of displaced youngsters compelled the state and volunteer actors alike to systematize relief efforts on a supra-regional level, marking a sharp departure from the prewar configuration of largely autonomous philanthropic enterprises. For the first time in China, new central agencies raised funds and devised a uniform set of policies that bound together an array of satellite care giving facilities under their management. Second, there was a clear shift away from the previous ideal of preparing the dependent child for family life and responsibilities in favor of equipping him or her with the technical, physical, and spiritual assets for fulfilling one's duty, above all else, as a Chinese national and scion of a rejuvenated race. In short, a focus on family belonging and socialization, remnants of Confucian ideology, gave way to a heightened concern over national identity and community in the war years.

These changes were rooted not only in the brutal social realities of total war but also in new ways of thinking about the place of the vulnerable child in Chinese society. On one hand, the existing assortment of independently-run child relief organizations, many of which were geared toward feeding and sheltering foundlings, were regarded as lacking the coordination and capacity to cope with the droves of child refugees and war orphans. The challenge of dealing with the humanitarian crisis compelled officials and prominent civic leaders to coordinate relief work for the young on a scale unseen in the past. On the other hand, the uprooted child emerged as a living symbol of the atomized Chinese nation and a race brought to its knees by the unbridled aggression of foreign intruders. Poor, vulnerable, and disconnected, the lone child served as a concrete visual reminder of the fragmented state of the country. By the same token, though, these children were regarded as a font of hope for a return to the glories of the past.



Undeveloped and malleable, they could -- with the proper guidance and training -- be transformed into the type of producer-citizen needed for setting China on the path to recover its vitality and prominent place in the world of nations and cultures.

The following study draws heavily from the files of the Ministry of Social Affairs and National Relief Commission collections at the Second Historical Archives in Nanjing, China. Founded in spring 1938, each of these agencies not only directed local relief efforts but also served as a collection point for descriptive and statistical reports, rosters, budgets, plans, regulations and correspondence issued by the dozens of individual facilities under their supervision. In an effort to flesh out the dynamics of institutional care in these years, the following analysis relies primarily on the records of three facilities – located in Sichuan, Guizhou, and Henan provinces – which generated particularly rich institute portfolios. These materials are supplemented with a variety of wartime monographs, handbooks, and periodical articles that focus on the current trends in social relief and, more specifically, the child welfare movement.

### **War, Social Crisis, and Redefining Relief**

Throughout the late imperial era (ca. 1550-1911), the Chinese central authority's involvement in assisting vulnerable children was limited to encouraging community initiatives with pledges of financial support and tokens of honorary recognition. The absence of a centralized political structure during the decade and a half after the 1911 Revolution meant that the sustained operation and growth of programs for deprived children would continue to depend overwhelmingly on the energies of philanthropists, religious organizations, and education reformers at the local level in these years. A major shift in this arrangement appeared to be on the horizon when the

Guomindang regime, shortly after establishing nominal control over China in 1928, issued several sets of regulations aimed at making the state a central player in the management of public assistance projects. But the administration's role in child relief efforts remained, in fact, largely unchanged during the so-called Nanjing decade (1928-1937), when the Guomindang was arguably at the peak of its power to pursue such schemes. It was only after a massive social crisis, set off by Japan's imperialist ambitions in China, afflicted the nation that the government began to match its plans for at-risk children on paper with decisive action.

After the establishment of the Nationalist Government in 1928, the Guomindang articulated its intentions to “modernize” a wide range of administrative institutions and services based on Western and Japanese models. Such endeavors included promulgating new civil and criminal legal codes, establishing central control over and implementing uniform policies for local police forces and public schools, and extending the reach of local government down to the sub-county level. This wave of state-building also encompassed efforts to create a unified structure of social relief facilities. In May 1928, the Ministry of the Interior 內政部 (*Neizheng bu*) directed each provincial, municipal and county government to set up an Economic Relief Office 救濟院 (*Jiuji yuan*). The state-funded relief agencies were to be subdivided into four units 所 (*suo*) for vulnerable groups – the elderly, abandoned infants, orphans, and disabled people – and to include a medicine dispensary and a small loans division. Yet the new relief offices were designed to complement, not replace, the vast array of independently-functioning charities, which the Nanjing authorities hoped would be brought under

greater scrutiny with the passage of the “law for superintending charitable organizations” 監督慈善團體法 (*jiandu cishan tuanti fa*) in June 1929.<sup>283</sup>

The Ministry’s plans, however, appear to have had a relatively minimal impact on the ways relief for dependent children were organized on a macro-regional level. A national study conducted in May 1930 revealed that only 58 orphan units 孤兒所 (*gu'er suo*) and 188 foundling units 育嬰所 (*yuying suo*) were established throughout 566 counties surveyed.<sup>284</sup> Cai Qinyu’s research on Republican relief reveals that among those which counted as new offices in the survey were many that had simply been converted in short order from old philanthropic organizations and given the official name, 救濟院 (*Jiuji yuan*). Genuine expansion was limited primarily to the creation of new small loans offices.<sup>285</sup> Other than this, the majority of state resources available for public assistance were directed to disaster relief projects including work relief 工賑 (*gong zhen*) initiatives and the provision of agricultural tools and supplements to needy peasants.<sup>286</sup> In spite of the stated intent to create a uniform set of public facilities and services for vulnerable groups, official involvement in social assistance during the Nanjing Decade was most

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<sup>283</sup> Chen, *Shehui jiuji xingzheng*, 99. Newly-organized charities were supposed to first seek official approval and register with local authorities, but beyond these requirements there is little evidence to suggest that state agencies interfered in their operations. Interestingly, the Guomindang government followed the practice of the Qing central authorities of awarding different grades of medals and plaques to groups and individuals who ran private charities and made donations according to a classificatory chart drawn up by the Economic Relief Commission on November 21, 1928.

<sup>284</sup> The number of counties surveyed, spread throughout 18 provinces, and represented 25 percent of the national total.

<sup>285</sup> Cai, *Guojia, shehui yu ruoshi qunti*, 109-110.

<sup>286</sup> Work relief, or *gongzhen*, was an approach that dated back to the Qing era whereby the government hired displaced and idle rural residents to repair or construct public works in the wake of a natural calamity.

pronounced in times when a catastrophe threatened to paralyze agrarian production and uproot rural communities.<sup>287</sup>

Japan's military conquests in China in the late 1930s and 1940s, though, created a human catastrophe that dwarfed any natural calamity of the previous decade in terms of geographical expanse, numbers of victims, and duration. Poised for a confrontation, the Japanese army moved quickly to expand upon its occupation of China's northeast when the two countries' troops skirmished at the Marco Polo Bridge on July 7, 1937. The island nation, seeking to establish itself as the center of a new Asian order, proceeded to seize control of the Beijing-Tianjin corridor by the end of July. After gaining a foothold in the north, Japan sought to extend its dominance to China's economic heartland, the Yangzi Delta region, occupying Shanghai after three months of heavy combat and then pushing westward in a series of offensives that forced the Guomintang central government to withdraw from Nanjing to Wuhan and eventually Chongqing in October 1938. The fierce fighting and devastating aerial bombing that accompanied these and successive military campaigns over the following eight years forced tens of millions of civilians to flee their native places in search of security and subsistence.

It quickly became evident that the assortment of existing relief organizations and charities in China had neither the collective capacity nor the structural coordination to absorb, safeguard, and provide aid to the overwhelming numbers of people in flight. Most remarkably, both prominent leaders in Chinese society and the central government stepped forward in a similar way to address the social crisis in the following months, developing parallel relief apparatuses of a scale and structure without precedent in

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<sup>287</sup> Yu Minliang, in his 1948 article on the history of social relief in China, notes that official action in relief work down the onset of the war was typically sparked by disasters and temporary in design.

China's recorded history. Past distinctions between a philanthropic tradition of protecting vulnerable social groups and officially-sponsored relief initiatives to address large-scale instability dissolved as the war exacted its full toll on Chinese society. The changing dynamics of social assistance as a shared enterprise, carried forward by both state agents and civilian leaders, could be seen most clearly in the formation and work of the new relief networks for dislocated children discussed below.

The Guomindang government responded to the demographic cataclysm by thoroughly overhauling its administrative machinery for public assistance. Drawing on the concept of social administration in Western nation states, Chinese authorities expressed the need to distinguish between, and develop a separate set of institutions for social relief 社會救濟 (*shehui jiuji*) and social welfare 社會福利 (*shehui fuli*).<sup>288</sup>

Though the tradition of social relief, referring to the provisional allocation of material aid to segments of the population afflicted by a regional crisis, had a long history in China, the extent to which Japan's encroachment was pulling the country's social fabric apart at its seams in the late 1930s demanded a fundamental restructuring of aid facilities to meet the needs of the time.<sup>289</sup> Social welfare, on the other hand, encompassed a wide range of permanent institutions and services designed to improve the livelihood and health of the

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<sup>288</sup> Writing during the war, Chen Xuxian noted that whereas the term *shehui jiuji* connotes a sense of benevolence bestowed by authorities on commoners, the expression *shehui fuli* refers instead to a kind of responsibility that governments of modern nations had toward its people. He and other commentators in the 1940s, such as Yu Minliang, stressed the historical progression from a *jiuji* model to a *fuli* one in the modern age, a view also echoed in official reports: See GMD 507-19: "Shehuibu shizheng baogao" (1942).

<sup>289</sup> The tradition of social relief in imperial China, an agrarian society, centered heavily on famine or disaster relief. The creation of a granary system as well as work relief (*gong zhen*) programs and gruel stations (*shi zhou fang*) were the main mechanisms for relieving those who suffered at the hands of a natural calamity.

entire citizenry, including but hardly limited to the displaced.<sup>290</sup> Looking forward, top officials began to put in place a collateral hierarchy of social welfare offices which, in their vision, would largely supersede the provisional set of relief facilities after China transitioned to a peacetime existence.

The establishment of the National Relief Commission 中央賑濟委員會 (*Zhongyang zhenji weiyuanhui*) in April 1938 marked the government's first major step toward reorganizing social assistance work to meet the needs of the time. Headquartered in Hankou, the site of the temporary, wartime Guomindang capital, the Commission was charged primarily with the task of rescuing and transporting refugees from war zones to the rear base areas, where facilities were set up to succor, to train, and to provide employment opportunities to the displaced. To help facilitate their passage, the Commission established a string of refugee transfer stations (26), linked every 30 kilometers by sub-stations (132) and every 15 kilometers by rest houses (166).<sup>291</sup> A hierarchy of provincial, municipal and district relief commissions were also set up to coordinate the distribution of aid to displaced people at the local level. In addition to providing material assistance and rehabilitation programs for refugees, the Commission's major undertakings included dispensing emergency air raid relief to victims of bombings, doling out famine aid, and establishing new and refitting old relief facilities for dislocated and dispossessed children.

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<sup>290</sup> Guomindang officials emphasized a connection between the goals of welfare mechanisms in the West and Sun Yatsen's principle of the people's livelihood. Examples of welfare programs included vocational training and job introduction services, workers' compensation, and healthcare and nutritional programs.

<sup>291</sup> *China Handbook, 1937-1945*, 521.

The Guomindang's plan to move toward a welfare model of social assistance found its earliest institutional expression in the establishment of the Ministry of Social Affairs 社會部 (*Shehui bu*) in May 1938. The areas of work undertaken by the Ministry's three main departments – organizing and training civilian groups, administering social welfare, and managing cooperatives – underlined the state's enhanced role in the emergent field of social administration 社會行政 (*shehui xingzheng*), which involved harnessing public energies to strengthen the nation. More specifically, official reports spoke of the shift toward a more dynamic approach in welfare work, contrasting the Ministry's pursuit of “active relief” 積極救濟 (*jiji jiuji*), defined as initiatives that enabled “people to draw on their own efforts to make a living,” with “passive relief” 消極救濟 (*xiaoji jiuji*), the temporary, material-based aid doled out by the National Relief Commission, which would be largely phased out when hostilities ceased.<sup>292</sup> The central government also ordered the establishment of a network of Social Affairs Departments, Bureaus and Divisions in the provinces, municipalities and districts respectively to implement the Ministry's welfare work at the local level. Reports and records from the war period, though, show that welfare work carried out by the Social Affairs apparatus in these years was concentrated heavily in Sichuan province, particularly in the wartime capital of Chongqing, and took the form of experimental

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<sup>292</sup> It must be pointed out that wartime records demonstrate that distinctions between the two agencies were not in reality as clear-cut as such reports suggest; though the National Relief Commission did disburse large sums of material aid, it simultaneously incorporated an “active relief” approach into many of its programs, especially the child welfare initiatives discussed below.

programs and model facilities that would be extended to the rest of the nation after the war.<sup>293</sup>

## **The Structural Transformation of Child Relief Work in Wartime China**

### *The Rising Tide of Government Initiative*

In many ways, the year 1938 can be seen as a crucial turning point in the formation of a national system of child welfare in China. With the republic seeming to crumble before their eyes, many Chinese leaders began to view the waves of uprooted, parentless children roaming the land as a predicament worthy of special attention within the broader scope of the refugee crisis. For the displacement of vulnerable youngsters not only served as an acute reminder of the loss of territory and the upheaval of the family and other social institutions, it also came to be seen as a looming threat to the future condition and very survival of the Chinese race. The state moved quickly to address the plight of child refugees, demonstrating a level of official leadership and engagement in social assistance for the young scarcely seen since the Southern Song (13<sup>th</sup> century). Particularly worth noting, though, is that the government's aggressive response was met by an equally if not more vigorous movement among volunteer organizations to aid the torrent of dislocated minors. Moreover, there came to be little to distinguish the new relief programs run by the state from those organized by civic associations in terms of both underlying objectives and rehabilitative approaches. In short, the project of child welfare became a shared enterprise in the war years, propelled by a growing sense of

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<sup>293</sup> See GMD 507-19: *Shehuibu shizheng baogao, di yi ci quanguo shehui xingzheng huiyi* (October 1942). The majority of the programs discussed in the report were located in Chongqing.



anxiety and impulse to strengthen the nation in the minds of public officials and private actors alike.

In fall 1938, Guomindang central authorities developed a detailed blueprint for systematizing child relief work wartime China. Drafted jointly by the National Relief Commission, Ministry of Education and Ministry of the Interior, the “Plan for Relieving and Rearing Child Refugees during the War of Resistance and National Reconstruction Period” 抗戰建國時期難童救濟教養事實方案 (*Kangzhan jianguo shiqi nantong jiuji jiaoyang shishi fang'an*) declared that new state-run institutes for dependent children should be set up in provincial seats and other large cities to “strengthen the foundations of the nation.”<sup>294</sup> The institutes were not to function simply as refugee shelters, but would adopt a set of policies aimed at rehabilitating the lone child on several fronts. Stated objectives included strengthening physiques, cultivating a good moral character, arousing a sense of nation-race identity, and providing a basic education and vocational training. The government in effect sought to redirect several of the approaches found in progressive facilities such as Xiong Xiling’s Fragrant Hills Home in a way that would enable disadvantaged youth not only to stand on their own but also contribute to the war effort. Each of these facilities, the plan declared, should embody the principle of “teaching people the ways of war to defend the national honor” 明恥教戰 (*ming chi jiao zhan*).<sup>295</sup>

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<sup>294</sup> GMD 507-29: *Jiuji jiaoyang nantong guize huibian*.

<sup>295</sup> *Ibid.* The militarized aspects of daily training at the institutes are discussed in the following section.

The National Relief Commission established and managed a total 24 new institutes for dislocated children from 1938 through 1944.<sup>296</sup> These were distributed throughout eight provinces, mostly in unoccupied territory – Anhui (8), Sichuan (6), Shanxi (4), Henan (2) Guangdong (1), Guangxi (1), Hunan (1), and Jiangxi (1), and absorbed nearly 51,000 war-stricken youngsters until the end of the conflict. Uprooted children below 12 歲 (*sui*) were eligible to enter the institute, where they would receive full support until they began working on their own.<sup>297</sup> As an overt expression of their commitment to new directions in child welfare work, these facilities were named 兒童教養所 (*ertong jiaoyang suo*), or children’s reformatories (lit. institutes for teaching and raising children); the appellations of prewar organizations (e.g., *yuyingtang*, *ciyou yuan*, *huiier yuan*), by contrast, bespoke of a charitable spirit and a primarily materialist approach to aid. In the reformatory, the unfortunate youngster would not be treated simply as a victim of human catastrophe but would be molded through a regimen of physical, academic, and practical instruction and emotional guidance into a new being primed to contribute to the twin tasks of resisting the Japanese 抗日 (*kang Ri*) invaders and reconstructing the nation 建國 (*jianguo*).

In addition to setting up a network of new institutions, the state sought to alter the orientation and broaden the scope of volunteer organizations in ways that would meet the challenges of the times. Following up on one of the stated points made in the official plan of fall 1938, the National Relief Commission issued an order on March 30, 1939 for all foundling homes 育嬰堂 (*yuyingtang*) and orphanages 孤兒院 (*guer yuan*) in the

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<sup>296</sup> *China Handbook, 1937-1945*, 521.

<sup>297</sup> GMD 507-29: *Jiuji jiaoyang nantong guize huibian* (April 1940).

counties to be converted into 教養所 (*jiaoyang suo*) by the end of June.<sup>298</sup> Local education activists and gentry who continued running these organizations were asked to expand the original facilities to accommodate uprooted children and the sons and daughters of fallen servicemen 抗屬子弟 (*kang shu zidi*), and to amend their methods of instruction and rearing in line with official plan. A series of reports from several provinces indicates that this project had mixed results, limited primarily by budgetary insufficiencies. Fujian provincial authorities disclosed in May that organizations in twelve counties had been converted or were in the process of doing so, but that at least six other counties requested “postponement” due to financial shortfalls. In Zhejiang, organizations from seven counties singled out for conversion by the provincial government noted that expanding their capacity could not be carried until additional funds were forthcoming, prompting a request to the National Relief Commission for such monies. Shaanxi provincial agencies reported that 16 counties had undertaken the transformation of children’s institutions, but that 56 counties requested postponement of such changes owing to insufficient resources or a dearth of refugee children within their jurisdictions.<sup>299</sup>

But the project of converting prewar institutions, incomplete in execution as it was, served as just one example of the state’s design to tap into and catalyze the energies of local activists committed to the cause of relieving the young. Government assistance to private orphanages and children’s homes took many forms. For example, agents from these organizations were encouraged to coordinate with staff at the Commission’s circuit

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<sup>298</sup> ZZY 116- 1285: *Guanyu choushe ge sheng xian shi ertong jiaoyang yuan suo ge xiang wenjian*.

<sup>299</sup> *Ibid.*, ZZY-116-1285. Each of the individual reports, issued between May 1939 and May 1940, can be found in this section of the National Relief Commission files.

of refugee transfer stations to arrange for the handover of uprooted youngsters into the formers' custody. Volunteer organizations could also request the assignment of trained social service personnel and teachers accredited by the Ministry of Education to their facilities. Most crucial to expanding the private sector's ability to absorb displaced youngsters, the National Relief Commission devised a formal process whereby local organizations could apply for subsidies from the central government. Eligibility requirements included approval and accreditation by local government and party organizations, the support of a minimum of 50 child refugees between the ages of 18 months and 16 years, the inclusion of academic and production education programs, and evidence of budget insufficiencies. Organizations who met these preconditions were asked to submit an application packet that included registered credentials, rosters of staff and children in their custody (name, gender, age, hometown, etc), a list of property/assets, and a side-by-side account of budget sources and expenditures to a local agency which, in turn, would forward these materials to the Commission in Chongqing for review.<sup>300</sup> During the course of the war, the Commission provided subsidies to 191 private organizations, which sheltered a total of nearly 170,000 children.<sup>301</sup>

As the National Relief Commission strove to restructure institutional relief directly and indirectly in a way that would meet the challenges of the war era, the Ministry of Social Affairs set about to devise and fine tune models for the future of child welfare work in China. Throughout the war, virtually all of the Ministry's activity in this

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<sup>300</sup> Chen, *Shehui jiuji xingzheng*, 95.

<sup>301</sup> *China Handbook, 1937-1945*, 528. This statistic pertains only to the period from October 1938 to December 1944. Since the Commission was not disbanded until late July 1945, the total figure for children receiving support during the war should be higher.

field was concentrated in and around Chongqing, the wartime capital. In 1941 and 1942, the Ministry assumed direct control over and enlarged the Chongqing Foundling Home 重慶嬰兒保育院 (*Chongqing yinger baoyuyuan*) for infants under 3 *sui* and the Number One and Number Two Orphanages 重慶第一育幼院, 重慶第二育幼院 (*Chongqing di yi yuyouyuan, Chongqing di er yuyouyuan*) for older children, and then set up three additional state-managed orphanages 育幼院 in the city's hinterlands for the sons and daughters of wounded soldiers.<sup>302</sup> The government made an effort to incorporate improved teaching techniques, enforce higher nutritional standards and provide a full array of training equipment in each institution, adopting “the system and methods of care offered by experimentation- and demonstration- oriented child welfare institutions.”<sup>303</sup> The Ministry paid particular attention to the prevalence of sickness among children of destitute families and servicemen in the capital area, establishing free children's clinics and allocating funds for hospitals to expand pediatric departments and render services for the young without charge.<sup>304</sup>

But the Ministry's most ambitious undertaking for the young in the war years was no doubt the Beibei Experimental Child Welfare Center 北碚兒童福利實驗區 (*Beibei ertong fuli shiyan qu*). Established in 1943, the Center was tasked with advancing welfare initiatives for all ‘ordinary’ and ‘special’ children (e.g. the orphaned, abandoned,

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<sup>302</sup> GMD 507-19: *Shehui bu shizheng baogao* (1942); SHB 11-6791: *Ertong fuli zong baogao*, September 1947. The foundling home was established and then managed by the National Relief Commission before the Ministry took over, expanded its capacity from 100 to 200, and implemented ‘scientific methods’ to lower mortality rates. The two orphanages had also been run by the Commission until the Ministry took over.

<sup>303</sup> *Ibid.*, SHB 11-6791: *Ertongfuli zong baogao*, September 1947.

<sup>304</sup> The Ministry reported that over 184,000 children benefited from these services from 1943, when they were first initiated, to 1947.

poor, disabled, and deviant) within the administrative district of Beibei, a suburb of the capital city. It experimented with various cutting-edge services in the areas of health, nutrition, recreation, and learning to enhance the mental and physical wellbeing of children. Serving as the base of its operations, a Community Center for Children 兒童福利所 (*Ertong fuli suo*) was outfitted with a medical clinic, a playground, a barbershop and a reading room and offered free physical examinations and manual training classes to the hundreds of children who visited each day.<sup>305</sup> A day care center was also set up for younger children between the ages of two and six. In addition to these facilities, the Beibei institute launched training classes for child welfare workers and extended its services and activities for minors living beyond its premises through the establishment of three welfare stations 福利站 (*fuli zhan*) in nearby villages. In fact, the Ministry of Social Affairs designed the institute at Beibei to serve as a prototype for the creation of child welfare centers in each district in the future.<sup>306</sup> Clearly the Guomintang authorities envisioned a welfare model in which state-sponsored services were used to raise children's health standards, ease parental burdens, and lower the numbers of dependents forced into fulltime institutional care. The severity and duration of the war, however, ensured that an expansion rather than decline of custodial care would persist in the meantime.

### *The Emergence of Volunteer Child Relief Networks*

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<sup>305</sup> SHB 11-6791: *Ertong fuli zong baogao*, September 1947. The Beibei center was not designed to provide fulltime care. According to this report, an average of 300 to 500 children visited its premises each day.

<sup>306</sup> Ding, *Zhongguo ertong fuli yanjin shi*, 17.

The social disarray caused by the war not only compelled the government to take direct action in ways rarely seen in the past, but also spurred volunteer associations to develop a new species of welfare organizations for the young. In the spring of 1938, just as the National Relief Commission and Ministry of Social Affairs were redirecting public assistance to fit the needs of the time, three civic associations undertook the creation of supra-regional circuits of relief for child refugees. These networks differed from the existing array of private foundling homes and orphanages in fundamental ways. In addition to exhibiting a level of ambition and scale of operations that overshadowed virtually any philanthropic entities of the past or present, the new organizations set up headquarters for the first time at considerable distances from the sites at which care was given. From these hubs, top-level administrators defined their organization's agenda and set policy, formulated a binding set of rules and regulations, determined suitable locations for setting up operations, and raised and disbursed funds to these facilities. These developments, alongside the state's introduction of centrally-managed reformatories, mark an important breakthrough in the structural arrangement of child relief in China, pointing to the shape of things to come.

The Chinese Children's Aid Association 中華慈幼協會 (*Zhonghua ciyou xiehui*), the first among these new organizations to appear, had been engaged in various aspects of child assistance for nearly a decade prior to the war. Founded by H.H. Kung 孔祥熙 (Kong Xiangxi), a high-ranking politician and brother-in-law of Madame Chiang Kai-shek (Jiang Jieshi), in April 1928, the Association organized a range of operations including a refugee home, nurseries, clinics, and infirmaries for the young throughout the city of Shanghai, its base of operations; it also sponsored conferences and publications to

promote discussion and disseminate knowledge of child welfare.<sup>307</sup> But the social turmoil unleashed by Japan's invasion in 1937 prompted the Association to dramatically amend its previous approach to welfare work. In summer 1938, it relocated its headquarters to Chongqing and began organizing and dispatching rescue corps to retrieve displaced children from war-torn areas. Those rescued, along with the sons and daughters of servicemen, were placed in one of 15 institutes 慈幼院, 教養院 (*ciyouyuan*, *jiaoyangyuan*) set up by the Association in Henan, Shaanxi, and Sichuan provinces between 1938 and 1945. Over the course of the war, more than 16,700 received shelter, education, and vocational training in these complexes.<sup>308</sup> The Association funded its operations through the collection of membership fees, donations, and, increasingly during the war, subsidies from the National Relief Commission.

Just as the National Children's Aid Association of China began shifting the focus of its services, a group of statesmen and prominent social reformers came together to launch an organization with a similar agenda in central China. Well known figures such as Gu Zhenggang, Ma Chaojun, and Liu Baimin announced the founding of the China Wartime Children's Relief Association 中國戰時兒童救濟協會 (*Zhongguo zhanshi ertong jiuji xiehui*) at the Hankou city Chamber of Commerce on April 16, 1938.<sup>309</sup> During the following month, the Association commissioned staff members to

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<sup>307</sup> Ding, *Zhongguo ertong fuli yanjin shi*, 13-14.

<sup>308</sup> SHB 11-6791: *Ertong fuli zong baogao*, September 1947.

<sup>309</sup> See *China Handbook, 1937-1945*, 531; Xu, "Liang nian ben hui shiye shu yao" in *Zhanshi ertong*, 26-32. Gu Zhenggang, who would soon be appointed Minister of Social Affairs, Ma Chaojun, Vice Minister of the Guomintang Board of Organization, and Liu Baimin, an editor and activist in China's system of higher education, served on the Association's Executive Committee. Though both Gu and Ma were high-ranking statesmen, the classification of the Association as a "civilian organization" in a government report suggests that they participated in its affairs in an unofficial capacity.



proceed to battle zones, particularly in Henan province, to save child refugees from an uncertain existence. The uprooted youngsters were first placed in provisional children's camps in Wuhan before being transferred to one of six permanent children's homes it established in Western Hunan, Sichuan, and Jiangxi provinces between summer 1938 and summer 1939.<sup>310</sup> Over five thousand children were taken in and given a basic education and vocational training by these facilities during the period of warfare.<sup>311</sup> Like the Children's Aid Association, the central headquarters of the China Wartime Child Relief Association drew on a mix of membership fees as well as public and private monies to run its satellite operations.

But it was the Wartime Child Welfare Society 戰時兒童保育會 (*Zhanshi ertong baoyuhui*) that would emerge as the most historically significant and geographically expansive of the new type of supra-regional relief apparatuses. The Women's Advisory Council of the New Life Movement, headed by Song Mei-ling, wife of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, convened on the grounds of the YWCA in Hankou city on March 10, 1938 to formally announce the launching of the Society.<sup>312</sup> Song's statements at the inaugural ceremony and in the following months intimated clearly that the Society was designed not simply to provide charitable assistance, but was also guided by the pressing mission of restoring national strength in the face of Japanese encroachment. In her keynote speech, she declared the organization endeavored not only

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<sup>310</sup> The children's homes run by the Association were located in Pushi, Gancheng, Dong'an, Fenghuang (all in western Hunan), Wan county (Sichuan) and Shangrao (Jiangxi); they were established between early July 1938 and July 1939. For more detail on the processes by which the headquarters organized these institutes, see the reports on each home in the periodical *Zhanshi ertong* 1 no. 16 (April 1940), 32-42.

<sup>311</sup> Over half of the 5000 children sheltered by the China Wartime Child Relief Association were sent to middle school (2000) or given jobs as apprentices in factories (700).

<sup>312</sup> *Zhanshi ertong baoyuhui guicheng*, 8.

to provide shelter to children fleeing war-torn areas and the offspring of deceased military personnel, but also the sons and daughters of those engaged in war-related occupations. Song proclaimed that “all of these children need our assistance; solving their problems is entirely our responsibility, for they are the future able-bodied men and women of our country. This also supports the strength of the nation.” Moreover, she stated, “in order to enable women, one half of the nation’s citizenry, to join in the task of saving the nation, we must liberate them from the shackles of the family and also reduce the burden of men so that they can devote themselves to nation-building work and enable young people to engage in this to their full potential, going to the front lines.”<sup>313</sup> In sum, the Society’s founders endorsed an approach to welfare that deemphasized the kin unit as a starting point for societal rejuvenation, placing primacy instead on fostering identification with the nation and nationalist goals in children and parents alike.

The Society featured an administrative hierarchy even more extended than its two peer wartime networks discussed above. A central association 總會 (*zonghui*) and its smaller seventeen-person standing committee functioned as the organization’s command center. Based first in Hankou and then, following Japan’s inland march in fall 1938, in Chongqing, the association undertook the tasks of raising funds to cover all operating costs and setting in place a uniform program of learning and training for all children in the organization’s custody.<sup>314</sup> Thirteen branch committees 分會 (*fen hui*) were set up in

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<sup>313</sup> See “Ben hui yuan qi” in *Zhanshi ertong baoyuhui guicheng*, 3, 5. Unlike the two other wartime associations discussed above, the Society not only undertook efforts to rescue child refugees and war orphans, but also accepted applications from families wishing to entrust their sons and daughters to its care.

<sup>314</sup> The standing committee also set up six task-specific committees in charge of planning, organization, propaganda, care giving, refugee transport, and finances.

various provinces and major cities.<sup>315</sup> Headed by local members of Women’s Advisory Council of the New Life Movement or the wives of senior provincial and municipal officials, these mid-level bodies were charged with deciding on locations to establish the Society’s care giving facilities, known as “warphan homes” 兒童保育院 (*ertong baoyuyuan*), and serving as a logistical liaison between central officers in the wartime capital and local administrators.<sup>316</sup> During the war, 45 warphan homes were founded in eleven provinces (Anhui, Fujian, Guangxi, Guangdong, Guizhou, Hunan, Jiangxi, Sha’anxi, Shanxi, Sichuan, and Zhejiang) and the Shan-Gan-Ning border region.<sup>317</sup> Collectively, the Society’s facilities admitted nearly 30,000 disadvantaged children during its eight-year existence, making the organization the largest direct provider of child welfare outside of the government’s newly-created social relief apparatus.<sup>318</sup>

The physical distance between the headquarters and care giving sites exhibited by the Wartime Child Welfare Society and the two organizations mentioned above indicate the emergence of an administrative approach to child relief quite unlike anything seen in the Chinese philanthropic tradition of the past. The Society’s central association took responsibility for defraying the warphan homes’ operating expenses at the local level. Situated in the wartime capital, it was particularly well-positioned to secure fixed subsidies from the central government, raise private donations from both Chinese who

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<sup>315</sup> Branch societies were formed in Anhui, Fujian, Guangdong, Guangxi, Guizhou, Henan, Hunan, Jiangxi, Shaanxi, Sichuan and Zhejiang provinces as well as the cities of Chengdu and Hong Kong.

<sup>316</sup> *Zhanshi ertong baoyuhui guicheng*, 23. The term “warphans home” is adopted as a translation for *baoyuyuan* in the English version of the work report, *Ertong fuli zong baogao*. See SHB 11-6791, p. 2.

<sup>317</sup> See the report published by China’s Ministry of Information (*Xingzhengyuan Xinwenju*) in 1948 entitled *Ertong baoyu* (p. 2) for a map that features the geographical distribution of the children’s homes.

<sup>318</sup> Several sources give a figure of 29,849 children. For example, see *Ertong fuli zong baogao*, 2; *Ertong bayou*, 6; and SHB 11-561-3: “*Zhanshi ertong baoyuhui ba nian lai gongzuo baogao*.”

followed the government inland and concerned foreign contacts, and collect fees from the Society's expanding membership.<sup>319</sup> The central association also took an aggressive approach to bringing the displaced into its network of facilities, sending agents to work with local officials to gather child refugees in occupied zones and setting up transfer stations between these areas their care giving sites.<sup>320</sup> Finally, the association exercised a great deal of control over the management of the child welfare homes. It not only devised and issued a body of rules and regulations to the homes that encompassed its vision of child welfare, but appointed directors of the homes 院長 (*yuanzhang*) and sent groups of approved instructors and staff to the institutes. In sum, rather than functioning as a loose conglomeration of autonomous institutes, the homes could be counted on to implement the headquarters' policies faithfully and thus extend the organization's geographical reach and influence on a macro level.

This model proved instrumental in facilitating the spread of new progressive methods in child training and learning that had begun to trickle into China from the West in the 1920s. Equally important to the wider dissemination of these approaches to teaching and childhood development was the leadership of 熊芝 (*Xiong Zhi*), daughter of the prominent early Republican philanthropist, 熊希零 (*Xiong Xiling*), discussed in chapter one. Following the path of several of her father's younger associates, 熊芝

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<sup>319</sup> The majority of the Society's revenue came from "passionate Chinese and foreign donors," according to a retrospective report "*Zhanshi ertong baoyuhui ba nian lai gongzuo baogao*" (SHB 11-561-3). Lennig Sweet, the Program Director of the organization United China Relief during the war, estimated that the subsidies from Chinese Nationalist government counted for 25 percent of the Chinese Wartime Child Welfare Society's revenue stream. See L. Sweet, 1943, "Child Care in China," 212. Each member of the Society was required to pay an entrance fee of two yuan and one yuan in membership dues annually thereafter.

<sup>320</sup> See *Zhanshi ertong baoyuhui guicheng*, 9.

(Xiong Zhi) went abroad to study early childhood education at Columbia Teachers College. When she returned to China in 1933, her father put her in charge of one of the five main facilities at the Fragrant Hills Children's Home.<sup>321</sup> 熊芝 (Xiong Zhi) left the Fragrant Hills organization in the late 1930s to take the position of Secretary-General 總幹事 (*zong ganshi*) of the Wartime Child Welfare Society, where she found a bigger platform to advance her ideas on training the young and to adapt many of the programs first implemented at Fragrant Hills to the wartime conditions of the 1940s. In particular, the Secretary-General enjoined the directors of children's homes to have their facilities fulfill the role of both family and school and to undertake an approach associated with a progressive model of learning known as life education 生活教育 (*shenghuo jiaoyu*) that combined 'teaching, study, and doing as one.'<sup>322</sup> The following section explores how the Dewey-inspired learning methods pioneered in China by Xiong Xiling and others were adapted and reshaped to meet the new goals of national salvation and enemy resistance, finding concrete expression in the regimens of both the Wartime Child Welfare Society and state-run network of relief facilities for the young.

### **Life Training at a Wartime Children's Home**

The late 1930s and early 1940s witnessed the rise of a new type of home for at-risk children in China. Whether initiated by government or volunteer agencies, these

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<sup>321</sup> Ding, *Zhongguo ertong fuli yanjin shi*, 6; Hayford, *To The People*, 49.

<sup>322</sup> Xiong Zhi's ideas on child training and welfare work were recorded in a report she issued to the directors of the Warphans Homes in January 1943. See Fu, "Du Zhanshi ertong baoyuhui – Zhu Xiongzhi zong ganshi gao yuanchang shu hou" for a summary and comments on Xiong's main points, which include the progressive approach of practical learning traced back to Dewey and modified by Tao Xingzhi in the 1920s. Later known as Nora Tze Hsiung, she would become a prominent advocate of Dewey-style education in Taiwan after the 1949 revolution, serving as president of Women's Normal College in Taipei. See Hayford, *To The People*, 49; Boorman, *Biographical Dictionary*, Vol. 4, 109.

institutes differed from their predecessors by virtue of their vertical linkages to extra-local authoritative bodies, displaying a degree of coordination, systematization, and distribution of human and material resources across geographically expanses scarcely seen in the world of Chinese relief up to this point. Such coordination was underpinned by the unified commitment among wartime welfare organizers to national reconstruction, which in turn lent itself to the creation of a uniform agenda and set of programs at all facilities affiliated with the aforementioned networks. An examination of wartime institutes reveals a clear consensus on the need to instill in their wards a deep-rooted sense of national identity and race consciousness, habits of austere discipline and industriousness, and a selfless commitment to serve the national community. In short, the detached, dislocated youngster who entered the home was to be transformed and honed into a strong, self-reliant future citizen of the republic who would be willing and able to help rebuild and even defend China.

#### *The Physical and Social Makeup of Wartime Children's Facilities*

The first step for the leaders of the wartime child welfare movement was to find suitable locations for care giving institutes. Upon deeming an area in urgent need of assistance, relief agencies typically commissioned an officer to survey the locale for secure sites capable of accommodating several hundred children and support staff. These agents commonly selected a large, abandoned structure, such as an old temple complex, a deserted public building or a private ancestral hall erected in rural areas that were considered well-positioned to elude Japan's urban-centered bombing campaigns.<sup>323</sup> Illustrative of this process, the National Relief Commission entrusted one Cai Youduan

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<sup>323</sup> *China Handbook, 1937-1945*, 29.

with the task of locating a viable site for the Xibei Children's Reformatory in Henan Province.<sup>324</sup> After reconnoitering several locations, Cai selected the grounds of the run-down Hekou temple, located about 15 *li* west of Nanzheng city, based on the site's access to good roads and potential to lodge more than 500 children. But the dilapidated condition and limited capacity of many of these structures forced home directors to carry out renovation and expansion projects of varying lengths. Beginning in September 1939, Cai and fellow officers of the Xibei home launched a twelve-month plan that specified a series of repairs and additions at each stage, enabling the institute eventually to lodge a total of 1000 children.<sup>325</sup> Taking another example, the heads of the Chengdu No.3 Warphanage, a facility set up by the Wartime Child Welfare Society in Jianyang, Sichuan province, embarked on a project to repair and enlarge the deteriorating buildings of Sanxi temple compound in late June 1939. Ready to begin operations, the warphanage officially opened its doors to 300 children of fallen servicemen some eight weeks later.<sup>326</sup>

Upon completion, these organizations approximated a self-contained, full-service community not unlike the sprawling complex set up by 熊希零 (Xiong Xiling) in Beijing's Fragrant Hills district. Situated in the countryside and "generally surrounded by vast wastelands and groves of tall trees with hills and rivers in the vicinity," the wartime children's homes operated as residential oases amid large swaths of otherwise uninhabited land.<sup>327</sup> Given their sparse surroundings and the perils of war that loomed beyond their walls, the institutes were specially designed to meet all of the everyday

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<sup>324</sup> ZZY 116-1408-1, September 2, 1939: "Choubei Xibei ertong jiaoyangyuan gongzuo jianbao."

<sup>325</sup> Ibid., ZZY 116-1408-1, September 2, 1939.

<sup>326</sup> SHB 11-586: "Chengdu fenhui di san baoyuyuan san jiu nianji nian kan."

<sup>327</sup> *China Handbook, 1937-1945*, 529.

needs of the youngsters admitted and support staff alike. They were typically equipped not only with residential quarters, instructional and training facilities, and dining areas, but also medical units, postal services and shops full of daily-use items. With the exceptions of encountering a family or medical emergency or participating in certain extracurricular activities, there was little need for personnel or children to leave the institute's premises.

A survey of diagrams of wartime children's homes found in archival collections allows us to form a composite picture of their layout.<sup>328</sup> A courtyard commonly occupied the central space of the complex, flanked by classrooms, children's dormitories and administrative offices on the left and right and ceremonial halls above and below. In front of the main gate to the southern hall stood a flag pole and terrace, where all children assembled each morning and evening to participate in ceremonies to be discussed below. An outer ring of buildings typically housed industrial workshops, small factories, storehouses for raw materials as well as additional classrooms and sleeping quarters. Another row of structures contained a kitchen, a clinic, an apothecary, a children's library, a post office, and a cooperative store. The surrounding areas were invariably sectioned off into vegetable gardens, tracts of farmland, grazing plots and fish ponds, serving as both training grounds for agricultural production and animal husbandry as well as a major source of the home's food supply. Finally, an air raid shelter might be constructed along the outer perimeter to provide safety in the event of an attack from above.

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<sup>328</sup> The following description is based on archived maps of three facilities: No. 8 Warphanage and Guizhou Branch Committee No. 5. Warphanage, each under the China Wartime Child Welfare Society, and Pinglu Childrens Reformatory, under the National Relief Commission. See SHB 11-586; *ibid*; and ZZW 116-1396, respectively.



Institute regulations required that all entrants, limited to minors below 14 歲 (*sui*), were to undergo a series of examinations both to safeguard the wellbeing of the closely-quartered community and for classification purposes. The tests, administered by both state-run reformatories and the Society's warphanages, were designed to assess both the physical condition and mental development of all children at the time of their arrival.<sup>329</sup> Those classified as sick or convalescent were given rest and special care, whereas those diagnosed with an infectious disease or other serious ailment were sent away to the hospital for treatment.<sup>330</sup> Children were also given an entrance examination to evaluate their reading ability. The test results, rather than age, determined the grade level into which each youngster was placed. Therefore, given the wide disparity in educational backgrounds, it was not uncommon for a single first grade class, for example, to include children ranging from the ages of 7 to 14 歲 (*sui*).<sup>331</sup> The academic program, and the institute at large, strived to level past inequities, setting basic universal standards for health, education, and training to which all who entered the home – regardless of background – were expected to measure up.

While the agenda and physical layout of wartime children's institutions were more or less uniform, both the family circumstances and total number of children could vary widely from one facility to the next. One group of homes catered in particular to youngsters who were natives of the local area but suffered from a sudden absence of

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<sup>329</sup> SHB 11-607-2: "Zhangshi ertong baoyuhui shourong ertong banfa"; ZZW 116-1408: "Zhenji weiyuanhui Xibei ertong jiaoyangyuan san shi niandu gongzuo shishi jihua."

<sup>330</sup> *China Handbook, 1937-1945*, 526.

<sup>331</sup> Details regarding children's individual grade level and age, as well as other personal information, can be found a roster for Shou County Children's Reformatory. See ZZW 116-1364, June 1943: "Zhenji weiyuanhui Shouxian ertong jiaoyangyuan san shi niandu di er xueqi ertong zong mingdan."

parental support because of the war. For example, the main impetus behind the founding of Chengdu No. 3 Warphanage in Jianyang, Sichuan province was Song Mei-ling's concern for the welfare of dependents of local men sent to fight the Japanese. By the time the warphanage officially began operations on September 1, 1939, more than 300 children of active servicemen had been admitted.<sup>332</sup> Similarly, a roster from Shou County Children's Reformatory, a facility set up by the National Relief Commission in western Anhui Province, reveals that over 80 percent of those admitted were natives of said county.<sup>333</sup> Moreover, 40 percent of the household heads of children at Shouxian home were listed as unemployed, suggesting that a failing rural economy was, in some areas, more of a driving force in expanding institutional care than the absence of fathers who had been sent to the front.<sup>334</sup>

Another set of wartime institutes arose primarily to address the waves of displaced minors roaming the lands. Citing the flight of children from battle zones into Guizhou province in fall 1938, the leadership of the Wartime Child Welfare Society called for the establishment of Guizhou No. 3 Warphanage outside of Zunyi, a city in the northern part of the province.<sup>335</sup> In sharp contrast to the local orientation of the Jianyang and Shou county complexes, institutional records show that only two percent of the children admitted to warphanages overseen by the Guizhou Branch Committee were natives of Guizhou province. These documents, dating from May 1943, indicate that the

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<sup>332</sup> SHB 11-586-2, 1942: "Chengdu fenhui di san baoyuyuan san zhou nianji niankan."

<sup>333</sup> ZZW 116-1364, June 1943: "Shouxian ertong jiaoyang suo san shi niandu di er xueqi ertong zong mingdan."

<sup>334</sup> Ibid., ZZW 116-1364, June 1943.

<sup>335</sup> SHB 11-586-3, November 24, 1943: "Guizhou fenhui Zunyi di wu baoyuyuan wu zhounian jinian tekan."

homes in the province continued to be geared toward caring for young refugees nearly five years after their founding.<sup>336</sup> In addition, the number of wards could differ greatly among institutions, ranging anywhere from 150 to over 600.<sup>337</sup> In short, the social composition and size of the student body at each facility was dictated in large part by the way war and the mounting social crisis it bred affected the area in question.

The child welfare movement in the war years also encompassed the rise of a new corps of professionally-trained staffers dedicated to aiding and educating disadvantaged minors. Illustrative of its hands-on approach, the central association of the Wartime Child Welfare Society screened prospective employees to ensure they met minimum age and education requirements, creating a pool of specialists who were eligible for placement in one of the four divisions -- General Affairs 事務 (*shiwu*), Instruction and Guidance 教導 (*jiaodao*), Production Education 生產教育 (*shengchan jiaoyu*), and Medical Affairs 義務 (*yiwu*) -- in each home.<sup>338</sup> Prior to their assignment, the headquarters mandated that new employees undergo a two-week training course.<sup>339</sup> Similarly, the vast majority of those hired by state-run children's institutes had accumulated years of schooling and experience in their fields of child care and training prior to receiving an appointment

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<sup>336</sup> SHB 11-638-1: "Zhanshi ertong baoyuhui Guizhou fen hui baoyusheng jiguan tongji tu."

<sup>337</sup> For example, at the end of March 1941, a total of 591 were in residence at Xibei Children's Reformatory whereas only 150 were sheltered by the Guizhou No. 3 Warphanage in fall 1943.

<sup>338</sup> *Zhanshi ertong baoyu*, 7. Candidates for institute director (*yuanzhang*) must be 25 *sui* or older, a college graduate and possess a minimum of two years experience in social work or education administration. Division heads (*guzhang*) must be at least 23 *sui*, a high school graduate, and have at least two years of teaching experience. Teaching and administrative staff (*jiaozhiyuan*) were required to have a high school diploma and to have taught for at least one year or be a middle school graduate with three years of teaching experience.

<sup>339</sup> SHB 11-561-3: "Zhanshi ertong baoyuhui ba nian lai gongzuo baogao;" *Zhanshi ertong baoyuhui jihua ji guicheng*, 31.

under the National Relief Commission. A biographical listing of employees at the Henan Children's Reformatory shows that nearly the entire home's teaching staff (20) held degrees from normal schools, medical staff (4) had completed medical or nursing school, and technical training staff (5) had studied at normal or vocational schools.<sup>340</sup> Moreover, the bulk of its instructors had served previously as teachers (15) and / or principals (3) in public schools.<sup>341</sup>

In addition to placing emphasis on the appointment of specially-trained child care workers, the wartime relief organizations also sought to create a new instructional ethos based on earlier adaptations of the Deweyan educational model in China. As noted in the chapters above, 熊希零 (Xiong Xiling's) Fragrant Hills institute and many other independently-run facilities that appeared in early Republican times drew heavily from the pool of vocational and normal school graduates to field their operations. What set the wartime welfare movement apart was the will and capacity of central agencies to replicate these practices on a much broader scale, establishing clear criteria for employment eligibility, making appointments for key positions, building up a corps of qualified staffers for hire, and implementing short-term training courses for new appointees. More specifically, the new relief apparatuses hired teachers to serve not only as instructors in the traditional sense, but also as daily counselors who would reside alongside their students on campus, imparting guidance to them both inside and outside the classroom. Here too the organizational capacity of wartime relief agencies allowed for the teaching methods embraced by 熊 (Xiong) and his cohort to be replicated on a

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<sup>340</sup> ZZY 116-1385-2, February 1945: "Zhenji weiyuanhui Henan ertong jiaoyangyuan jiaozhi yuan mingce."

<sup>341</sup> Ibid., ZZY 116-1385-2, February 1945.

scale scarcely possible in the decentralized world of child relief of the past.<sup>342</sup> The section below explores how this and other formal and informal aspects of learning were pursued concretely within the walls of the new children's institutions.

### *Rehabilitation Through 'Life Education'*

The core program of learning at the home centered on life education 生活教育 (*shenghuo jiaoyu*), an approach that initially gained a foothold among circles of Chinese educational reformers in the 1920s, but was now adapted to meet the changing realities of China's political and social circumstances of the times. To recap, life education, in its original incarnation, favored applied study and active student involvement in the learning process over methods of rote memorization, as captured in the slogan "combining teaching, learning, and doing into one."<sup>343</sup> Toward that end, teaching staff not only lived and dined with their students on the premises, but were expected to engage them regularly during extracurricular hours, serving as "an instructor in everyday behavior" though extensive contact.<sup>344</sup> The various forms of experiential learning undertaken in the name of life education aimed above all to mold displaced youngsters into individuals who would achieve self-sufficiency but also, in a departure from the movement's initial rationale, show a commitment to direct their newly-acquired skills toward the project of

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<sup>342</sup> Owing most likely to the sway of General Secretary Xiong Zhi, the Wartime Child Welfare Society enlisted instructors from the Fragrant Hill Institute to provide training to new staff at the Society's network of homes, further cementing the adoption of Xiong Xiling's Deweyan approach to learning within the wartime facilities. See SHB 11-561-3: "Zhanshi ertong baoyuhui ba nian lai gongzuo baogao."

<sup>343</sup> This phrase continued to be used in wartime China, as seen in Xiong Zhi's report to warphanage directors in 1943 as well as records left by individual warphanages. See 11-747-6, March 28, 1945: "Zhanshi ertong baoyuhui zhishu di ba baoyuyuan." Elsewhere, leaders of the wartime movement expressed the spirit of life education in a slightly different manner: "We try to make education and life become a harmonious whole, taking advantage of real life education materials."

<sup>344</sup> SHB 11-586-3, November 24, 1943: "Guizhou fenhui Zunyi di wu baoyuyuan wu zhounian jinian tekan;" *Zhanshi ertong bayou* (1938), 17. Administrators at Henan Provisional Warphanage noted that the practice of having staff and children eating together was designed to bind the two groups closer together.

rebuilding the nation.<sup>345</sup> Exemplifying these principles, children made their own straw sandals, stitched together all clothes and bedding materials for the facility, and learned trades while also partaking in regularly scheduled ceremonies and a variety of activities designed to foster allegiance to the nation.<sup>346</sup>

An institute's formal program of study, administered by the Division of Instruction and Guidance 教導股 (*jiaodao gu*), was modeled on China's primary school system. All children were expected to complete, at minimum, a six-grade curriculum that was approved by the Ministry of Education and consisted primarily of core academic subjects such as Mandarin, social studies, mathematics, civics, and natural science along with a gradually increasing proportion of courses aimed at cultivating manual dexterity. (See Appendix 3.1 for a typical weekly schedule of courses and activities at a wartime institute). But instructors also made a point of integrating knowledge and discussion of China's current national crisis into the curriculum, using newly reedited versions of textbooks that addressed the challenge of national reconstruction and introducing into the classroom newspaper articles and stories that highlighted Japan's aggression and valiant examples of Chinese resistance.<sup>347</sup> Children who graduated from the home's elementary school by the age of 14, maintained a minimum average of 80% in their classes,

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<sup>345</sup> These dual objectives were expressed in a report issued by the Chengdu No. 3 Warphanage in Jianyang, Sichuan Province. The institute had recently acquired a 10-*mu* plot of land with the intention of expanding "agricultural work to enable every child to have the ability to live by his or her own exertion, forming a base of ability for the nation." See SHB 11-586: "Chengdu fenhui di san baoyuyuan nianji nian kan."

<sup>346</sup> SHB 11-586-3, November 24, 1943: "*Guizhou fenhui Zunyi di wu baoyuyuan wu zhounian jinian tekan.*"

<sup>347</sup> The manual *Zhanshi ertong baoyu* (1938), published by the Wartime Child Welfare Society, listed "National Heroes" and "Stories of Heroes Resisting the Japanese" as two subjects to be taught in the classroom, noting that "guiding their [i.e. the children's] energies to attack the enemy and resist them in war" was the "main duty we have when compiling a set of teaching materials." See *Zhanshi ertong baoyu*, 14-16, 20.

demonstrated “excellent moral character,” and were in good physical health could sit for middle or normal school entrance exams.<sup>348</sup> Successful candidates resided on the premises of the institution they attended, returning to the warphanage for winter and summer breaks. In short, the wartime homes ensured that all youngsters admitted would, irrespective of background, emerge with at least a basic education befitting a citizen while also providing, with the financial support of the Ministry of Education, a route for thousands of the more academically-inclined to pursue advanced study.<sup>349</sup>

Vocational instruction, referred to as production education 生產教育 (*shengchan jiaoyu*), constituted a second, yet no less significant stage of mandatory learning at children’s wartime relief homes. This phase, underpinned by the ideas that the creation of a self-reliant citizenry and the formation of a vibrant labor pool were crucial to revitalizing the nation, encompassed both skill training and job placement. All primary school graduates who did not qualify for middle school embarked on a two- to three-year training program in the industrial arts, agriculture, or commerce under the guidance of the institute’s Division of Production Education technical instructors. Each campus was dotted with trade-specific workshops and small factories engaged in activities such as iron and textile production, candle, soap and shoe making, printing, dyeing, and woodworking. The Guizhou No. 5 Warphanage, for instance, set up eight training groups 組 (*zu*) for its wards in the fields of light industry (sewing, rattan work, weaving, straw

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<sup>348</sup> SHB 11-606: “Shengxue baoyusheng xuzhi.”

<sup>349</sup> Ibid., SHB 11-606; *China Handbook, 1937-1945*, 529. The children’s home continued to remain financially responsible for the child during the first year in middle school. After the first year, the Ministry of Education assumed responsibility for tuition and expenses for clothes, items of personal use, and study materials. By then end of the war, the Wartime Child Welfare Society had sent 5,167 of its dependents (almost 20 %) to middle schools or other institutions of higher education (vocational or normal schools, technical colleges, etc). See SHB 11-561-3: “Zhanshi ertong baoyuhui ba nian lai gongzuo baogao.”

sandals, and woodworking), service (haircutting), commerce (a cooperative) and farming (animal husbandry).<sup>350</sup> Every complex also contained agricultural plots devoted to teaching youngsters how to plant, feed, and harvest crops. Whereas the Guizhou organization acquired and rented a total of 55 *mu* of arable land for cultivating rice, beans, and vegetables, the grounds of the state-run Xibei Childrens Reformatory included 15 *mu* on which its young residents grew 20 varieties of crops (rice, corn, cotton, soybeans, sweet potatoes, etc.).<sup>351</sup> Upon completion of the training period, the home's administrators helped these children obtain apprenticeships or full-time jobs in local enterprises and maintained contact with them thereafter, marking the final step of rehabilitative transformation from a weak, helpless child to an individual who could earn a living on one's own.<sup>352</sup>

A third component of mandatory education at wartime children's homes may be referred to as service learning. Though, unlike academic and vocational study, there seems to be neither a particular Chinese term that encapsulated it nor a formal administrative office charged with overseeing it, the numerous examples of this form of experiential learning in institute records underscore that it was deemed an essential part, perhaps even the very embodiment, of the pedagogical approach known as life education. In some instances, organizations continued to draw on examples of service learning introduced to China by education reformers in the 1920s. In particular, warphanages

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<sup>350</sup> SHB 11-586-3, November 24, 1943: "Guizhou fenhui Zunyi di wu baoyuyuan wu zhounian jinian tekan."

<sup>351</sup> Ibid., SHB-11-586-3; ZZY 116-1408, "Xibei ertong jiaoyangyuan san shi nian si fen gongzuo baogao."

<sup>352</sup> During the eight-year period, the Wartime Child Welfare Society placed 1,860 children in local enterprises. The majority entered the fields of industry or public affairs, with lesser numbers going into trade, communications, or farming. An additional 439 former wards of the homes joined the army. See *China Handbook, 1937-1945*, 531; SHB 11-561-3: "Zhanshi ertong baoyuhui ba nian lai gongzuo baogao."



implemented the “little teacher” 小先生 (*xiao xiansheng*) project, known also as ‘each one teach one,’ in which their young residents took on the role of instructor even as they continued to function as students in the classroom and the workshop. Armed with donated newspapers and magazines as well as their own creations of pictorial current event posters, the children set out in teams to surrounding villages to educate locals about China’s state of affairs. They also taught servants within the warphanage to read and write.<sup>353</sup> Such activities exemplified the spirit of serving the public and epitomized efforts to fuse learning, teaching and, doing into one that administrators regarded as the core of the educational experience.

But the war and the shadow it cast over the fate of the nation lent itself to an expanded notion of public service and the ways it ought to be carried out. In the 1920s, Tao Xingzhi, James Yan and other like-minded reformers felt that strengthening rural communities was a crucial first step in addressing the political fragmentation and impoverished rural conditions that they saw holding China back. From this impulse sprung new initiatives designed to raise education levels and to foster public participation among villagers, whom it was hoped could be transformed into a new type of citizens 公民 (*gongmin*), lit. public person). To be sure, leaders of the child welfare movement in the 1940s continued to place emphasis on nurturing in their dependents a spirit of collective voluntarism in developing the local community. In addition to participating in the “little teacher” project, children helped repair roads in nearby villages and used break times and summer vacations to help nearby peasants bring in the harvest.<sup>354</sup> However,

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<sup>353</sup> *China Handbook, 1937-1945*, 530.

<sup>354</sup> ZZY 116-1408, November 30, 1939: Xibei ertong jiaoyangyuan shi yi yue fen gongzuo jianbao.

hinting at a shifting worldview and a new sense of the term citizen in wartime China (now rendered as 國民 (*guomin*), lit. ‘person of the nation’), social activists now thought it necessary to extend an interest in public service from the local level to the country at large. In this vein, children from Xibei reformatory formed fund-raising teams to collect monetary and material donations for the families of generals and soldiers sent to the front. A separate “consolatory team” of youngsters visited the homes of troops who died at the front in order to provide comfort to surviving family members. Yet another group from the Xibei home organized a ‘propaganda’ team that traveled to the seat of the township to lecture and perform dramas that highlighted efforts to resist Japan.<sup>355</sup> In sum, welfare administrators hoped that the seeds of direct involvement in efforts to support the community and the nation would blossom into “life habits for serving the masses,” a quintessential trait of an activist citizenry they envisioned carrying China forward.

#### *Creating a Disciplined Citizenry*

Much like a spirit of public voluntarism, an adherence to strict discipline was heralded by leaders of the child welfare movement as a fundamental characteristic of the type of citizen they hoped would emerge from the new institutions. Robert Culp’s study of secondary education in the Yangzi Delta Region during the 1930s reveals how military drill was adopted in middle school curriculums to cultivate “externalized discipline” and “homogenization” among students during the Nanjing Decade, even as other pedagogical approaches aimed at fostering an incongruous set of outcomes were pursued.<sup>356</sup> The

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<sup>355</sup> Ibid., ZZY 116-1408.

<sup>356</sup> Culp, 2006, “Rethinking Governmentality: Training, Cultivation, and Cultural Citizenship in Republican China,” 630-645. Culp shows that military exercises were juxtaposed with seemingly

outbreak of the war with Japan in 1937 seems to have only intensified the extent to which military-style methods came to shape the daily agenda of children's institutions. In his discussion of this period, the PRC scholar Cai Qinyu aptly notes that a military-style management 營 (*ying*) was used by welfare enterprises to “cultivate organizational discipline and to enable them [children] to adjust to a wartime environment.”<sup>357</sup> More specifically, archival records show that the new relief facilities organized children into military-like units for coordinating everyday activities, devised a highly-regimented daily schedule, established a well-defined code of conduct with corresponding rewards and punishments, and sponsored competitions designed to foster discipline and teamwork. Collectively, these arrangements were geared toward helping otherwise unguided youths develop a set of habits that would serve them well when called upon to participate directly or indirectly in the drive to expel the Japanese occupiers from Chinese soil.

From dawn to dusk, the children's behavior was to be governed by detailed sets of regulations and by performing a repertoire of prescribed actions in each part of the complex. Indeed, the image of the facility that emerges from written records tends to resemble a boot camp more than a relief shelter. The young residents of Guizhou No. 3 Home were expected to rise immediately upon hearing the clanging of the morning bell (“resisting any temptations to linger”), make their beds, open the dorm's doors and windows, and sweep the floor.<sup>358</sup> In the classroom, the teacher's arrival was met with the

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contradictory educational methods designed to foster creativity and independent thinking as well as to inculcate values associated with traditional Chinese (i.e. Confucian) ethics in this period.

<sup>357</sup>Cai, *Guojia shehui yu ruoshi qunti*, 179.

<sup>358</sup> SHB 11-586-3, November 24, 1943: “*Guizhou fenhui Zunyi di wu baoyuyuan wu zhounian jinian tekan.*”

class leader 班長 (*banzhang*) calling out the command “one,” triggering all bodies to rise to attention. The leader then cried out “two,” prompting all students to bow in unison to the figure of authority, and then “three,” signaling that everybody should sit down. During class, they were required to sit silently with their “bodies upright,” refraining from leaning over their desks and from speaking without the teacher’s explicit permission. They were trained to exit the classroom in a single-file, orderly fashion, neither “vying to get to the front” nor “running wildly” to the door.<sup>359</sup> Upon hearing the “dining bell,” all children were to assemble in their teams at the cafeteria.<sup>360</sup> Each team appointed a student who, upon receiving the command of the team leader, filled his or her fellow members’ plates with rice, and brought them back to the table. Prior to eating, all children would sing together: “one’s voice should be sonorous and full;” it was not permitted to “sing in a careless manner or not sing at all.” When the song was over, students waited for the oral command of the team leader on duty before adjourning to the table assigned to their team. There, they stood at attention until the leader gave them the signal to begin eating, an act to be carried out in utter silence.<sup>361</sup> Each day officially concluded with the sounding of the “sleeping bell” and then the “lights bell,” cueing all youngsters to extinguish the lamps, cease talking, and go to sleep immediately.

Administrators at the Guizhou institute in Zunyi sought to further encourage good behavior and deter acts of disobedience, negligence, and indolence by implementing an elaborate system of rewards and punishments. Those who achieved a cumulative average

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<sup>359</sup> Ibid.

<sup>360</sup> The Zunyi home was equipped with four dormitories for its dependents. Children from each dorm were divided into several teams (*dui*), which were headed by a student-selected team leader. The task of conducting inspections of the dormitory rotated daily among team leaders.

<sup>361</sup> SHB 11-586-3, November 24, 1943.

of 80 or higher in academic courses or a moral conduct score of 70 or above and maintained “good hygiene, clean clothes, and a tidy area” were awarded a certificate of merit 獎狀 (*jiangzhuang*), the home’s highest distinction. Lesser honors, such as merits 功 (*gong*) were bestowed for perfect attendance or for not breaching a single regulation during the course of an academic term.<sup>362</sup> Conversely, sanctions ranging in severity from “big demerit” to “small demerit,” warning, reprimand and admonishment were handed out at the end of the each term for truancy and tardiness. Each grade of censure, excepting admonishment, carried with it a specific deduction in points from the offender’s academic average. Penalties, such as the assignment of extra cleaning work, orders to perform tedious agricultural chores, and “standing at attention or kneeling down while engaged in silent recitation” 罰立正跪下默誦 (*fa lizheng guixia mosong*) were meted out to those who jeopardized the safety of the home or more generally breached classroom or dormitory regulations.<sup>363</sup> Influenced by new ideas on child development, the leaders of wartime children’s organizations, it must be pointed out, unequivocally rejected one quintessential aspect of traditional discipline -- corporeal punishments, favoring methods designed to build character and offer the child an opportunity to reflect upon one’s mistakes instead.<sup>364</sup>

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<sup>362</sup> Ibid., “*Guizhou fenhui Zunyi di wu baoyuyuan wu zhounian jinian tekan.*”

<sup>363</sup> SHB 11-586-3, November 24, 1943.

<sup>364</sup> A report issued by the Xibei Children’s Reformatory noted that it “resolutely rejected physical punishments and instead used moral suasion and exhortation to encourage their (i.e. the children’s) self-awareness.” As seen in chapter 2, many of the independently-run Shanghai children’s institutions had similarly renounced the older methods by the start of the war. Their leaders were shown to have been influenced by a new current of ideas in the branches of sociology and psychology at the university.

Administrators of homes affiliated with both the Wartime Child Welfare Society and the National Relief Commission placed a discernable emphasis on group organization as a mechanism for promoting a sense of collective responsibility over selfish impulses. As touched on above, residents of the four dormitories at Guizhou No. 3 Warphanage were subdivided into teams 隊 (*dui*), within which appropriate behaviors in the cafeteria, classroom and other facilities were scripted and learned on a daily basis. The arrangement of these units also adopted a simple chain of command to ensure order and breed a respect for authority in the home's charges: if a team leader encountered disobedience, for example, while directing his members to clean their sleeping quarters, the matter would be reported to his superior, the room leader 室長 (*shi zhang*), for proper handling.<sup>365</sup> If the issue could still not be resolved at that level, it was communicated to the instructor on duty or child training officer, who could decide on an appropriate punishment if warranted.

The Xibei Children's Reformatory drew even more explicitly from the model of organization used in the armed forces. The institute's chronicler explained the rationale behind the system: "...children can use military management to handle all affairs, to address all types of problems, to develop lifelong habits of being orderly and disciplined, and to cultivate leaders and talent."<sup>366</sup> The youngsters in each grade formed a 'battalion' 大隊 (*dadui*). These units were divided into two 'squadrons' 中隊 (*zhongdui*), one for each class, which, in turn, were subdivided into 6 or 7 'platoons' 分隊 (*fendui*) of

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<sup>365</sup> Ibid., SHB 11-586-3, November 24, 1943. One room leader (*shi zhang*) was selected from among the children for each of the four dormitories. The room leader held the highest rank among children at the Guizhou institute.

<sup>366</sup> ZZY 116-1408: "Zhenji weiyuanhui Xibei ertong jiaoyangyuan ershi jiu niandu gongzuo fang'an."

approximately eight children a piece, each detachment led by one of the youths.<sup>367</sup>

Invested with a measure of authority, the heads of these units served as a crucial nexus and conduit of information between the institute's adult staff and their wards. Squadron commanders 中隊長 (*zhongdui zhang*) were responsible for submitting reports on their members' behavior to the institute's administrators, who read and commented on the dispatches, and offered guidance to the heads when they deemed it necessary.<sup>368</sup>

Moreover, staff members set aside a specific time each week to explain to 'squadron' and 'platoon' leaders how they ought to conduct themselves as role models and how to handle all matters related to the training of members within their units.<sup>369</sup> The institute's instructors also assisted the young leaders in the task of organizing group activities on special occasions, such as Children's Day celebrations and fundraising campaigns for local army units.<sup>370</sup>

Above all, administrators felt the nested unit served as an ideal instrument for imparting to disconnected youngsters an understanding of how the individual's disciplined habits and skills could contribute to group (i.e. national) success in a time of war. We've already noted that children were trained to behave in the cafeteria, classroom, and resident hall in ways that placed primacy on group order over individual whim. The

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<sup>367</sup> Put differently, there were a total of 78 platoons (*fen dui*), which made up 12 squadrons, which in turn collapsed into a total of six battalions (*da dui*) at the end of February 1941 at Xibei Children's Reformatory.

<sup>368</sup> ZZY 116-1408: "Zhenji weiyuanhui Xibei ertong jiaoyangyuan sanshi nian san yuefen gongzuo baogao."

<sup>369</sup> ZZY 116-1408: "Zhenji weiyuanhui Xibei ertong jiaoyangyuan sanshi nian si yuefen gongzuo baogao."

<sup>370</sup> Children's Day, held annually on April 4, was established by Chinese Children's Aid Association (see p. 14) in 1931. Children from the Xibei facility engaged in a variety of activities -- performing dramas, participating in speech contests, and showcasing their achievements in exhibits -- at the Nanzheng county Children's Day festival. Other special activities included traveling to the county seat to show support for local military personnel; there, the children held mass rallies in which they turned over donations to local soldiers groups and performed well-known plays with patriotic themes. See *Ibid.*, ZZY 116-1408.

Xibei reformatory sought to further reinforce its standards of group behavior through “discipline competitions.” Squadrons inspected one another and assigned scores based on a variety of factors. At the end of the week, rewards and punishments were doled out to each unit on the basis of their respective point totals. Finally, there was an important physical component to “group training” 集體訓練 (*jiti xunlian*), which, in the parlance of wartime welfare workers, capitalized on “the power of the group to control individual behavior.” In virtually all homes, children assembled in their designated units each morning to perform physical exercises. Moreover, “in accord with needs of the wartime era,” additional times were set aside at Xibei reformatory for the youngsters to practice climbing, crawling, sandbag piling, and even grenade-throwing exercises. Transforming lone youngsters into new citizens who would defend the country, though, required not only shaping their lifelong habits, but also, as the section below explores, imbuing them with a deep-rooted sense of belonging to the Chinese race and nation.

*From Family to Nation: Forging New Loyalties in Wartime China*

Confucianism, the official ideology and dominant ethical system during much of China’s imperial era (ca. 220 BCE -1911), upheld the family as the crucial starting point for moral training and the basic building block of a stable empire. Each person was taught first the proper way of acting toward one’s kin relations, and then expected to apply such moral principles in their everyday dealings with outside world, thereby creating – in the ideal – a harmonious state and society. Furthermore, the major thinkers of the imperial period did not write about China in terms of ethnicity or a fixed territory, but rather spoke of its cultural tradition (e.g. moral values, ritual, artistic and literary expression) as the very essence of their “Chineseness” and, as such, something to be defended at all costs.



Alarmed by the might and appetite of the Western imperial powers, late 19<sup>th</sup>-century Chinese intellectuals began to speak of China as a nation with borders to protect lest it be “carved up like a melon.” Yet even as Confucian orthodoxy was jettisoned and the traditional family system assailed in the name of political and cultural modernization, the vast bulk of China’s population continued in the new Republican era to place emphasis on one’s role in, and obligations to the family above all else.

The War to Resist Japan, however, undermined the cohesion of the kin unit in ways scarcely imaginable by the new generation of 20<sup>th</sup>-century intellectuals who denounced its structure and practices as outmoded. Countless families were split apart amid the bedlam of flight from battle zones; others endured the loss of a key provider as a result of enemy attack or obligation to serve at the front, rendering an estimated two million children devoid of family support.<sup>371</sup> At the same time, Chinese territory was being swallowed up by an outside aggressor on a scale not seen since the Manchu invasions of the mid 17<sup>th</sup> century. Unlike their Qing-era predecessors, the statesmen, intellectuals and social activists of the 1930s and 1940s, fully subscribing to the idea of China as a modern nation and sensing Japan’s ambitions to conquer and enslave it, deemed the twin tasks of resisting the enemy and national salvation 救國 (*jiuguo*) as the most vital of the time. The networks of child welfare homes sponsored and run by these individuals served as a support structure for some of the most vulnerable in a time of widespread crisis, while at the same time advancing a daily agenda firmly grounded in their larger nationalist aims.

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<sup>371</sup> This figure of 2 million “warphans” is supplied by Lennig Sweet, Program Director of United Child Relief during the war. See Sweet, “Child Care in China,” 212.

Several of the child welfare movement's leaders spoke unabashedly of the need to cast aside the ideal of a cohesive and harmonious kin unit in favor of cultivating a deeper awareness of race and a stronger allegiance to the nation. The rootless and deprived children who entered wartime institutes were expected to learn the ways and duties of "a collective life that substituted for the narrow family life of the past."<sup>372</sup> Li Kunyuan, the director of the Hankou Provisional Warphanage 漢口臨時兒童保育院 (*Hankou linshi ertong baoyuyuan*) summed up his views on the institute's educational mission: "From this [learning program], children are able to recognize that they are not merely the sons and daughters of the Zhang family or the Li family, but are also members of the Chinese race. In order to do away with the idea of simply identifying with the family and not with the country in this time of invasion, the nation must provide public education for children."<sup>373</sup> In his essay "Ertong qiangjiu ertong" (Children Saving Children), welfare organizer Zhang Jie went one step further, suggesting that the private concerns of the family were directly at odds with the public concerns of the nation, and thus must be wiped out: "We wish to destroy the private concept of the family, and have men and women send their children to be raised and protected by the nation [i.e. children's institutes] to help the nation preserve its vitality."<sup>374</sup> The children who were brought into institutional care were referred to variously as "the foundation of a rejuvenated race" and the "young masters of the Chinese race" 中華民族的幼年主人 (*Zhonghua minzu de younian zhuren*), underlining the movement to forge a new sense of identity.

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<sup>372</sup> SHB 11-3492: "Ertong baoyuhui ertong jiaoyu shishi banfa dagang cao'an."

<sup>373</sup> See *Zhanshi ertong baoyu*, 21.

<sup>374</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

Holding regularly-scheduled ceremonies was one way in which the wartime institutes endeavored to strengthen a sense of belonging to the Chinese nation. Prior to class each morning, all children congregated in a courtyard for a moral exhortation designed to “arouse their sense of national identity and race consciousness.” A central part of this event was the ceremonial raising of the flag, the ultimate symbol of national unity, in the morning and the corresponding lowering of the flag each evening. Each Monday morning, all wards of the home gathered to commemorate collectively the life and contributions of Dr. Sun Yat-sen, widely touted as the founder of the republic and the ‘father of the nation’ 國父 (*guofu*). In a sense, the revolutionary was invoked to serve as a universal father figure to whom youngsters taken out of their traditional family settings displayed veneration. Moreover, it is interesting to note that children raised in the wartime welfare facilities were taught to refer to Song Mei-ling as 蔣媽媽 (*Jiang mama*), or “mother Jiang.” As the public face of the child welfare movement and the wife of the head of state, Song Mei-ling was elevated to maternal status on a national order, dispensing motherly compassion to all Chinese youngsters who had been severed from their birth families and serving as a symbol to which they owed their loyalty and dedication in the years to come.

The classrooms on campus functioned like a petri dish for patriotism, rich with the nutrients to nurture nationalist sentiments and racial identity among the young. Official objects of respect such as the flag as well as a portrait and testament 遺囑 (*yizhu*) of Sun Yat-sen adorned each room, serving as constant visual reminders of Chinese nationhood. Teachers and children added to these timeless emblems a variety of wall hangings that highlighted aspects of the current struggle to defeat the rapacious occupiers

and regain the country's independence. These included pictures clipped from newspapers depicting model scenes of the resistance and nation building efforts; maps and charts documenting the battles and occupation of Chinese territory; and slogans inspiring patriotic fervor and a collective steel will to resist Japanese aggressors.<sup>375</sup> Teaching content in the classroom was also adjusted in light of these concerns. Thought training 思想教育 (*sixiang jiaoyu*), as it was called, had both race- and nation-centered components, using instructional materials designed to “enable them to see that the Chinese race is the greatest in the world,” to instill in them “the highest degree of belief in the nation,” and help them “clearly see the relationship between the individual and the nation.”<sup>376</sup> The traditional form of character training 訓育 (*xunyu*) was also updated to fit the times: children were now taught to apply Confucian virtues such as loyalty, righteousness, and propriety toward the nation, creating “patriotic, race-loving, law-abiding citizens” in the process.<sup>377</sup>

The effort to inspire an allegiance to the nation was hardly limited to the array of formal ceremonies and classroom exercises described above. Administrators also devised a battery of extracurricular activities directed toward this end. Participating in fundraising drives to aid generals and soldiers deployed to the front, lecturing about the War of Resistance in the township, and making consolatory visits to the kin of deceased and wounded troops served as hands-on lessons to children that every citizen had a supportive role to play in the cause of national liberation. In order to “strengthen children’s racial

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<sup>375</sup> ZZY 116-1408-23: “*Xibei ertong jiaoyangyuan gongzuo shi’shi jiahua.*”

<sup>376</sup> Ibid.

<sup>377</sup> SHB 11-3492: “*Ertong baoyuhui ertong jiaoyu shishi banfa dagang cao’an.*”

and national identity,” teachers at the Xibei reformatory organized a Chinese language speech contest and lecture competition on the subject of the War of Resistance for those enrolled in upper-level Mandarin classes.<sup>378</sup> Theater posters, created by children to publicize student dramas depicting events in the war, were compiled for a special publication devoted to the subject. Students in the lower grade levels, meanwhile, mastered songs with themes of war and national salvation in preparation for singing competitions.<sup>379</sup> In short, age-appropriate activities designed to foster patriotic pride and racial consciousnesses were built into each stage of the wartime institute’s curriculum.

A set of essays written by the young wards of Chengdu No.3 Warphanage provide a unique window into the ways the children applied the new rhetoric on race and nation to their own lives.<sup>380</sup> Though clearly directed to focus on a single set of themes, the writing exercises afforded the children a blank canvas for framing the significance of these concepts as they saw fit and, in turn, allow the reader to appreciate the variety of ways they made sense of such terms. Some lamented over the suffering endured by their compatriots and over the splintered state of the nation. Others recounted elements of their physical and moral training at the relief institute and how they might link up to a broader nationalist liberation movement. These young authors were united, though, in the conviction that they themselves would be active participants in the tasks of freeing fellow Chinese from the shackles of enemy domination and restoring China’s long lost cultural grandeur and independent statehood.

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<sup>378</sup> ZZY 116-1408: “*Zhenji weiyuanhui Xibei ertong jiaoyangyuan sanshi nian er yuefen gongzuo baogao.*”

<sup>379</sup> Ibid.

<sup>380</sup> For the complete collection of children’s essays, see SHB 11-562: “*Chengdu fenhui di san baoyuyuan san zhou nian jinian kan.*”

In “My Own Account” 我的自述, sixth-grader Tang Zhengsong informs his readers that he intends to develop his wood carving skills to benefit the nation. Having undertaken one year of training in wood carving at the Chengdu facility, Tang declares that he wishes to make a career out of it. He begins with a culturally conventional self-deprecatory disclaimer that he has done little to help his classmates and not made a significant contribution to the home, but goes on to note that his engraving class of 25 students has produced all of the institute’s forms and supplementary textbooks. Tang has a plan to develop further his techniques in woodworking, painting and calligraphy to the best of his ability so that he could continue to produce teaching materials as well as beneficial propaganda for the home, thereby enabling “the culture of the nation to flourish, our national power to thrive,” and China to be free from “the invasion and oppression of foreigners.”

Peng Denghou, a classmate of Tang’s at the Chengdu No. 3 institute, emphasizes the facility’s capacity to transform the lives of children like himself in his essay, “Reflections on the Three Year Anniversary of this Warphanage” 本院三周年紀念的感想. Peng recalled that before entering the home, he was generally ignorant, lacked any sense of morality, and was devoid of any practical skills. Fortunately, reports Peng, several children’s homes were set up under the leadership of Jiang mama (Song Mei-ling) for the “purpose of constructing a new China” on a stable foundation. Moreover, the teachers who filled these institutions sought to cultivate “our knowledge, skills, and moral conduct,” with the hope of empowering them to become “outstanding citizens.” He goes on to explain that given the precious opportunity to receive an education in a time of war, those sheltered in the home must “stride forward in our small foot steps, expanding

our knowledge, skills, and ethics for the survival of our nation and race...enabling us, the great Chinese, to endure in the universe forever.” When they make this progress, Peng avers, it will bring honor to the personages who run the warphanage as well as to the children themselves.

In his piece, “Our moral training and responsibility” (*Women de xiuyang yu zeren*), Li Dongzhu exhorts his fellows to save their downtrodden compatriots and vanquish the foes from Chinese territory. Li, a graduate of Chengdu warphanage’s elementary school program, was a first-year middle school student when he wrote his composition. He begins his impassioned plea by apprising his young peers of the momentous obligations they have inherited: “Classmates: let’s forge ahead! We are the soul of the nation; we are the flowers of the country...those who have risen to succeed in the war of resistance and in building the nation bear such weighty responsibilities.” In order to prepare themselves for these roles, Li proclaims, “children in these times” would have to pursue extensive moral cultivation and physical training. In the final portion of the essay, Li sounds a clarion call to members of his generation to resist the invaders:

Look! The clouds of war and an aura of death fill the air; peace has drifted far away. East Asia is under the iron heel of the enemy. Our compatriots in occupied territory are still groaning painfully under oppression. We are compatriots! We are masters! Classmates: forge ahead! We must proceed to rescue and relieve the wounded. We must avenge [the wounded]. We must recover our mountains and rivers and only then shall we have fulfilled our responsibility.

The young author’s appeal places particular emphasis on the ties that bind his countrymen together. Most important, juveniles were to be considered a vital part of this national community. The countless hours devoted to cultivating a keen a sense of social duty and developing strong bodies at the home prepared children for the active roles they

were to play in reclaiming lost territory and aiding fellow citizens, each recognized as defining pillars of the national reconstruction project.

Fifth-grader Hou Boyuan also enjoins his peers to carry on the bitter struggle with the enemy to ensure that the nation has a bright future. His essay, “Our Future” (*Women de qiantu*), opens with a reflection on China’s dire circumstances: “We have reached a point at which our nation’s very survival is at stake; our future is unthinkable.” But with numerous “brave warriors” having taken upon themselves the heavy burden of protecting the oppressed people, Hou avows a glimmer of light appears for China’s future. He points out that his fellows were well prepared to take part in the conflict: “An education rooted in the bloody war of resistance has caused our muscles to be especially strong, our eyes to be especially sharp, and our ears to be especially acute. All of our thoughts are united with the people of the entire nation.” In sum, unified by a common purpose and the development of keen faculties, Hou’s companions must follow the path of their compatriots before them, the “brave warriors,” by intensifying the struggle against the foreign foes. Only then, the author opined, would China’s radiant future be secured. Though it cannot be claimed that the essays from the Chengdu home represent the thought of all children placed in institutional care during the war, our sample does suggest that dependents socialized in these environments learned to identify personally with the movement to resist the current threats to national and racial solidarity.

The key strains of learning at wartime children’s facilities – life education, disciplinary training, and implanting a deeply-rooted national and racial consciousness – have been treated separately for the purpose of bringing into relief the core content and teaching methods associated with each. Nevertheless, the three areas of learning were



conceptually linked to one another in a vision shared by the architects and administrators of the welfare movement, each an interconnected part of the process by which the dislocated, rudderless child would be transformed into a citizen with the tools and willpower to defend the integrity of the Chinese homeland and race. Life education, as noted above, had emerged as the guiding pedagogical approach among China's progressive educational leaders in the 1920s. Amid the crisis conditions of wartime China, though, social activists appropriated and adapted the approach's key feature, experiential learning, to a newly-ascendant repertoire of citizen training exercises at the relief facility. Building on knowledge gained from formal classroom instruction, the child's direct participation in vocational training, public service and outreach programs, performances, and competitions served as a medium for 'learning by doing' the types of skills and nurturing the disposition that befitted a modern national devoted to serving and sacrificing for the country.

### **Epilogue: Aftermath and Legacies**

In the postwar years (1945-1947), the Guomindang government endeavored to transition from an emergency relief mode to a permanent welfare model. The Wartime Child Welfare Society and National Relief Commission were dissolved; their care giving facilities were consolidated into a total of 28 institutes and placed under the direct management of the Ministry of Social Affairs.<sup>381</sup> The reorganized welfare centers continued to offer the same type of training and care giving programs to orphaned and

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<sup>381</sup> The 28 institutes included 24 Children's Homes (*yuyou yuan*) for homeless children, 3 nurseries (*tuo'er suo*) for foundlings, and one home for special needs children (*texu ertong fudaoyuan*), distributed through 17 provinces and municipalities. As of June 1947, a total of 13,640 children were enrolled in these facilities.

displaced children as their wartime predecessors.<sup>382</sup> In addition to supporting homeless youngsters, the Ministry undertook an array of initiatives designed to improve the wellbeing of minors from underprivileged backgrounds, guided by the intention of dramatically shrinking the need for placement in full-time institutional care. Toward that end, the Ministry's Child Welfare Experimental Center, having relocated to Nanjing, expanded upon its initial operations, providing free health care, conducting case work/family visits, sponsoring cultural activities, and offering day care to thousands of children from less fortunate families each month. This sphere of activity, intended to play a demonstrative role for extending such efforts to the provinces and cities, was touted by the heads of the Ministry's Child Welfare Section as the cornerstone of child assistance in the years to come. In fact, the Ministry issued a report in September 1947 in which it unveiled its plans for future work, including the insertion of child welfare offices in provincial, city, and county governments, which in turn would set up a variety of local facilities modeled on those found in the capital's experimental center.<sup>383</sup> These plans, however, appear to have been suspended indefinitely as the Guomindang became embroiled in an all-out civil war with the Communists.

Though incomplete and eventually aborted, the policies of the postwar years highlight the ways in which the eight-year conflict was a watershed in the creation of China's modern child welfare system. Indeed, it was during the war that the very idea of social welfare, or 社會福利 (*shehui fuli*), initially gained traction among Chinese

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<sup>382</sup> The regimen of military drill, occupational learning, and citizen training found in wartime facilities was, for example, on full display at the Children's Receiving Home, the state-run children's home set up in postwar Shanghai that was discussed at length in the final section of chapter 2. See above, pp. 42-53.

<sup>383</sup> Specifically, the report mentions the creation of child welfare experimental districts (*ertong fuli shiyan qu*), welfare stations (*fuli zhan*), nurseries (*tuor suo*), children's homes (*yuyou yuan*) and guidance centers (*texu ertong fulidao yuan*). See SHB 11-6791: "Ertong fuli gongzuo zong baogao."

activists as a preferable alternative to social relief, which was now regarded as an outmoded approach. Wartime commentators were quick to point out that the tradition of social welfare was an offshoot of the rise of nation states in 19<sup>th</sup>-century Europe, grounded in an emergent consensus that the modern state has a fundamental responsibility to ensure the wellbeing of its peoples. With Japan pressing further into China's interior and the specter of foreign domination stirring anxieties over the county's destiny, prominent statesmen and social activists identified European-brand social welfare as an essential component of the ongoing project to strengthen the nation's foundations. The state could no longer afford to simply sit on the sidelines, delegating to volunteer groups the job of aiding the disadvantaged as it had in the past. Under the direction of the Ministry of Social Affairs, the government now assumed an active role in ensuring that at-risk children were supplied with the health care, education, vocational training, and nation-race awareness deemed essential for joining the ranks of a patriotic, productive citizenry. To be sure, one must not overstate the extent to which the landscape of child assistance was actually transformed in late Republican times: on the eve of the 1949 revolution, the vast majority of child aid facilities were still run by unaffiliated private associations.<sup>384</sup> Nevertheless, the centrally-managed welfare system and its uniform agenda that took root in the war years would become permanent features of Chinese social administration for the remainder of the century and beyond.

Additionally, the agenda that informed the suite of training programs at wartime facilities signaled the coming of a paradigmatic shift in child training in China, from

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<sup>384</sup> A report published by the Ministry of Social Affairs in 1947 disclosed that only 100 of the 2,504 welfare facilities for infants and children operating at the time were run by the government. Among these, 29 were managed by the Ministry and 71 were administered by provincial and municipal governments. See *Shehui fuli tongji, minguo san shi liu niandu*.

preparing the young for their place in the family to grooming them for national citizenship. Here, it is important to stress that the notion of citizenship underwent a telling change during the Republican era. Influenced by the principles of Western democratic liberalism, leading reformers of the 1910s and 1920s such as Hu Shi, James Yan, and Tao Xingzhi proclaimed that a reversal of China's misfortunes hinged on instilling in its people the qualities of a bona fide 公民 (*gongmin*) (citizen), namely the knowledge and proclivity to participate actively in local decision making and community affairs. As noted in chapter one, their contemporary Xiong Xiling 熊希零 showed a commitment to this pursuit with the creation of simulative administrative agencies and community programs for the wards of the Fragrant Hills institute. But Xiong also organized the institute's children into artificial kin units in order to implant in them a moral disposition based on familial roles and responsibilities; to Xiong, arguably the leading philanthropist of his day, these two visions were not incompatible. With the outbreak of the war, though, the term 國民 (*guomin*) came to displace 公民 (*gongmin*) in public discourse, carrying with it a new sense of citizenship. Consistent with this spirit, children were taught to suppress individual whim, to identify with the plight of the Chinese race, and to direct their allegiance to the nation rather than the family. This tendency would only become more pronounced in child welfare after the Communists came to power in 1949. But unlike the trends toward centralization and systemization, the movement from a family- to a nation-centered approach to childhood socialization was not entirely irreversible, as developments in the post-Mao era would make clear.

**Table 3.1. Children’s Daily Schedule at the National Relief Commission’s Xibei Children’s Reformatory (Nanzheng County, Henan Province)**

<b>Time</b>	<b>First Grade Class</b>	<b>Sixth Grade Class</b>
5:30	Wake up	Wake up
5:30 – 6:10	Wash face and rinse mouth; tidy up personal area	Wash face and rinse mouth; tidy up personal area
6:20 – 6:40	Moral exhortation	Moral exhortation
6:40 – 7:30	Weekly commemoration in memory of Sun Yatsen (M); Self study (T-S)	Weekly commemoration in memory of Sun Yatsen (M); Self study (T-S)
7:30 – 8:00	Eat breakfast	Eat breakfast
8:00 – 8:30	Rest	Rest
8:30	Preparatory bell	Preparatory bell
8:40 – 9:20	Reading (M-T-Th-F-S); Essay Writing (W)	Reading (M-T-W-F-S); Essay Writing (W)
9:25 – 9:55	Civics (M, F); Math (T, Th, S); Reading (W)	Social Studies (M, Th), Math (T, F); Reading (W)
9:55 – 10:15	Physical exercise	Physical exercise
10:15 – 10:45	General Knowledge (M, W, F); Art (T-Th); Writing (S)	Vocational Training (M, T, W); Nature (Th, F, S)
10:50 – 11:20	Drama and Singing (M-S)	Vocational Training (M, T, W), Physical Education (Th, F, S)
11:30 – 12:00	Eat lunch	Eat lunch
12:00 – 13:00	Rest and recuperate	Rest and recuperate
13:10 – 13:40	Oratory (M); General Knowledge (T, Th, S); Reading (W, F)	Reading (M); Writing Characters (T); Speech (W); Written Math (Th, S); Vocational Training (F)
13:45 – 14:15	Manual Training (M, W, Th, S)	Art (M), Nature (T), Math (W), Vocational Training (Th, F, S)
14:20 – 14:50	Story time (W, S)	Public Health Lectures (M), , Civics (T, W), Vocational Training (Th, S) Social Studies (F)
14:55 – 15:45		Physical Ed (M, Th), Abacus (T) Oratory (W), Weekly meeting (S)
15:55 – 16:55	Red and Recuperate	Extracurricular activity
16:55 – 17:10	Flag lowering ceremony	Flag lowering ceremony
17:10 – 17:40	Eat dinner	Eat dinner
17:40 – 18:20	Rest	Rest
18:20 – 19:20	Self study	Self study
19:30	Go to bed	Go to bed
20:00	Lights out	Lights out

Source: Number Two Historical Archives of China, ZZY 116-1411-2: *Zhenji weiyuanhui Xibei ertong jiaoyangyuan ertong shenghuo biao*

## **Chapter 4: Wards of the State: The Transition to Socialist Welfare in the Mao Years**

### **Introduction**

This chapter seeks to illuminate the dynamics of organized aid for at-risk children in conjunction with the formation of a socialist welfare system in the early People's Republic of China (PRC). Archival records and media reports from the Mao years (1949-1976) indicate that the Communist government sought to move away from a relief model dominated by private charity given its inefficiencies. But they also rejected the Western welfare state's mission of providing unconditional support to the needy, as it too was thought to breed a parasitic mentality at odds with the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) vision of a healthy society. Finding each of these approaches ultimately counterproductive, the Chinese authorities began speaking of socialist welfare as a set of government guarantees (保障) for vulnerable peoples who, in turn, had the obligation to use their talents and abilities to produce for the wellbeing of state and society. In short, the early PRC model of public assistance was built on the notion that relations between state and individual carried a specific set of reciprocal obligations.

In the following analysis, I suggest that Communist leaders saw the core of child welfare work as an endeavor to transform vulnerable youngsters into productive, morally responsible worker-citizens in the new socialist order. Chapter one describes how late imperial and Republican central authorities largely delegated the task of aiding at-risk children to privately-run charitable organizations. The Communist government departed from this course, claiming that state-managed institutions were uniquely qualified to bring about the type of personal transformation that was essential in new China. For abandoned infants and young children under 6 *sui*, this meant providing timely and

effective medical treatment to restore their health and normalize their physiological development, a fundamental first step on the path to societal integration. The focus for school-age dependents was placed on transforming their ethical character and conduct, purging them of selfish and delinquent tendencies and cultivating a collectivist moral outlook. Most important, rehabilitation of the troubled child was not considered an end in itself, but rather part of the larger CCP endeavor of maintaining a healthy (i.e. productive) social order.

The state's creation of a new child welfare apparatus proceeded along two lines. First, there was an obvious need to forge the institutional building blocks, that is, the 'hardware,' of the system. As detailed below, party officials established a hierarchy of welfare management agencies, known as civil affairs organs, from the capital down to the county seat as well as a separate network of care giving facilities for the vulnerable. Second, authorities drew upon a number of 'soft' tools such as print media, public campaigns, and mass organizations to create an environment conducive for carrying out their vision of child welfare. They found these entities useful, for example, in their effort to shape public opinion toward social assistance, working to discredit past arrangements and to underscore the humaneness and efficiency of the new system. These 'soft' elements were further used to galvanize popular participation in certain areas of welfare work like fighting infant abandonment. The following section highlights the ways in which each of these institutions, 'soft' and 'hard' alike, played a crucial role in propelling the transition from privately-run relief services to a state-managed welfare network for the young. The latter half of the chapter explores how the state adapted its general views

on welfare to the specific needs of dependent youngsters, highlighting the ways in which institutional programs were designed to effect a personal transformation.

Given the time period under study in this chapter, it is necessary to rely on a scattered assortment of historical sources. In contrast to the arrangement of Qing and Republican-era collections, no central-level archive of historical documents exists for the PRC. Documents from the Civil Affairs and Women's Federation files held at the Shanghai Municipal Archives, one of the more open local collections for post-1949 materials, are used in conjunction with newspaper articles, new gazetteers, and Civil Affairs reports that appeared in collected volumes and the official journal 内务部通讯 (Bulletin of the Ministry of the Interior). It is worth pointing out that newspaper articles, given the nature of the state-controlled media in the PRC, have served a dual purpose for this study, supplementing other sources of empirical data and providing a window into official thinking that helps us reconstruct the authorities' conceptual approach toward child welfare.

## **Envisioning Socialist Welfare for New China**

### *Diagnosing Societal Disorders*

In the early years of the PRC, the party-state's approach to social relief was grounded in a central concern over stemming sources of social unrest and demographic disarray. The end to the second Sino-Japanese war in 1945 afforded only a brief pause from the mass desperation that had driven tens of millions from their native places in search of subsistence. The ensuing civil war between the GMD and CCP, from 1947 to 1949, coupled with natural disasters, compelled waves of rural inhabitants to set out for urban centers, a dilemma further compounded by runaway inflation and a growing



scarcity of staple goods in the cities for those without personal connections to the fledgling GMD regime. In short, these dynamics provided a fertile ground for criminal behavior and other disruptive activities in urban areas. Not long after setting up its new governing structure in Beijing, the CCP introduced a series of initiatives for collecting, aiding and resettling the displaced peoples.

On the face of it, the new government's early relief work appears to be the latest incarnation of a long lineage of state-sponsored social assistance aimed at preventing uprooted disaster victims from threatening local order. While the granary was the most emblematic and enduring of such institutions, with a history that stretched back to 600 BCE, work relief projects 工賑 (*gong zhen*), gruel stations, and poor homes served this purpose during imperial times as well.<sup>385</sup> Nevertheless, closer scrutiny reveals that the CCP's new agenda was shaped by a moral vision of man and society not found in the imperial and pre-war Republican programs of the past.

Communist leaders held that a key function of its new relief enterprises was providing their recipients with a path to ethical transformation. During China's classical and imperial eras, the central authorities embraced a thoroughly materialist approach to relieving the masses in the wake of natural or human catastrophe. The key to defusing potential flashpoints for mass disturbance consisted in meeting the basic needs of the afflicted promptly. The Nationalist Government largely followed this approach in Republican times, though it began articulating the need to equip refugees with the tools necessary for self-sufficiency in the war years. While the architects of welfare policy in

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<sup>385</sup> Whereas the use of granaries had been used to feed disaster victims and forestall unrest consistently throughout imperial times, state-run poor homes 居养院 first appeared during the Song Dynasty, see Scogin, 30-46; work relief projects and gruel kitchens were introduced in the Qing period.

the early PRC were equally concerned with neutralizing crisis-induced upheavals, their solution paired material aid with work training programs to reform the mentality of recipients, cultivating in them a respect and affection for physical labor and a cooperative spirit, indispensable assets to their integration into a new society of producers. The enlistment of the uprooted, the idle, and the marginalized in the nationwide project of socialist construction was essential to restoring wellbeing in the broadest sense of the term, from an individual level to the local community and the nation at large.

The Communist idyllic vision of a stable, producer-oriented population prompted officials to articulate a need for, and to develop parallel sets of urban and rural public assistance programs. As noted above, the large movement of inhabitants as a consequence of disrupted productivity and scarcities was an acute source of concern for Chinese rulers throughout the imperial era. But the Communist party-state differed from its predecessors in tackling these problems in two regards. First, the PRC government demonstrated a historically unparalleled capacity to shift segments of the population to desired locations for the purpose of restoring order or mobilizing productive forces as it saw fit. These successes were facilitated by the authority's unprecedented reach down to the village and the city neighborhood as well its centralized control over modern transportation and communication networks. Second, the new government demonstrated that it was concerned not only with disruptions created by displaced rural residents, but also with certain groups of urban dwellers whose lifestyles, it was believed, undermined social stability and the party's vision of a politically conscious labor force.

The rural and urban relief schemes of the early 1950s, however, were based on a shared principle of rehabilitation through production. Rural aid work, identified in

official documents as 农村救灾 (*nongcun jiuzai*), encompassed a three-stage process of gathering dislocated disaster victims, often times in cities, transporting them en masse back to the countryside, and enlisting them in various forms of agricultural production. Officials described the approach they adopted toward social assistance as “supporting oneself through work relief” 生产自救 (*shengchan zijiu*).<sup>386</sup> The methods employed bore a distinct resemblance to the Qing practice of work relief 工赈 (*gong zhen*), though the CCP placed a newfound emphasis on fostering a sense of self-responsibility among the dispossessed and raising, or least restoring, levels of production.<sup>387</sup>

Social relief work in urban areas, or 城市救济 (*chengshi jiuji*), was to be concentrated in newly established sites known as production reformatories 生产教养院 (*shengchan jiaoyangyuan*). These institutes were designed not only to guide marginalized persons into proper lines of production, but also to reshape their outlook on the individual’s contributions to society. On the one hand, the new training programs were established to absorb individuals who were detached from their families and supported themselves through questionable means: vagrants, prostitutes, professional beggars, and swindlers.<sup>388</sup> The training programs were structured to rid these groups of a shared

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<sup>386</sup> “Di er ci quanguo minzheng huiyi jueyi” in *Neiwubu tongxun* (December 1953), 8-10.

<sup>387</sup> The Qing government typically implemented “work relief” schemes following major natural or manmade disasters. Displaced peasants were recruited to engage in the construction or repair of public works such as dykes, bridges and roads. There was a two-fold emphasis on preventing idle rural residents from becoming restless and improving infrastructure, but little discussion of the impact of such work on the individual as seen in the early PRC.

<sup>388</sup> Hershatter’s study of prostitutes in 20<sup>th</sup> century Shanghai provides a detailed analysis of the CCP program for reforming streetwalkers in the early 1950s. This process involved curing sexually transmitted diseases, breaking ties with the fictive kin networks in the brothels, teaching basic literacy, raising class consciousness and enrolment in productive labor training. See Hershatter’s chapter, “Revolutionaries,” 304-324.

‘parasitic mentality,’ transforming consumers of the old society into producers in the new one. On the other hand, the institutes also took in a variety of vulnerable groups who similarly lacked family support, while also suffering from physical and mental limitations that impeded their ability to engage in labor and support themselves. In the early 1950s, these individuals, often referred to collectively by the stock phrase 殘老孤幼 (*can lao gu you*) (lit. “the disabled and the elderly, the orphaned and the young”) were lumped together indiscriminately with the aforementioned groups. Ironically, the emphasis placed on rehabilitation through labor meant that the truly vulnerable – those who were incapable of supporting themselves – were de-prioritized within the nascent state-run relief apparatus of the early 1950s, a misstep authorities would acknowledge and seek to correct in later years.

*A Discourse of Dichotomies: Discrediting the Old, Validating the New*

A common trope in early PRC official discourse on social welfare programs, and social policy in general, was the depiction of a clear-cut dichotomy between old and new China. The government emphasized a stark contrast between the misery of vulnerable groups in pre-revolutionary China and the effectiveness of new programs designed to help the weak and stigmatized turn their lives around. The message was conveyed in official documents as well as, and arguably more significantly, in a torrent of reports published in newspapers and journals now under party control. In short, the campaign for social welfare was waged not only in the trenches of the new training and care giving sites, but also in the state-controlled print media to raise public consciousness of the positive societal transformations achieved in recent years.<sup>389</sup> The CCP’s narrative of

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<sup>389</sup> By contrast, those who undertook child relief in Republican times used the new print media primarily to draw attention to the plight of the suffering, to elicit financial support from the reading public, and to

public assistance accentuated the shortcomings of relief work in previous times, sometimes at the expense of making gross generalizations, to bring into full relief the elements of superior care and conditions for disenfranchised groups in the present. The dissemination of media messages formed part of the government's soft system for reshaping public and private zones of responsibility in social services.

The narrative of a black-and-white contrast between pre- and post-revolutionary regimes of relief prevailed down to the mid 1970s, although the particular points of comparison shifted in accord with the changing political circumstances of the times. In the early years of the PRC, the party-state's need to bolster its legitimacy in the eyes of the Chinese public lent itself to a slew of verbal attacks on domestic and foreign sponsors of charity for the young in previous times. An essay published in a handbook on civil affairs in 1951 denounced social relief of the past as a superficial "adornment" (装饰品) with which the ruling class deceived the "sedated masses" and as a "bitter struggle" fought by a small "isolated force" of philanthropists, suggesting that such efforts were too scattered and unfocused to address social problems effectively. This picture stood in stark contrast to the author Dong Bingwu's description of the new face of welfare work in the PRC, which centered on "the government and the people working in full cooperation to heal the scars of war," an allusion to adoption of work relief schemes.<sup>390</sup> Other reports assigned full blame for the gamut of social problems in post-1949 China, including, for example, a surfeit of street urchins causing havoc on the streets of Shanghai, to "the

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provide public recognition for individuals who donated to the cause. See Chapter Two (pp. 78-82) above for a fuller discussion of this issue.

<sup>390</sup> Dong, "Xin Zhongguo de jiuji fuli shiye" in *Minzheng gongzuo shouce*, 253.

reactionary Guomindang government.”<sup>391</sup> By stressing the point that virtually all current societal afflictions were derivative of the corrupt old order, the CCP party-state was staking out a role for itself as both the genuine savior of disadvantaged commoners and their partner in the ongoing project to construct a new socialist China.

Foreign sponsors of relief in China were likewise castigated for operating under ulterior motives. Increasingly contentious relations between communist countries and the capitalist West, eventually leading to the outbreak of the Korean War, sparked a wave of anti-imperialism campaigns in the PRC. Spilling over into discussions of social policy, this tide of hostile sentiment included bitter denunciations of foreign activities in Republican China. PRC officials charged that Western social relief initiatives were used as a vehicle to further imperialist encroachment, drawing particular attention to U.S. involvement in relief work as a result of its enhanced presence in Northeast Asia.<sup>392</sup> After the U.S. entered the Korean War in June 1953, Chinese newspapers expanded their coverage to include public criticisms of an imperialist agenda in relief work, reporting on rallies in which dependents were encouraged to voice their grievances over past abuses and mistreatment at the hands of the foreign relief administrators and workers.<sup>393</sup> The media’s coverage of these events was designed to offer the reading public clear evidence

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<sup>391</sup> See “Jiaoyu liulang ertong xuexi shengchan gongzuo” *Wenhui bao*, July 6, 1949; see also “Ertong fuliyuan de huadou -- ji gu’er men de xingfu shenghuo,” *Changjiang ribao*, May 29, 1959, in which authors claim that the problem of street urchins was a “remnant of old society” (*jiu shehui liu xia lai*) despite the passage of nearly ten years since the founding of the PRC.

<sup>392</sup> The charge of a link between relief and imperialism is discussed extensively in SMA C31-2-94, 1951, “Guanyu jieban diguo zhuyi de yuyingtang baogao.” For examples of public condemnations of U.S.-sponsored relief, see the following newspaper articles: “Hu [Shanghai] jiuji fuli jie renshi juxing kang Mei youxing shiwei” *Renmin ribao*, December 28, 1950; “Jiejue xiezhu zhengfu suqing Mei di jingji wenhua qinlue shili” *Renmin ribao*, January 7, 1951; and “Zhongguo renmin jiuji zonghui Beijing fenhui jieguan Mei zi banli de san ge ‘jiuji jiguan,’” *Renmin ribao*, March 29, 1951.

<sup>393</sup> These events appear to have adopted the “speak bitterness” (*suku*) form of confrontation used in CCP land reform campaigns, in which poor peasants and laborers publicly denounced landlords and capitalists.

that, despite an alleged adherence to Christian slogans such as “brotherly love,” foreign-run relief enterprises betrayed a glaring lack of concern for the wellbeing of China’s underprivileged.<sup>394</sup>

Beginning in the early 1960s, comparisons between substandard care at pre-PRC relief enterprises and the successes of the current welfare system found expression in two new forms of public writing. With the once incendiary issues of foreign imperialism and GMD “reactionary” rule receding into the past, these newspaper articles traded the political denunciations of the early 1950s for anecdotal accounts that spoke to the dramatically improved conditions and opportunities for at-risk children under Communist rule. The first type consisted of a pre- vs. post-revolutionary comparative profile of care giving at child welfare facilities. Cai Fanting, a former resident of a private orphanage in Guiyang, juxtaposes his wretched experiences as an orphan in Republican times with the impressive standards for Mao-era child relief in his piece on Guizhou City Child Welfare Institute for the city newspaper (*Guizhou ribao*).<sup>395</sup> Cai reports that he and his fellow inmates subsisted on “two daily meals of light and watery rice gruel” and thus “never felt full,” were dressed in tattered clothes once discarded by GMD soldiers, and resided in cramped, humid quarters rife with insects that contributed to high rates of illness. The children at Guizhou Child Welfare Institute, by contrast, were fed three to four meals

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<sup>394</sup> Examples of reports on the public condemnation of foreign-sponsored relief include “Fandui diguo zhuyi fenzi nuesha ying’er he canfei laoren: ben shi Xinpuyutang juxing kongsu dahui,” *Wenhui bao*, July 12, 1953; “Diguo zhuyi fenzi hendu ru cailang, jiyao nue sha ying’er ye yao pohai canlao: Xinpuyutang Canlaobu laoren Zhang Jinlin de kongsu” *Wenhui bao*, July 13, 1953, and “Wei wen Xujiahui Shengmuyuan yuyingtang gu’er” *Wenhui bao*, July 13, 1953.

<sup>395</sup> Cai Fanting, “Jiu shehui: gu’er shenghuo kunan yan; Xin shehui: gu’er shenghuo bi mitian” (Orphans’ lives were difficult old society, but much sweeter in new society), *Guizhou ribao*, May 30, 1963.

each day and were given two or three sets of new clothes and beds equipped with ample blankets and mosquito nets.

Wang Wenhui delineates a similar gap between the two eras in his retrospective essay “An Orphan Looks Back” 孤兒的回歸 for the daily newspaper, *Zhejiang ribao*.<sup>396</sup> Wang’s grandmother, his only living relative, left him at a Hangzhou orphanage in fall 1948, where he vividly remembers being hungry, cold, cursed and beaten on a regular basis, making him “long for the day he would become an adult and leave this terrible place.” But after the People’s Government took control of the facility in May 1949, Wang and his peers were given new sets clothes, opportunities to pursue vocational study, and, for the first time, “the warmth of human relations” typically found in a family. Though ostensibly less polemical than earlier writings, these accounts were aimed equally at underscoring the marked gap between the first-rate care for society’s most vulnerable at present and the abominable treatment they received in the past.<sup>397</sup>

A second form of writing to appear on the subject, the biographical narrative, centered on the individual transformation from homeless child in “old society” to an ordinary citizen-worker, a paradigmatic figure in the PRC. These tales offered a more personal glimpse into the changing fortunes of those who saw their younger years defined

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<sup>396</sup> Wang Wenhui, “Gu’er de huigui,” *Zhejiang ribao*, October 4, 1962.

<sup>397</sup> Additional examples of essays that adopted a comparative format include Huang Duantuo’s look back on his career as a worker at a Guangzhou child relief facility in both pre- and post-1949 China (See “Huigui ‘Ertong jiaoyangyuan’ de beican shenghuo,” *Nanfang ribao*, June 4, 1964); a profile of Li Yifang, who was orphaned in Republican times and subsequently assumed the responsibilities of guardianship for three orphans (See “Gu’er de qinren,” in *Fangda ribao*, January 10, 1974); and Zhang Xuwen’s recollection of his harrowing experiences at a private orphanage in Guangzhou in juxtaposition with the care and attention he and his fellows received at the institute after the People’s Government assumed control over it in October 1949 (See Yi pian gu’er xielei shi, mandong shu huo zhe ‘fu li’,” *Guangzhou ribao*, April 21, 1974). Some of these accounts, such as “Zai ‘Puji gu’er yuan’,” *Gongren ribao*, May 29, 1964 and “Renjian diyu ‘puyutang’,” *Jiefang ribao*, February 27, 1966, simply focused on the wretched conditions and abuse at child relief homes in Republican times.



primarily by the privations of the old order. One Wu Xiaowen recounted his personal saga in an essay, “Street urchin – master: an account of my life in new and old society,” that appeared in *Henan Daily*. Born in Hebei province in 1931, Wu endured a string of hardships in his youth, including the harsh treatment of a landlord, the loss of his mother and father in early childhood, begging on the street, and working amid squalid conditions as a child laborer under Japanese rule. The transition from “homeless child” to “master of one’s fate” 主人 (*zhuren*) occurred when, on the heels of the Communist victory, the People’s Government gave him a factory job with fair compensation, good benefits, and support for continued schooling. Happily married with two children, a job at a machine factory in Luoyang city, and a decent income, he describes his life experiences in old and new China as “far apart as heaven and earth” 天淵之別 (*tianyuan zhi bie*)<sup>398</sup>

This personal trajectory, from tragic childhood to normal family life, is featured prominently in Liu Jinlong’s autobiographical piece, “Liulang’er fanshen ji” (An account of a homeless child freeing himself) as well.<sup>399</sup> At a young age, Liu and his family fled their rural life in eastern Hebei province in search of better opportunities to make a living in the city of Beijing. After Liu’s father and mother passed away in 1945 and 1946 respectively, he became a street urchin, spending his days collecting coal cinder 煤渣 (*meizha*) and selling cigarettes and his evenings seeking out relatively warm places to sleep, such as heated areas near inn gates.<sup>400</sup> The youth’s fortunes improved only with

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<sup>398</sup> “Liulang’er – zhuren: jizai wo de xin jiu shehui shenghuo pianduan” *Henan Ribao*, July 26, 1963. Liu concluded his account with the statement, “If we don’t recall the bitterness of old society, it hard to know the happiness of today.”

<sup>399</sup> “Liulang’er fanshen ji,” *Hebei Ribao*, August 18, 1963.

<sup>400</sup> Other examples include the story of Wang Hui who made the transition from orphaned Tibetan serf to first-rate modern drama actor in the Shanghai Drama Troupe (“Cong liulang er dao yanyuan,” *Zhongguo*

the “peaceful liberation” of the capital city in 1948. Taken under the wing of a party cadre, Liu was given an introduction to revolutionary ideology, an understanding of class conflict, and the warmth of a family for the first time in his life. After joining the army, he went on to establish a respectable career in the city police force and a happy family of wife and four children. He concludes his piece by quoting advice he gave his sons and daughters: “By all means, one must not forget one’s roots!...Only by following the Party and Chairman Mao have I been able to survive down to today and ensure that each of you will not experience the life of a street urchin as I did!”

In addition to accentuating the gulf between the old society and new China, the published life stories of Wu, Liu and several other former street urchins typically exhibit two shared features of note. As suggested by the quote above, the writers tended to laud the (Chinese Communist) Party as a savior, bestowing upon them the guidance they needed to make the transition from lost, misguided youth to model socialist citizen. Furthermore, there was a tendency in these recollections to cast the Party as a big surrogate family that provided the support of a kin group otherwise lacking from these individuals’ lives. Not unlike developments during the war with Japan, the concept of family was reconfigured and expanded to encompass a larger community that existed outside blood relations. Second, in sharp contrast to legendary rags-to-riches tales that embody the spirit of capitalism in the West, the success of the protagonists of these stories lay in establishing a happy family life and taking an ordinary, if respectable, job

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*qingnian bao*, February 20, 1962); a feature on three former street children (Wang Pinzheng, Wang Xinming, and Liu Ange) each of whom, for the first time, found the warmth of family and an opportunity to develop their trade upon admittance to the China Welfare Society’s Children’s Drama Troupe in 1950 (“Cong liulang’er dao yishu gongzuo zhe,” *Wenhui bao*, December 5, 1962); and an account of Liu Daocheng’s personal journey from orphan and street urchin to locomotive engineer (“Cong liulang ertong dao gongchengshi,” *Gongren ribao*, March 24, 1962).

that enabled them to create value for society, reflecting the collectivist ideals of socialist China. Using public media to highlight the extensive support for vulnerable persons in Maoist China, in contrast to Republican times, was complemented by the state's efforts to develop the institutional machinery, the hardware of its new system, for translating plans for a socialist welfare system into reality.

### *Building a Social Welfare Apparatus in the PRC*

When the Communists came to power in October 1949, they faced the interconnected tasks of determining the government's future role in welfare work and deciding what to do with the existing array of relief facilities. Broadly speaking, the party-state developed a two-pronged approach to advancing public assistance efforts in the early 1950s, allowing previously established organizations which had won approval to continue operations while simultaneously establishing a hierarchy of official organs charged with setting welfare policy, investigating and supervising the activities of private charities, and providing direct aid. Reports from the early PRC underscore the eclectic composition and decentralized nature of relief services functioning at the time of the Communist takeover. Pre-1949 facilities that continued operations included some 163 Economic Relief Offices 救济院 (*jiujiyuan*) established by the GMD government, about 600 Qing-era benevolent halls 善堂 (*shantang*) distributed throughout 21 cities, and at least 450 charities sponsored by foreign religious associations.<sup>401</sup> Though slated for

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<sup>401</sup> Statistics for Economic Relief Offices and benevolent halls can be found in Meng and Wang, *Zhongguo minzheng shigao*, 299. These figures are based on a Western survey conducted in 1951. The figure for philanthropic organizations run by Western religious groups is taken from 1953 and thus must be quite a bit lower than the total existing in 1950, as numerous ones had been disestablished, converted, and merged over the course of the previous three years. This figure is cited in Huang and Tang, *Zhongguo shehui zhuyi de shehui fuli*, 41.

ultimate demise, these aid organizations played an essential role in the transition to a full-formed socialist welfare system.

CCP leaders placed welfare work under the authority of the newly established Ministry of the Interior 内务部 (*Neiwu bu*). Founded on November 7, 1949, the Ministry presided over an area of administration known as civil affairs 民政 (*Minzheng*), which encompassed a set of initiatives aimed at integrating all members of the populace into the sort of productive civic body the authorities envisaged. In addition to social relief and welfare, civil affairs work encompassed marriage and household registration, the resettling of migrants, the registration of social organizations, the demobilization and rehabilitation of former soldiers, and the establishment of a variety of worker retraining programs.<sup>402</sup> The central-level agency developed a distinctive yet evolving approach to social welfare in a series of conferences held in Beijing throughout the early and mid 1950s, formulating policies that were to be carried out by a bureaucratic hierarchy of civil affairs organs at the provincial, municipal, and county seat level.

Civil Affairs Bureaus 民政局 (*Minzheng ju*) were set up as the primary institutions for coordinating and organizing social welfare activity in each city. Their mandate included investigating and initiating reforms at a shrinking number of private charities throughout the early 1950s, serving as a crucial bridge between past arrangements and the future direction of welfare as envisioned by the central government in these years. The way in which the bureau's administrative divisions were organized speaks to its primary mission of ensuring that otherwise marginalized peoples were

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<sup>402</sup> Ibid., 40. The first Civil Affairs Work Conference, held in 1950, identified 17 areas of civil affairs including, in addition to those mentioned above, land administration, national registration, rehabilitating vagabonds, and assisting the families of deceased and injured soldiers.

properly incorporated into the urban social order. Four of the bureau's five sections, namely the Department for Supporting Disabled Servicemen; the Department of Relief, in charge of aiding the poor, the unemployed, and victims of natural disasters; the Department of Worker Retraining, which managed programs for former prostitutes and vagrants; and the Department for Supporting Disabled, Elderly, and Young Dependents 残老儿童教养处 (*can lao ertong jiaoyang chu*) were directly engaged in this task.<sup>403</sup> It seems clear that the agency's overall objective was to provide not just assistance but also a path for social and moral rehabilitation to the vulnerable and needy, who might otherwise turn to activities that undermine social stability in the city. Thus it is not surprising that civil affairs work was concentrated primarily in urban areas, where marginalized and disconnected persons tended to amass in greater density.<sup>404</sup>

Civil Affairs Bureaus were also in put in charge of superintending a new type of state-run welfare facilities. In the broadest sense, two lines of relief institutes appeared in Chinese cities throughout the 1950s, each corresponding to a particular phase of the civil affairs bureaucracy's shifting approach toward welfare. Embracing a production-oriented welfare approach from roughly 1950 to 1954, leaders in civil affairs branches first authorized the organization of the aforementioned production reformatories, or 生产教养

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<sup>403</sup> The exception was the Bureau's Department of Social Affairs (社会处), which was responsible for administering marriage registration, investigating political rights organizations, managing and reforming funeral services, and registering mass organizations. The tasks of the bureau's administrative divisions are described in SMA B-168-1-427, "Shanghai shi minzheng ju zuzhi jigou bianzhi biao," April 1955.

<sup>404</sup> The PRC authorities developed a separate national welfare program, known as the "Five Guarantees System," for the residents of rural areas. The system of five guarantees (food, housing, education, medical care, and burial), in comparison to urban-based civil affairs programs, was managed and funded by the rural communities. See Huang and Tang, *Zhongguo shehui zhuyi*, 39. Accordingly, the civil affairs bureaucracy extended down to the county seat level, but no farther.

院 (*shengchan jiaoyangyuan*), in Chinese urban centers.<sup>405</sup> But the work-training approach to assistance found in these facilities seemed out of sync with the needs of elderly, disabled and young dependents, suited instead only to able-bodied beggars, vagrants and disaster victims. Thus by the mid 1950s, civil affairs authorities began placing greater emphasis on addressing the different needs of various disenfranchised groups, prompting a move toward a care-centered model with a secondary emphasis on productive training. In conjunction with this change, officials established a new line of public assistance facilities known as welfare institutes 福利院 (*fuli yuan*) in the cities. In contrast to the eclectic composition of production reformatories, the new set of facilities was organized along specialized lines to care for specific target groups, such as orphanages, or Children's Welfare Institutes, for young dependents. These facilities have continued to function as the backbone of the PRC welfare system down to the present.

A second official apparatus crucial to facilitating the transition from private charity to centrally-managed public assistance in the early PRC was the People's Welfare League of China 中国人民救济总会 (*Zhongguo renmin jiuji zonghui*). The league emerged from the proceedings of the National People's Welfare Congress, convened in Beijing in April 1950.<sup>406</sup> It was made up largely of prominent philanthropists who had broken with the GMD regime, remained on the mainland, and were willing to denounce the imperialist and feudal practices of the past. They possessed valuable assets, such as

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<sup>405</sup> A survey conducted in 1954 found that there were 666 production reformatories operating at the time. See "Yinian lai de chengshi jiuji," *Neiwubu tongxun*, 19.

<sup>406</sup> Dillon, "New Democracy and the Demise of Private Charity," 82-85. Dillon notes that the original incarnation of the People's League, the Chinese Liberated Areas Relief Commission 中国解放区救济总会, was founded at the end of the War of Resistance to press the United Nations Relief and Reconstruction Administration to distribute funds to Communist controlled territory.

experience in managing charities and fundraising skills, that would help sustain relief efforts in the transitional period of the early 1950s. Given their social influence and range of contacts, the league's members, along with their local representatives, also provided authorities with a foothold in the volunteer relief sector for orchestrating changes at a point in time before the state was ready to take over the entire enterprise.

The April 1950 Welfare Congress also mandated the formation of league branches 分会 (*fenhui*) in cities throughout China. Like the league's central body in Beijing, its local chapters were filled with prominent Republican-era philanthropists who had demonstrated their loyalty to the new order.<sup>407</sup> As Nara Dillon shows in her study of early PRC Shanghai, the state's recruitment of the urban elite, despite their potentially problematic class backgrounds, spoke to the open and inclusive spirit of the New Democracy movement that spread through urban China in the early 1950s.<sup>408</sup> League branches were charged with the tasks of centralizing private fundraising within the city, exerting influence over planning and services at charitable organizations, and advancing anti-imperialist thought among their staff and wards. More specifically, branches regularly dispatched work teams to the city's remaining charitable sites to investigate improper practices, conduct ideological training and exercises, and effect personnel changes as they saw fit. Well before the state's complete takeover of welfare work in the mid 1950s, however, growing antagonism between civil affairs bureaucrats and former

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<sup>407</sup> Zhao Puchu, a well-known relief organizer and founder of Boys Town orphanage (see chapter 2 above), was named head of the Shanghai League Branch. Zhao had established links with the Shanghai Communist underground while running Boys Town during the war.

<sup>408</sup> For more on the theoretical basis of the New Democracy movement, see Mao, "On New Democracy," 342. For more on how the movement unfolded in a localized context, see Dillon, "New Democracy and the Demise of Private Charity," 80-102.

philanthropists in conjunction with a decline in official support for the New Democracy coalition left the People's League disempowered and eventually redundant.<sup>409</sup>

Additionally, semiformal organizations played a supportive role in the effort to institutionalize welfare work in urban centers in the early PRC. Sanctioned by the party, these associations could be counted on to help advance civil affairs work at the local level. The All-China Women's Federation (hereafter Women's Federation), a mass organization founded in March 1949, was dedicated to the cause of gender equality and to improving conditions for women and children, with a particular emphasis on maternity infant hygiene 妇婴卫生 (*fu-ying weisheng*).<sup>410</sup> Driven by this concern, city chapters of the Women's Federation conducted formal investigations of conditions at privately-run foundling homes and made recommendations for improving health care therein. Alongside urban neighborhood committees 居民委员会 (*jumin weiyuanhui*), another type of semiformal association mandated by the Party, Women's Federation chapters participated in social campaigns to fight infant abandonment, as described below. These organizations' involvement in the enterprise of social assistance, much like that of the People's Welfare League, however, would decline precipitously by the middle of the decade, as the inclusive spirit of the New Democracy movement was undercut by a new set of policies on the management of social services.

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<sup>409</sup> Dillon observes that members of the Shanghai branch came under severe attack for their class backgrounds during the Three-Anti Campaigns of 1952. In this case, the branch was not formally dissolved, but its credibility was destroyed and all of its operations were taken over by the Civil Affairs Bureau. See *Ibid.*, 96.

<sup>410</sup> This organization was originally named the All-China Democratic Women's Federation. Symptomatic of the flagging support for "New Democracy," the term "democratic" was dropped from its name in 1957. Kay Ann Johnson (*Women, the Family and Peasant Revolution in China*, 140-141) and Judith Stacey (*Patriarchy and Socialist Revolution in China*, 115) claim that this excision underscored the Party's growing grip on the federation and a reversal of its more open policy during the height of the New Democracy movement, trends which, according to Stacey, were evident as early as 1953.



### **Early Interventions: Consolidating Child Relief Work, 1950-1955**

Throughout the first half decade of CCP rule, the state drew on both official and semiformal organizations to extend its control over the volunteer sector of child relief. This gradualist approach afforded the authorities opportunities to become familiar with the management of welfare facilities and to introduce targeted reforms as they saw fit, while continuing to rely on the work of experienced local philanthropists and private actors for running day-to-day operations. Rather than set up its own facilities, the government channeled its energies toward investigating conditions for vulnerable children on an institution by institution basis as well as within each city as a whole. Based on the results of these investigations, charities for the young were either dissolved, converted into other types of facilities, or merged into organizations the state deemed exemplary and thus worth preserving, at least provisionally. There is little evidence to suggest that the Civil Affairs bureaucracy planned this out in advance, but the process was crucial in placing the state in a favorable position for a smooth take-over of the few facilities that remained operational at the time the switch to full socialism was announced. Historically, the early 1950s marked an end, albeit temporary, to an enduring pattern of collaboration between local authorities and volunteer actors in child relief work that reached back to the early Qing.

#### *Attacking Infant Abandonment*

The new rulers, characterizing the practice of abandonment as a social problem left behind by “old society,” moved quickly to legislate against it. The section on “Relations Between Parents and Children” in the newly promulgated 1950 Marriage Law proclaimed that “neither the parents nor the children should maltreat or desert one

another” and “infanticide by drowning and similar criminal acts are strictly prohibited.”<sup>411</sup> While these declarations appeared to be the latest example in a string of government edicts prohibiting abandonment and infanticide that dated back to the Song dynasty, the new legislation would also serve as the basis and inspiration for a broad social campaign aimed at rooting out the perennial problem. Citing the aforementioned passage from the Marriage Law, the People’s Welfare League officially identified the task of eliminating infant abandonment as a primary component of child welfare work at its national congress in November 1951.<sup>412</sup>

Official investigations carried out for the purpose of assessing the nature of the practice in the early 1950s reveal a continuation of old patterns while also yielding new interpretations of the problem based on the ideological currents of the time. Surveys found that the decision to desert one’s baby was often driven by a combination of economic difficulties and the presence of serious health issues or deformities. Pre-existing weaknesses and disabilities were aggravated by the abandonee’s exposure to the elements, creating a situation in which up to 80% of foundlings entering institutional care were found to be ill and in need of immediate medical attention.<sup>413</sup> Moreover, a government-led inspection of the three largest private foundling hospices in Shanghai, conducted over a three-month period in 1951, revealed that 60% of their wards did not survive their first year of life at the institution.<sup>414</sup> But the authorities insisted that the

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<sup>411</sup> An English translation of the 1950 Marriage Law may be found in Johnson, *Women, The Family and Peasant Revolution in China*, 236-239.

<sup>412</sup> SMA B1-2-1512, May 14, 1954, “Shanghai shi fangzhi qiying gongzuo chubu fang’an ji jihua.”

<sup>413</sup> Ibid., SMA B1-2-1512, May 14, 1954.

<sup>414</sup> SMA C31-2-94, 1951, “Guanyu jieban diguo zhuyi de yuyingtang baogao.”

persistence of infant abandonment in new China could be attributed not merely to economic difficulties and serious health problems, but also to the vestiges of “incorrect thought” from old society. They opined that the remnants of capitalist class thought festered into a brute selfishness that conditioned new fathers and mothers to shirk their parental responsibilities without moral misgiving. Deeply-engrained feudal attitudes, another pernicious remnant of the past vilified by Communists, sustained a broad cultural preference for sons and a devaluation of daughters. This was borne out in the persistence of highly skewed sex ratios among infants deserted by their parents, with female babies making up more than 80% of the total entering facilities in greater Shanghai area during the first half of 1952.<sup>415</sup>

These assessments uncovered other enduring features of infant abandonment in the early PRC, helping official and semiofficial organizations shape their approaches to combating the practice. In the cities, parents who resorted to this act commonly left their offspring in crowded public spaces such as municipal parks, infant changing rooms in railway stations, and steamship wharfs, presumably to allow for the child’s rescue in short order.<sup>416</sup> Some parents, perhaps even more intent on minimizing the duration of the child’s vulnerability to hunger and inhospitable conditions, strategically placed their infants near the front gates of foundling homes or city hospitals.<sup>417</sup> Just like in Qing and Republican times, very few young victims were older than one *sui* old at the time of

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<sup>415</sup> See SMA C31-2-155, 1952, “Shanghai shi qiyong qingkuang tongji biao shuoming.” The statistics for this six-month period, based on activity in Shanghai’s 20 urban districts and 7 of its 10 suburban districts, were supplied by the Public Safety Division of the municipal Public Security Bureau (*gong’an ju*).

<sup>416</sup> “Yi ge dairen zuo fumu de jigou,” *Wenhui bao*, March 26, 1957.

<sup>417</sup> SMA C31-2-155, 1952, “Shanghai shi qiyong qingkuang tongji biao shuoming.”

abandonment, with the overwhelming majority less than six months old.<sup>418</sup> In short, the decision to cease caring for one's child was typically made before developing emotional ties might deter a parent from carrying out the act. Those put in charge of curbing the practice in the early 1950s learned that they must focus their efforts on new parents within a crucially narrow window of time if they stood any chance of making gains.

The People's Welfare League's official declaration on fighting abandonment in fall 1951 sparked a wave of local activism across urban China. When the Shanghai City Consultative Congress met in 1952 to discuss the problem, they resolved to follow the example of several cities such as Hangzhou, Fuzhou, Nanjing, and Changzhou, which had already launched target programs to root out the tenacious practice to good effect.<sup>419</sup> Municipal branches of the Welfare League and the Women's Federation, working in conjunction with urban neighborhood committees, were enlisted as the foot soldiers in this campaign, taking their instructions from the district Civil Affairs Department. The Civil Affairs authorities' emergent policy prescriptions were oriented toward ensuring that infants born into unstable circumstances would not be cast aside by desperate guardians or, in cases in which abandonment has already occurred, could be reclaimed by them. The preventative tack of trying to keep the child with her natal family had been touted and pursued intermittently by philanthropists and concerned officials from the dawn of organized child relief in the Southern Song (1127-1279) through the Republican period, the most notable and enduring manifestation being the proliferation of "infant preservation societies" (保婴儿, see Chapter 1) in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Given its extensive

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<sup>418</sup> Ibid., SMA C31-2-155, 1952.

<sup>419</sup> SMA B1-2-1512, May 14, 1954, "Shanghai shi fangzhi qiying gongzuo chubu fang'an ji jihua."

reach and partnerships with mass organizations, however, the new government was in a position to intervene at the local level in ways scarcely possible in earlier times.

The anti-abandonment programs that took shape in the early 1950s were built around efforts to raise public awareness of the moral and legal transgressions of such an act, to collect demographic data on households in urban neighborhoods, and to direct aid to couples with newborns who faced acute economic challenges. Insisting that improper thought factored into decisions to cast aside one's own flesh and blood, municipal authorities proclaimed that "propaganda and education were indispensable parts of our arsenal for solving the problem."<sup>420</sup> Concerned with reports indicating that numbers of foundlings had not declined locally since 1949, Shanghai state agencies convened a meeting in September 1953 expressly to discuss the current situation of abandonment and to explore methods other city governments had used effectively to curtail the phenomenon in their jurisdictions.<sup>421</sup> Consequently, the attending organizations jointly authorized the formation of a municipal-level "Infant Abandonment Prevention Work Committee" 防止弃婴工作委员会 and an affiliated infant abandonment prevention small group in each urban district. The committee's members were drawn from personnel at the bureaus of civil affairs, public security, and public health as well as the local branches of the Women's Federation and the Welfare League. The meeting also determined that neighborhood committees would be called upon to play a leading role in this work at the sub-district level, that is, within small residential communities.

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<sup>420</sup> Ibid., SMA B1-2-1512, May 14, 1954.

<sup>421</sup> Ibid., SMA B1-2-1512, May 14, 1954.

But most significant, the attendees formulated a multi-pronged plan of attack that reflected the particular functions and assets of each participating organization. Though the scheme assigned a specific set of tasks to members from each organization in the coalition, these can be consolidated under four main areas. First, there was an effort to register pregnant women and infants, including those who dead at birth. Such records could help authorities detect cases of abandonment and potentially help reunite foundlings with birth parents. Second, there was a drive to propagandize the immorality and illegality of the practice at neighborhood meetings attended by household heads and in public gathering spaces such as playgrounds and parks.<sup>422</sup> A third dimension of this work was centered on improving health outcomes for newborns. Pregnant women were given free prenatal checkups to monitor potential concerns and postnatal counsel to improve their care of their young. Additionally, personnel were assigned to provide midwives with guidance so as to prevent the occurrence of complications such as deformities during the birthing process.<sup>423</sup> Finally, the infant abandonment prevention small groups dispensed direct aid to infants from households in particular need.<sup>424</sup>

Whether because of it was due to the successful implementation of this program, other factors such as increased socioeconomic stability in the early PRC, or a combination of the two, published statistics suggest that there was a precipitous decline in

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<sup>422</sup> Illustrating the collaborative spirit of this endeavor, neighborhood committees were responsible for convening the meetings of household heads at which a representative of the Women's Federation propagandized against the practice of abandonment and officers from police substations helped carry out registration.

<sup>423</sup> See chapter six, "Rural Midwifery Reform during Socialist Construction and the Great Leap Forward" in Ahn Byungil's dissertation, *Modernization, Revolution, and Midwifery in Twentieth-century China*.

<sup>424</sup> The specific tasks that fall into these four categories are discussed in greater detail in section IV of SMA B1-2-1512, May 14, 1954, "Shanghai shi fangzhi qiying gongzuo chubu fang'an ji jihua."

rates of abandonment in the following years. Figures supplied by successive feature pieces on the Shanghai's primary foundling home 上海育儿院, appearing in July 1956 and March 1957, show that annual totals of newly-admitted waifs declined by nearly 25% from 1954 to 1955 and by an additional 45% from 1955 to 1956.<sup>425</sup> Reflecting on these reductions, officials and staff opined optimistically that the superiority of socialism was improving people's lives to such an extent that it had undermined the longstanding practice, bringing about a diminution that would allow agencies to supplant fulltime care with supplementary arrangements. A representative on the Shanghai Consultative Congress surnamed Xie remarked that "as the numbers of abandoned infants decrease in the future this foundling home [Shanghai's single state-run orphanage, discussed below] can be converted into a day care center," echoing a point made by Director Liu of the institution in question several months earlier.<sup>426</sup> This buoyancy was dampened, however, with the dramatic spikes in abandonment brought about by the insufficiencies of the Great Leap years, particularly 1958 to 1960.<sup>427</sup> Like their counterparts from late imperial and Republican times, those engaged in child welfare were forced to shelve their hopes of

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<sup>425</sup> Appearing in Liberation Daily (*Jiefang ribao*) on July 4, 1956, the article "Xingfu de gu'er" noted annual totals of 1412 and 1018 new foundlings for 1954 and 1955 respectively. Published 8 months later in the paper *Wenhui bao*, a feature piece on the Shanghai orphanage, "Yige dairen zuo fumu de jiguan" stated that this figure had declined to 612 for 1956.

<sup>426</sup> Representative Xie's comments can be found in B168-1-518 "Guanyu benshi renmin daibiao ji zhengxie weiyuan guancha...di yi yueryuan..." For Director Liu's shared views on the move toward a day care model, see "Xingfu de gu'er," *Jiefang ribao*, July 4, 1956.

<sup>427</sup> While surges in abandoned infants were not widely reported in media for mass consumption, archival and edited sources such as new gazetteers show dramatic increases in the late 1950s. For example, the Jiangsu Provincial Gazetteer notes that a spike in 1958, a slight decline in 1959, and then a mind-boggling five-fold increase from 1959 (3796) to 1960 (19,679). Municipal gazetteers for cities such as Beijing and Nanjing, to take two other examples, also note sharp increases in the numbers of foundlings collected in 1960. See *Jiangsu sheng zhi*, chapter 9 (*cishan yu fuli*): 611; *Beijing zhi (Minzheng zhi)*, 7 no. 14: 301; and *Nanjing minzheng zhi*: 333-334.

moving toward supplementary models and to accept institutional care as a necessary and fundamental component of the project.

*Reshaping the Private Sector of Child Relief*

Though the state did not seek to exert immediate control over philanthropic institutes for the young in the early 1950s, it was intent on altering the atmosphere and care giving techniques within them to reflect its transformative vision. Even the volunteer organizations deemed valuable enough to escape dissolution, conversion, or merging into others were suspected of harboring incorrect attitudes and of following outdated methods. The authorities assumed that many of the principals involved in organizing and running private charities in “old society” subscribed to a political and religious worldview at odds with the Communist Party and the principles of socialism. During the first half of the 1950s, the state’s direct participation in social welfare was limited primarily to programs aimed at settling and reforming potentially disruptive segments of the vulnerable population. If authorities were neither prepared nor willing to manage relief for other groups of dependents at this time, they wanted to ensure that the environment and standards of care giving were at least in alignment with their vision of how socialist society ought to be organized. Historically, these efforts marked a notable departure from a general immunity the realm of child welfare enjoyed from the forces of political and ideological activism down to the War to Resist Japan.

With institutional roots firmly planted in “old society” and, in many cases, linkages to foreign organizations, private charities for the young were, despite their seeming innocuousness, regarded by officials with suspicion. Thus, those in charge of relief work launched personnel inspections to weed out objectionable actors and attitudes,



thereby purifying the atmosphere at the dwindling number of children's institutions. The local arms of the Civil Affairs bureaucracy and the People's Welfare League dispatched work teams to identify administrators and staffers with questionable backgrounds, including those with a history of political problems and those with a record of "complex social relations," namely direct connections to the GMD regime or foreign religious organizations.<sup>428</sup> Work teams had the power to remove officers and caregivers with particularly suspect political records from their posts, but they were also charged with holding study sessions to advance "anti-feudal" and "anti-imperialist" thought among remaining staff.<sup>429</sup>

Cadres from Civil Affairs units and the Welfare League also organized struggle session meetings at children's institutes to alter the ideological tenor within. Struggle sessions, purposefully confrontational encounters between a victim and his or her oppressor, had become a standard feature of the land reform movement and other mass campaigns by the early 1950s, affording the aggrieved a public hearing and a psychological triumph over their former subjugators. The struggle session was adapted to charitable associations by pitting dependents, the victims, against bullying administrators and staff in an open-air setting for all wards and staff to witness firsthand. These encounters could produce a broad assortment of grievances among those selected to participate, ranging from accusations of physical abuse to claims that staff had verbally

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<sup>428</sup> SMA B168-1-430, 1955, "Shaoniancun bianzhi qingkuang diaocha." The term "political problem" (*zhengzhi wenti*) is not defined clearly in the archival records but most likely implies a 'bad class background' whereas the phrase "complex social relations" (*fuza renji guanxi*) insinuates former connections to individuals in the GMD government or foreign religious or aid organizations.

<sup>429</sup> SMA B168-1, September 7, 1958, "Wei qingshi lianxu gonghui jisuan wenti."

attacked the Communist Party and its programs.<sup>430</sup> While these sessions were designed in part to empower those who had suffered under the old system, making them aware of their elevated social status in “new China,” they were more historically significant for publicly undermining the legitimacy of the leadership in the volunteer sector. Toward that end, these activities marked another crucial step toward fracturing the autonomy of privately-established child relief organizations, making it conducive for a state takeover when the time was right.

The Chinese government also extended its influence in the arena of child welfare by instituting a “privately run, publicly assisted” (私办公助) model in charities which survived the early rounds of closings and consolidation. At a national congress in November 1952, the People’s Welfare League cited the Shanghai-based Longhua Children’s Home for its success in adopting this model, advocating its replication in children’s relief institutes across the nation as it would “encourage private persons to engage in welfare work.”<sup>431</sup> Further examination of this formula, however, suggests that enhanced state control was arguably the main driving force behind the Welfare League’s embrace of it. To be sure, these arrangements often left the Board of Directors of participating organizations intact, creating an impression of continued institutional autonomy in the volunteer sector.<sup>432</sup> But the government encroached upon the independence of these organizations in two key areas: personnel and budget. First, the

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<sup>430</sup> For a first-hand account of a struggle meeting at a child relief organization, see “Fandui diguo zhuyi fenzi nuedai ying’er he canfei lao ren – ben shi Xinpuyutang juxing kongsu dahui,” *Wenhui bao*, July 12, 1953 and “Diguo zhuyi fenzi langdu he cailang jiyao nue sha ying’er...” *Wenhui bao*, July 13, 1953.

<sup>431</sup> “Guanyu chengshi jiuji fuli gongzuo de baogao” in *Neiwubu tongxun* (January 1953):16-20.

<sup>432</sup> Indeed, a government report noted that “though they will be private in name, in fact in terms of their activities, personnel and finances, we have begun to control them.” See SMA B168-1-84, September 7, 1959, “Shanghai shi Minzhengju dangzu guanyu jieban de fuli tuanti jigou.”

“privately run publicly assisted” model mandated that all hiring and firing of staff was subject to the approval of state agents. Second, the government became the primary source of funding for facilities that followed this template.<sup>433</sup> Obtaining control over personnel decisions and the purse strings enabled the state to dictate policy changes at institutions as it saw fit, and to eliminate any elements might thwart its plans.

*Local Transformation: The Case of Shanghai*

By late Republican times, Shanghai had emerged as a leading center of child relief work in the country. The city’s location in a region rich in philanthropic tradition, the dramatic rise of its population since the Opium War (1839-42) -- including large contingents of outsiders seeking fortune, foreign missionaries, and energetic social and education reformers -- and a glaring gap between wealthy residents and a desperate and potentially dangerous underclass all gave rise to a vigorous movement to aid defenseless persons, especially dependent children. Untouched by the GMD’s initiatives in public assistance during the war (1937-1945), Shanghai’s child relief programs remained largely in the hands of private actors down to 1949. A survey conducted by the Women’s Federation that year found that Shanghai was host to 36 children’s relief institutes, a figure far larger than in most Chinese cities, and that all but one were private organizations.<sup>434</sup> Among the total, four were hospices for abandoned infants and thirty-two were facilities designed to support and rear school-age children: orphans, kids born into poor families, young refugees, child beggars and juvenile delinquents. Beyond

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<sup>433</sup> State control in these two areas is outlined in the following archival records: Ibid., SMA B168-1-84 and SMA B168-1-959, February 28, 1956, “Guanyu jieban de shi yi ge ertong canlao danwei zhengdun gongzuo jihua.”

<sup>434</sup> SMA C31-20-1, November 1949, “Shanghai ertong jiaoyang jigou diaochabiao.” Beijing and Changchun, to take two examples, had a total of 20 and 11 child relief homes respectively on the eve of the 1949 revolution. See *Beijing shi zhi*, vol. 7, p. 294-305 and *Changchun shi zhi - Minzheng zhi*, 256.

requiring each organization to register and offering subsidies to qualifying institutions, the local GMD authorities showed little interest in interfering in their internal affairs and methods of care giving. A closer look at developments in early 1950s Shanghai dramatically illustrates how the city's once vibrant, sprawling, and loosely connected private sector of child relief was gradually reshaped into a highly-concentrated local installation of the government's nascent welfare apparatus.

From 1950 to 1955, Shanghai authorities launched a series of campaigns to dissolve, convert, or merge most of the prerevolutionary children's homes. After seizing and eventually dissolving the sole state-run facility for children, the municipal government instructed the Shanghai Welfare League to investigate and reorganize operations, when necessary, at the urban center's 31 private charities for school-age children in fall 1950.<sup>435</sup> Those which the League found to be successful enterprises were allocated regularly-scheduled subsidies going forward; underperforming institutions were disbanded or amalgamated into ones deemed effective. Complying with a central directive issued in June 1951, the Shanghai Welfare League undertook the consolidation of 16 foreign-supported shelters for older children which had survived the first round of reorganization: three were dissolved; four were refashioned into schools; and eight were merged into one Yixin Children's Home in the old Chinese section of the city.<sup>436</sup> The Yixin facility would continue to function down to 1953, when it was incorporated into what became the last surviving relief home for school-age children in the city, Boys

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<sup>435</sup> Fan Jingsi, ed. 2000, *Shanghai Minzheng zhi*, p. 162. The single government-managed institution, Shanghai Children's Receiving Home 上海市兒童教養院 (*Shanghai shi ertong jiaoyang yuan*) was set up by the municipal government in November 1945 to shelter and rehabilitate street children. The CCP took control of it in 1949, but transferred the bulk of its inmates to Sibenhe farm in Jiangsu to engage in agricultural labor. The facility ceased operations in 1952.

<sup>436</sup> *Ibid.*, 228.

Town 少年村 (*Shaonian cun*). Among the municipality's four hospices for abandoned infants, Renshan Foundling Home 仁善育嬰堂 (*Renshan yuyingtang*) was closed down in June 1951 and Renji Crèche 仁济育嬰堂 (*Renji yuyingtang*) was merged into St. Joseph's Hospice in February 1954.<sup>437</sup>

In sum, only three of the city's original thirty-six institutions for dependent children remained in tact and operational by early 1954. These consisted of two shelters for deserted infants, Hospice St. Joseph and Convent Sainte-Marie, and one care giving facility for older homeless children and juvenile delinquents, Boys Town. They would continue to serve the city, operating in the liminal 'public-assisted private-run' mode, for the following two years, when they were fully taken over by local authorities and rebranded as state welfare agencies. A survey of developments at these three organizations during the first half of the 1950s brings into focus the government's evolving agenda to regulate and standardize welfare programs for the young during the height of New Democracy and the transition to full-fledged socialism.

Hospice St. Joseph, or 新普育堂 (*Xinpuyu tang*), was organized by the Chinese Catholic, industrialist, and gentry man Lu Bohong in 1912 to aid the poor, the sick, and the unprotected.<sup>438</sup> Situated on a 78-*mu* (12.5-acre) campus in the Lujiabang neighborhood of the old Chinese section of Shanghai (南市), the shelter encompassed five care giving divisions: a foundling section, poor children's home, disabled persons

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<sup>437</sup> *Ibid.*, 231.

<sup>438</sup> The English rendering of this shelter's name is provided in the Chinese-language compendium, *Shanghai shi shehui fuli jiguan yaolan* (1948):1-23.

ward, an old-age home, and an infirmary.<sup>439</sup> Its charitable activities were underwritten by a combination of donations solicited from the general public, membership fees and grants issued by the Catholic Church. With a capacity to house over 1100 dependents and free medical services for the destitute, St. Joseph became one of the largest charitable organizations in the city, providing relief to more than 110,000 disadvantaged persons, ranging from neonates to octogenarians, from its inception down to 1946.<sup>440</sup> The charity's relatively large set of onsite accommodations, broad range of services and programs, and extensive experience in furnishing aid to large groups of needy persons set it apart from other philanthropic organizations in the bustling port.

In the early years of the PRC, Shanghai civil affairs officers concluded that while Hospice St. Joseph was worthy of keeping intact and functional, it had nevertheless been host to certain personnel and practices that impeded the running of socialist welfare programs as they saw fit. Having already begun to provide funding for the organization's operations, the Shanghai Welfare League dispatched a work team in spring 1952 to investigate operations and implement improved care giving methods. In January 1953, authorities restructured the organization along the lines of a "privately run publicly assisted" model and, most significantly, refashioned it into a facility devoted exclusively to caring for abandoned infants, transferring the majority of elderly, disabled, and sick inmates to other homes. From that point onward, only infants two *sui* or under of unknown parentage were accepted.<sup>441</sup> This decision both reflected a shift in official

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<sup>439</sup> Fan Jingsi, ed. 2000, *Shanghai Minzheng zhi*, 225.

<sup>440</sup> *Ibid.*, 225; SMA B168-1-430, 1955, "Xinputang bianzhi qingkuang diaocha."

<sup>441</sup> SMA B168-1-430, 1955, "Xinputang bianzhi qingkuang diaocha."

thinking toward the necessity of separating vulnerable groups in order to provide more effective, specialized care and signaled that Hospice St. Joseph would henceforth be designated one of the few local bases for saving and succoring defenseless foundlings.

The Civil Affairs Bureau's lingering concerns over potentially or autonomous tendencies within the hospice's administration came to a head in summer 1953. Modeled on the struggle session format employed in the Three- and Five-Anti campaigns of the 1951 and 1952, officials staged a so-called "denunciation rally" 控诉大会 (*kong-su dahui*) in the complex's courtyard on July 13. With the entire hospice's resident body and several neighborhood committees in attendance, representative victims presented an array of stinging accusations in front of administrators and staff. Fatherless Chen Lingdi inveighed against one of her nannies for abusing her brother to the point that he fled the facility and for cruelly rejecting her birth mother's request to reclaim her.<sup>442</sup> Other wards complained that the home, an agent of imperialism, prepared food not suitable for humans and placed them in dilapidated living quarters. Charges were also levied against orphanage staff for verbally assailing the CCP, causing children to lose confidence in their race, and dampening their enthusiasm over the consequences of "liberation" (解放). At the conclusion of these sessions, which included readings from among 65 "denunciation letters" sent in by the aggrieved, participants formally called on the Shanghai municipal government to purge the home's imperialists and their "running dogs" to avenge the mistreatment of young and elderly dependents over the years?<sup>443</sup>

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<sup>442</sup> "Ben shi Xinpuyu tang juxing kong-su dahui," *Wenhui bao*, July 12, 1953.

<sup>443</sup> *Ibid.*, July 12, 1953. The term "running dog" (*zou gou*), or lackey, here likely refers to Chinese workers who both collaborated with and embraced the worldview of foreign staff and administrators.

The rounds of investigating operations, introducing reforms, and modifying personnel yielded both subjective gains and concrete improvements at Hospice St. Joseph. Authorities pointed out that the dispatch of work teams in 1952 and the June rally fostered a more “humane atmosphere” and instilled in the hospice staff a patriotic spirit, motivating them to do their best to improve care giving. In the new environment, a once strong adherence to religious beliefs among staff and children dissipated, as seen in the plummeting numbers of those who continued to attend morning convocation at the home.<sup>444</sup> Taught to eschew religion and learn from “advanced Soviet” methods and techniques, nannies started supplementing any shortages of human milk with dairy milk, leading to healthy weight gain and a sharp curtailment of digestive-related ailments in infants under their care.<sup>445</sup> Additionally, care givers now followed strict time tables for changing infant’s clothes and diapers, took extra care to thoroughly disinfect cloth diapers between uses, resulting in the elimination of rashes, and sterilized their rooms to kill germs and prevent the transmission of communicable diseases.<sup>446</sup> Arguably the most crucial indicator of reform-based success was a steady decline in infant mortality rates at the facility during this period, falling annually from 24.2% (1951) to 15.1% (1952) to 10.5% (1953), and finally to a low of 4.9% (1954).<sup>447</sup>

Though not operating on the same scale as Hospice St. Joseph, Convent Sainte-Marie 圣母院育婴堂 (*Shengmuyuan yuyingtang*) was set up similarly as a multi-

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<sup>444</sup> SMA B168-1-430, “Xinputang bianzhi qingkuang diaocha,” 1955. This investigation found that the number of Catholic disciples attending morning convocation at St. Joseph declined from a peak of 300 in the past to 10 in 1955.

<sup>445</sup> “Xin puyutang xin qixiang,” *Wenhui bao*, October 17, 1953.

<sup>446</sup> *Ibid.*, October 17, 1953.

<sup>447</sup> SMA B168-1-430, 1955, “Xinputang bianzhi qingkuang diaocha.”



functional charity to aid a variety of needy and disadvantaged groups. Founded by French Catholic missionaries in 1854, Sainte-Marie was based in Shanghai's western Xujiahui district and included separate sections for abandoned babies, small children, deaf and mute persons, and the elderly and disabled.<sup>448</sup> The shelter took in both male and female foundlings, but transferred unclaimed boys to an all-male institution, Tushanwan Orphanage, when they turned 6 *sui*. Chinese and French nuns were responsible for teaching adolescent female wards the arts of homemaking (e.g. purchasing vegetables, cooking, washing clothes) and domestic sideline production such as bamboo and rattan work, net-weaving, animal husbandry, and shoe making. The nuns were also charged with the task of locating suitable (i.e. Catholic, orphaned) marriage partners for the girls when they came of age. One of the longest-running charities for the young in Shanghai, Sainte-Marie had sheltered more than 17,000 infants and young children by 1935.

After the 1949 revolution, Convent Sainte-Marie underwent a process of reorganization similar to that of Hospice St. Joseph. Partnering with the local branch of the Welfare League, the Shanghai Women's Federation delegated a group of its officers in June 1951 to investigate conditions at the shelter and propose suggestions for reform. A three-week survey found that infants were living in cramped (five or six per bed), poorly ventilated quarters and given insufficient nutrition, commonly suffered from skin infections because of unhygienic practices, and died prematurely in large numbers.<sup>449</sup> Based on their findings, the Welfare League sent a team of one physician, two nurses,

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<sup>448</sup> SMA C31-2-94, 1951, "Guanyu jieban diguo zhuyi de yuyingtang baogao."

<sup>449</sup> SMA C31-2-94, 1951: "Guanyu jieban diguo zhuyi de yuyingtang baogao." The Women's Federation learned of large numbers of infant corpses that were deposited by orphanage staff in a nearby location where through interviews with those who resided near the shelter.

and one care giver supervisor to the home to improve medical treatment and everyday care, leading to a reported drop in mortality rates.<sup>450</sup> The Women's Federation also found the treatment of older girls at the home objectionable on two fronts. First, their report noted that when girls turned 12 or 13 *sui*, they were expected to work excessively long hours and subjected to cruel punishments for slight mistakes, much like the exploited proletariat. Second, the practice by which nuns chose spouses for their charges in exchange for gifts of jade was a gross violation of the principle of free choice written into the new marriage law, and often led to domestic abuse. The Women's Federation report did note, however, that recent efforts to infuse education with patriotic principles have enabled children to begin "identifying with their motherland and Mao Zedong," a positive step toward liberating them from the bleak and isolated world of the institute.<sup>451</sup>

Civil Affairs officers organized a mass meeting at Convent Sainte-Marie not unlike the "denunciation rally" held at Hospice St. Joseph. On July 13, 1953, the same day as the St. Joseph assembly, a "consolation group" 慰问团 (*weiwen tuan*) of thirty-four representatives from Wuxi city and county proceeded to Sainte-Marie.<sup>452</sup> After touring the premises and expressing condolences to "orphans who luckily survived" and commemorating the lives of the less fortunate who had died prematurely from abuse and neglect, the group engaged resident orphans, onsite laborers, and family members of wards in a formal question-and-answer session. The Wuxi group expressed a desire to draw on the "deep education" they had received to spread the word of these abuses and

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<sup>450</sup> Ibid., SMA C31-2-94, 1951.

<sup>451</sup> Ibid., SMA C31-2-94, 1951.

<sup>452</sup> "Xuwen Xujiahui Shengmuyuan yuyingtang gu'er" *Wenhui bao*, July 13, 1953.

assisting the government in rooting out lingering imperialists. Later that day, several Shanghai neighborhood committees visited the complex, offering condolences and delivering a large stack of letters of solace as well as treats and daily-use items to the orphans. The heads of these groups also expressed their resolve to engage the “imperialists” at the home in a struggle session to avenge the death of orphans under their guardianship<sup>453</sup> These sessions had the effect of transforming a once private activity into an arena of public scrutiny, connecting the home’s wards to the outside world and further undercutting the autonomy of holdover staff suspected of clinging to the practices and teachings of the old society.

Unlike Hospice St. Joseph and Convent Sainte-Marie, Boys Town 少年村 (*Shaonian cun*) was designed to take in and reform homeless children with a proclivity toward anti-social and illegal behavior. Founded by Shanghai Buddhist luminary and relief activist 赵朴初 (*Zhao Puchu*) in 1940, the institute was a prime example of an emergent branch of child relief for street urchins in that era. Under Zhao’s leadership, Boys Town drew on both the “half-study, half-work” learning model embraced by education reformers in Republican times and Buddhist techniques such as quiet reflection and moral suasion to root out anti-social tendencies and cultivate an honest, upright character in the wards of the home.<sup>454</sup> Those admitted, limited to boys between the ages of 12 and 17 *sui*, were also charged with performing household tasks such as purchasing vegetables, cooking meals, and washing clothes to foster a sense of individual and familial responsibility. Like many of its peer institutions, Boys Town administrators

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<sup>453</sup> Ibid., July 13, 1953.

<sup>454</sup> For more on the Boys Town’s approach to reform, see chapter 2 above.

arranged employment for its wards after determining that they had acquired a vocational skill and an ethical foundation suitable for outside living.

The effort to reorganize Boys Town in the early 1950s reveals that civil affairs workers in the Communist government were committed to preserving this dimension of child welfare, but also strove to reshape it in light of new views on the detached, potentially dangerous adolescent in socialist society. In 1951, the Shanghai Welfare League assumed full responsibility for funding the home's operations, supplanting its formerly diverse financial base, launched a formal investigation into its procedures and personnel, and, based on the results, set about replacing one third of its original staff members with workers from its league and other outside individuals.<sup>455</sup> The League also introduced reforms to expand the pool of those admitted, as it became clear that the home would serve as the city's hub for rearing and reforming homeless and delinquent children in the future.<sup>456</sup> The minimum age was lowered from 12 to 7 *sui* and admittance was extended to girls. In 1953, Civil Affairs authorities merged Yixin Children's Reformatory, which had recently absorbed dependents from eight local children's institutions, into Boys Town, and moved its operations from a temple complex in Shanghai's suburbs to a larger, centrally located campus in the old Chinese city to accommodate its growing body.<sup>457</sup> The number of charges under its care rose from 44 in 1949 to 589 in 1955, peaking at nearly 750 in between these years.<sup>458</sup>

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<sup>455</sup> SMA B168-1-4 "Shaonian cun bianzhi qingkuang diaocha." Five staff members were cited for "political history problems," twelve were charged with having "complex social relations," and seven were charged with committing serious crimes.

<sup>456</sup> SMA B168-1-4 "Shaonian cun bianzhi qingkuang diaocha."

<sup>457</sup> Fan Jingsi, ed. 2000, *Shanghai minzheng zhi*, 225.

<sup>458</sup> SMA B168-1-4 "Shaonian cun bianzhi qingkuang diaocha."

Finally, the social composition of Boys Town dependents underwent a telling reconfiguration during the early 1950s. In Republican times, the social conception of the street urchin 流浪儿童 and the problem child 问题儿童 was borne out of rising concerns over adolescent involvement in petty crime and, to a lesser extent, mendicancy in a disorderly urban landscape. A report issued in 1942 stated that 85% of the home's inmates had been caught stealing, pick-pocketing, swindling, or snatching goods; the remaining 15% were picked up for begging.<sup>459</sup> In 1955, by contrast, nearly 43% of the children were institutionalized because their parents had been branded counterrevolutionaries or had been sent away to engage in labor reform. Another 5.6 % of dependents were identified as Catholic or Protestant followers; the remaining half consisted of orphans (25.8%) and homeless children from poor families (24.2%), with child criminals comprising only 1.7% of the total.<sup>460</sup> If the image of the anti-social child in Republican times was underpinned by anxieties over homeless youngsters contributing to urban disorder, then the face of the wayward youth in PRC was that of sons and daughters led morally astray by social forces that challenged the Communist Party and undermined its project of constructing a new socialist society.

To recap, by 1955 Shanghai authorities had pared down an aggregation of some three dozen independently-managed children's institutions into three "privately run publicly assisted" homes -- Hospice St. Joseph, Convent Sainte-Marie, and Boys Town. The initiation of reorganization drives and mass campaigns along with the adoption of a mixed public-private administrative setup allowed Civil Affairs and Welfare League

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<sup>459</sup> *Liulang ertong jiaoyang wenti*.

<sup>460</sup> SMA B168-1-4 "Shaonian cun bianzhi qingkuang diaocha."

agents to gradually gain control and shape policy at a time in which the bulk of their human and material resources were steered toward a nationwide production-oriented relief agenda. By the mid 1950s, however, shifting political forces began to undo the cooperative arrangements for public assistance. With the inclusive spirit of New Democracy waning and official recognition of the divergent needs of vulnerable groups mounting, the few still-standing children's homes in Shanghai and other urban centers were ripe for state takeover.

### **Party Knows Best: Wards of the Socialist State**

The year 1956 was a key turning point in the PRC government's efforts to reorganize the social and economic forces of society. At the 8<sup>th</sup> National Party Congress held in September of that year, the CCP proclaimed that the nation's transition to full-fledged socialism was complete.<sup>461</sup> Indeed, by the end of the year, it was reported that over 96% of rural households had been organized into collectives and that 99% of private manufacturers, 90% of handicraft production, and 85% of private commercial enterprises had been restructured as collectivist operations in the spirit of socialist construction.<sup>462</sup> In this brave new world of socialism, only the awakened masses and their purported representatives, the People's Government, had the legitimacy to participate in social and economic activities, with private actors -- be they capitalists, philanthropists, and/or religious figures -- denied any sort of position or platform to exercise power and influence while pursuing allegedly selfish aims.

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<sup>461</sup> Huang, et al., *Zhongguo shehui zhuyi de shehui fuli*, 42.

<sup>462</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

At the same time that the edifice of state-philanthropist cooperation came tumbling down, the central authorities began criticizing the one-size-fits-all approach to public assistance undertaken by production-oriented reformatories. A circular issued by the Ministry of the Interior on March 16, 1956, found fault with the state-run relief programs for failing to discern between the needs of vulnerable, unprotected individuals and able-bodied persons whose activities undermined the social and moral order of new China.<sup>463</sup> In short, placing elderly, disabled, and young dependents alongside vagabonds, former prostitutes, and beggars enrolled in “self-aid through production” training programs was now seen as a flawed policy. This shift in official thinking sparked the formation of a new set of state-run facilities – social welfare institutes, old folks’ homes, and child welfare institutes -- into which groups deemed incapable of supporting themselves could receive more targeted forms of support. While production training was incorporated to a limited extent into the daily agenda of the new facilities, from this time forward it was no longer heralded as the centerpiece of government-run social assistance. Children’s institutes began adopting a more rounded approach, paying attention to the dependent child’s physical wellbeing, moral outlook, and political conscientiousness.

A series of directives issued by Shanghai’s Bureau of Civil Affairs in early 1956 illustrates how the jettisoning of both New Democracy cooperation and production-based relief was translated into welfare arrangements at the local level. The bureau ordered the city’s 11 remaining “privately run, publicly assisted” relief homes for disadvantaged

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<sup>463</sup> “Neiwubu, Caizhengbu guanyu dui chengshi canlao ertong yuan shixing,” in *Minzheng faling huibian*: 1956.1-1-12 (1957).

peoples be condensed and converted into five state-managed welfare agencies.<sup>464</sup> Of particular relevance, Hospice St. Joseph Hospice and Convent Sainte-Marie were renamed Shanghai No. 1 and No. 2 Children's Homes 育儿院 (*yu'er yuan*) respectively and Boys Town rebadged the Shanghai Children's Reformatory 上海市兒童教養所.<sup>465</sup> Most important, these organizations were placed under the direct authority of bureau and the management of state agents. The orientation of these facilities also points up the two officially sanctioned zones of welfare work for at-risk children as now defined by Civil Affairs leaders. Whereas the primary component of the state's welfare program for minors involved succoring infants and young children of unknown parentage, a secondary intermittent line of activity, dependent on local need, entailed efforts to reform delinquent youngsters.

*Sole Provider: Government Guardianship of Foundlings*

Springing up in provincial capitals and other medium-sized cities during the mid to late 1950s, Child Welfare Institutes (CWI, 儿童福利院 *ertong fuli yuan*) formulated a standard set of procedures for admitting and caring for the unprotected young.<sup>466</sup> These organizations took in abandoned infants of unidentified parents and children who otherwise lacked family support, were aged seven *sui* or under, and were found within

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<sup>464</sup> SMA B168-1-959, February 28, 1956, "guanyu jieban de shiyi ge ertong can lao danwei zhengdun gongzuo jihua."

<sup>465</sup> *Ibid.*, SMA B168-1-959, February 28, 1956.

<sup>466</sup> In 1958, there were a total of 57 Child Welfare Institutes caring for some 10,000 abandoned infants throughout China. By 1963, the number of facilities had grown to 73, with a total of 52,865 dependents under their care. See Huang, *Zhongguo shehui zhuyi de shehui fuli*, 40-49. As mentioned above, the institutes in Shanghai initially went by the variant name, Shanghai Children's Home (*yu'er yuan*). The two facilities were merged in 1957 and the name changed to Shanghai Child Welfare Institute (Shanghai shi ertong fuli yuan) in 1963.



city limits.<sup>467</sup> The vast majority of those sheltered in the new facilities, much like in their Qing-era forerunners -- foundling homes 育嬰堂 (*yuyingtang*), were newborns under 6 months old with health complications or disabilities.<sup>468</sup> Thus, in addition to treating babies with obvious signs of illness and those born prematurely, the institutes implemented a policy of quarantining all incoming waifs in special quarters for a minimum of two weeks.<sup>469</sup> During this transitional period, they were screened for infectious diseases and chronic disorders, only transferred to the facility's main care giving section upon receiving a positive assessment of health.

In line with the new China's overt embrace of scientific modernity, the primary objective of the new state-managed institutes consisted in transforming sick babies into healthy ones by adopting superior medical and nutritional standards. Supported by a clinic and a fulltime staff of pediatricians, nurses, a nutritionist, a pharmacist, and specialists in infectious diseases, infants had their weight and heights recorded on a monthly basis, underwent two to four full physical examinations per year, and were given vaccines on an annual basis to prevent any ailments.<sup>470</sup> Whereas it was not uncommon for Qing-era foundling halls to assign a wet nurse to feed two to three newborns each, a practice which often led to nutritional deficiencies and health problems, the new Shanghai facility kept a herd of 19 cows to supply virtually all of the milk for the home's infants. In May 1956, the same institute stipulated a near doubling of the daily

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<sup>467</sup> SMA B168-1-445, 1957, "Shanghai shi yu'er yuan zuzhi bianzhi de qubu yijian he bianzhi biao"; SMA B168-1-82: "Shanghai shi Minzheng ju ji fushu danwei zuzhi jigou bianzhi," (October 20, 1959): 4-5.

<sup>468</sup> SMA 168-1.

<sup>469</sup>"Yige dairen zuo fumu de jigou," *Wenhui bao*, March 26, 1957.

<sup>470</sup>"Xingfu de gu'er," *Wenhui bao*, July 4, 1956.

expenditure, from 6.4 to 12 *yuan*, on each child.<sup>471</sup> Furthermore, the home set standard ratios for care givers to dependents based on age level to ensure sufficient attention was being given to the especially vulnerable.<sup>472</sup> While anecdotes featured in newspaper articles hinted at improved outcomes such as weight gain, dramatically reduced infant mortality rates serve as the strongest evidence of the efficacy of the measures mentioned above. For example, only 7 of 612 infants admitted to Shanghai No. 1 Children’s Home in 1956, its first year operating under new management, died, a remarkably low figure given that mortality rates at foundling halls in Qing and Republican times typically hovered between 35 and 50%.<sup>473</sup> The figures in the following table point up a sizeable and consistent drop in premature deaths in Shanghai’s relief apparatus after local authorities assumed control.<sup>474</sup>

**Table 4.1: Number of Infants Entering and Dying in Shanghai Institutional Care**

Year	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959
New Infants Admitted	1499	1278	904	1422	1340	827	918	1735	3102
Deceased Infants	1013	832	326	109	155	16	27	53	83
Percentage of Deceased among Total	67.5%	65.1%	36%	7.7%	11.6%	2%	3%	3%	2.7%

Source: SMA B168-1-556: Shanghai shi Minzheng ju guanyu Shanghai shi nian minzheng gongzuo tongji.

<sup>471</sup> Ibid., July 4, 1956.

<sup>472</sup> One nanny (*baoyu yuan*) each was assigned to every 3 infants under 2 sui, for every 5 toddlers between 2 and 4 sui, for every 9 young children between 5 and 7 sui, and for every 3 sick or disabled children. SMA B168-1-445: “Shanghai shi yu’er yuan zuzhi bianzhi de qubu yijian he bianzhi biao,” 1957.

<sup>473</sup> “Yige dairen zuo fumu de jigou,” *Wenhui bao*, March 26, 1957.

<sup>474</sup> SMA B168-1-556: Shanghai shi Minzheng ju guanyu Shanghai shi nian minzheng gongzuo tongji.

After addressing any medical complications and nursing newborns back to health, child welfare institutes aimed above all to place their charges in homes with adoptive parents who could provide an upbringing in accord with socialist ideals.<sup>475</sup> While the 1950 Marriage Law stated that adoptive relations carried the same duties and responsibilities as natal ties, the absence of a central-level child welfare agency in China left local institutes room to formulate specific procedures for adoption and the leeway to adjust them in accord with shifting demographics. Typically, prospective adoptive guardians were required to supply evidence of a “clean political record,” a history of upright conduct, a proper occupation and the means to raise the child, and the absence of communicable disease, all verified by district civil affairs authorities.<sup>476</sup> Within three months of adoption, the new parents were asked to submit a letter to the institute reporting on the child’s condition or to host an evaluative inspection by the local branch of the Women’s Federation.

These basic requirements notwithstanding, the overriding intention was to place as many dependents in suitable family settings as possible, thereby reducing the burden on state-run agencies. That is, institutional care for this segment of young dependents was designed to be a bridge to family life, not an end in itself as the officially-sponsored trend towards communal living in the 1950s might indicate. Records from Shanghai’s two child welfare institutes, which along with their counterparts in other cities undertook an aggressive policy of recruiting adoptive parents from rural areas, demonstrate a

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<sup>475</sup> One pair of adoptive parents, quoted in the *Wenhui Daily* in July 1956, conveyed the official collectivist ideal: “This [adoption] not only enriches our family life, but furthermore enables us to fully undertake our responsibility for teaching and rearing the next generation.” See July 4, 1956.

<sup>476</sup> “Yinian lai de chengshi jiuji gongzuo he jinhou yijian” in *Neiwubu tongxun* (April 1955), 18-22; *Nanjing minzheng zhi*, 333.

remarkable ability to find homes for the overwhelming majority of infants taken in.<sup>477</sup> From January through November 1957, the city’s state-run orphanages received an average of 72.9 youngsters and placed an average of 66.2 children each month in adoptive homes.<sup>478</sup> The following chart shows that with the exception of 1960, when failing economic policies and a devastating famine precipitated a massive upsurge in abandonment, local institutions were able over time to approach a relative balance between the intake and placement of deprived children.<sup>479</sup>

**Table 4.2: Number of Infants Adopted at Shanghai Children’s Homes**

Year	1956	1957	1958	1959	1960	1961
Infants Admitted	827	918	1735	3102	8796	2068
Infants Adopted	1202	821	1632	2808	6145	2008
Percentage of Infants Adopted among Admitted	145%	89%	94%	91%	70%	97%

Source: SMA B168-1-556: “Shanghai shi Minzheng ju guanyu Shanghai shi nian minzheng gongzuo tongji.”

The state’s ultimate objective of placing abandoned youngsters in home environments was also reflected in its particularly liberal policy toward parents who wished to reclaim natal sons and daughters from state institutions. In many Western countries, the very act of casting one’s own child aside would at the least raise substantial concerns among social services authorities over their qualifications as parents, if not

<sup>477</sup> In 1957, fully one half of adopted babies from Shanghai institutes were placed with families residing outside of the city. The Nanjing CWI, for instance, worked with civil affairs offices in Henan and Shandong provinces to locate childless couples and commissioned agents to transport foundlings to those areas for adoption. See *Nanjing minzheng zhi*, 31.

<sup>478</sup> SMA B168-1-445, 1957, “Shanghai shi yu’er yuan zuzhi bianzhi de chubu yijian he bianzhi biao.”

<sup>479</sup> SMA B168-1-556: “Shanghai shi Minzheng ju guanyu Shanghai shi nian minzheng gongzuo tongji.”

disqualify them altogether from regaining legal guardianship. In Mao-era China, by contrast, local administrators made every effort to identify and reunite children at the institute with birth parents who had come to retrieve them.<sup>480</sup> Moreover, the welfare institute maintained a policy, with some restrictions, of persuading adoptive couples to relinquish the child's guardianship of the child to his or her birth parents in exchange for receiving another adoptive child from the institute and compensation for past rearing costs.<sup>481</sup> Reflecting the politically-charged environment of the Mao years, only household heads who belonged to the "five categories of public enemies" (former landlords and rich peasants, counterrevolutionaries, bad elements, and Rightists) or those who sired illegitimate children were automatically barred from reclaiming their kin.<sup>482</sup> Their immoral, selfish tendencies rendered them, in the eyes of the state, unfit to raise members of the next generation.

Despite welfare administrators' best efforts to facilitate family placement, there appeared a clear need to provide an educational program grounded in the principles of socialist construction for school-age dependents left unclaimed. The learning program adopted at child welfare institutes centered on the twin tasks of cultivating a life-long commitment to manual labor and arousing political consciousness, especially the importance of struggle against class enemies. On the one hand, dependents between the ages of 7 and 17 *sui* participated in a number of onsite training programs, from sewing,

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<sup>480</sup> SMA B168-1-981, July 3, 1963, "Guanyu jiazhang lai yuan renling haizi wenti de guiding."

<sup>481</sup> SMA B168-1-981, June 1963, "Yu'er yuan 62 nian, nian chuli qingkuang." This provision was limited to those adopted within the previous year and who had either been a) placed in temporary foster care arrangements, b) deserted due to their parents' extreme misfortune, c) abandoned by one parent without the knowledge of the other, or d) were lost children (*mi haizi*).

<sup>482</sup> *Ibid.*, B1168-1-981.

woodworking, shoe repair, and haircutting to animal husbandry and vegetable cultivation.<sup>483</sup> But administrators also looked beyond the campus for opportunities for children to draw on the real world experiences of those who participated in the revolution and those who labored daily toward increased production targets. During vacation times, institutes organized trips to factories and agricultural collectives, where their charges assisted “uncle workers” with their labor in the community’s farming plots and vegetable gardens.<sup>484</sup> Additionally, staff regularly arranged for military veterans, retired cadres, and old factory workers and peasants to share personal recollections of their involvement in the revolutionary struggle to create a new China.<sup>485</sup> In line with official goals, reports in the early 1960s pointed out that former dependents had gone on to establish laudable careers as cadres, instructors, truck drivers, commune members, and even to secure the designation of “five-rank” laborers.<sup>486</sup> These outcomes reinforced the notion that the state’s takeover of, and efforts to reshape care for at-risk children was an endeavor that paid off when it came to harnessing and redirecting individual energies toward the construction of the socialist motherland.

*Reform and Rehabilitation: Institutional Care for Wayward Youths*

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<sup>483</sup> “Zai wenuan de da jiating chengzhang – ji sheng ertongfuli yuan jian yuan shi nian,” *Heilongjiang ribao*, October 15, 1963; “Zai chuntian de huayuan li – ji Yilei ertong fuli yuan,” *Xinjiang Ribao*, September 2, 1964.

<sup>484</sup> *Ibid.*, September 2, 1964; “Ertong fuli yuan de huaduo – ji gu’ermen de xingfu shenghuo,” *Changjiang Ribao*, May 29, 1959.

<sup>485</sup> “Jiu shehui gu’er shenghuo ku’nan, xin shehui gu’er shenghuo bi mitian,” *Guizhou ribao*, May 30, 1963; “Zai chuntian de huayuan li,” *Xinjiang Ribao*, September 2, 1964.

<sup>486</sup> “Zai wenuan de da jiating chengzhang” *Heilongjiang ribao*, October 15, 1963; “Zai chuntian de huayuan li,” *Xinjiang Ribao*, September 2, 1964. The category of “five-rank laborers” in Mao-era China included was comprised of individuals, such as peasants, soldiers, workers, and cadres, who were recognized in particular for their selfless contribution to the building of new China.

The second state-authorized branch of child welfare revolved around efforts to reform delinquent minors in ways that would facilitate their integration into China's producer-oriented society. Following a 1956 central-level Civil Affairs proclamation on the need to treat helpless waifs and street urchins at separate institutions, there arose a number of Children's Training Homes (CTH) 儿童教养院 (*ertong jiaoyang yuan*) specifically for absorbing the latter.<sup>487</sup> As noted, this dimension of child relief can be traced back to Republican-era social anxieties over the homeless street urchin 流浪儿童 (*liulang ertong*) who commonly resorted to a mix of illicit, disruptive activities in order to subsist amid the unrelenting conditions of the city. Much like the enterprise of caring for deserted children, the state's direct involvement in assisting mischievous youths was predicated on its ability to bring about a crucial transformation in their lives. If the CWI strove above all to restore the physical health of its charges in preparation for outside placement, then Children's Training Home's mission lay primarily in imbuing their wards with a collectivist moral outlook.

The popular image of the wayward child was reconfigured to accommodate a new set of political and social realities in the early PRC. In prerevolutionary China, the wanton lifestyle of the street urchin evoked a palpable sense of danger precisely because he or she was unmoored from the constraints of the kin group, which continued to be upheld by state agents and most urban reformers as the fundamental unit for proper socialization. Under Communist rule, however, the family was subject to a broader range of official and government-supported critiques, especially in the case of those with bad

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<sup>487</sup> In fact, virtually every Children's Training Home (*ertong jiaoyang yuan*) took in orphans lacking family support alongside street urchins and other types of juvenile delinquents. Likewise, in some smaller cities the Child Welfare Institute (*ertong fuli yuan*) simply doubled as a facility for waifs and orphans as well as problem children. The decision to mix or separate 'normal' and 'problem' dependents was based primarily on local needs.

class backgrounds. It was noted that during the transitional early 1950s the sons and daughters of incarcerated criminals and those sent away for labor reform were placed in institutions for young delinquents such as the above-discussed Boys Town in Shanghai. Aside from providing for their basic needs, the institutions ensured they would receive an education grounded in proper ethics, far removed from the degenerative influences of their parents. From the mid 1950s onward, the focus of public discussion shifted toward a group of children who lived at home but developed a “naughty and unruly” 顽劣 (*wanlie*) disposition. Unrestrained by parents or teachers, these minors were drawn into a number of anti-social activities -- petty theft, fighting, scalping goods, bullying, and even arson -- that caught the attention of Civil Affairs officers.

Official analysis of wayward youths in the PRC located the origins of their unruly conduct and defiant attitude in the failure of parents to provide proper and sufficient discipline.<sup>488</sup> Lacking a suitably structured upbringing, the “naughty and unruly” youngster followed selfish pursuits at the expense of others’ wellbeing, reflecting the tenaciousness of capitalist class thinking in the new era. The childhood story of Zhao Zhongzhi, featured in a newspaper piece titled “Street Urchin” in December 1956, is recounted in a way that underscores the deleterious effects of lax parenting.<sup>489</sup> Zhao, a then 15-sui old resident of Xi’an city, had been spoiled and indulged by his father and mother from an early age, developing a love for junk food and play. Though his parents provided him with an allowance, he found it insufficient and began stealing money from street vendors to satisfy his desires. In middle school, he consistently challenged the

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<sup>488</sup> SMA B168-1-678, May 6, 1957, “Minzhengju guanyu jianli shanghai shi di er ertong jiaoyangyuan.”

<sup>489</sup> “Liulang er,” *Shaanxi Ribao*, December 16, 1956.



authority of his teachers, leading to his expulsion in January 1956 and a return to an unfortunate existence of stealing and aimless drifting on the city streets. In an appended social commentary, titled “Why did he become a street urchin?” 他为什么成了流浪儿, author Chang Xiaosu links the decline of Zhao and his peers into this lifestyle to poor parenting.<sup>490</sup> This lapse in parental duty, spawning a mentality of “loving ease and hating work” in the young, prompted the party-state to become involved in the private zone of child rearing in ways not seen before in China.

Child Training Homes were designed to provide fulltime corrective care for minors between the ages of 10 and 16 *sui* who might otherwise become a constant menace to society and an obstacle to the project of socialist construction. While the institutes continued to absorb homeless street urchins and the sons and daughters of incarcerated adults, they also took in wayward children who lived at home.<sup>491</sup> First, all minors convicted of serious crimes but too young to serve a prison sentence (i.e. under 13 *sui*) were remanded from court authorities to the custody of the local CTH unit. Second, children under 16 *sui* who consistently displayed anti-social behavior such as fighting, swindling, and small-scale theft in school and the neighborhood, were also accepted by the facility.<sup>492</sup> In this case, either the birthparents or neighborhood committee head were required to submit an application at their district Civil Affairs Division, which would conduct an investigation and send a formal recommendation to the CTH. The discovery of any developmental disabilities or congenital diseases during a mandatory health check

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<sup>490</sup> Chang Xiaosu, “Ta weishenma cheng le ‘liulang er’?” *Shaanxi Ribao*, December 16, 1956.

<sup>491</sup> SMA B168-1-983: “Guanyu Shanghai shi ertong jiaoyangyuan shourong fanwei he shenpi shouxu.”

<sup>492</sup> SMA B168-1-678, August 2, 1957: “Guanyu Shanghai shi di er ertong jiaoyangyuan shourong duixiang fanwei, shourong shouxu yiji shoufei banfa.”

automatically disqualified the youth from admittance, reinforcing the point that unlike CWI these facilities were specially equipped to provide only social, not medical, rehabilitation.<sup>493</sup> Additionally, the structure of these programs further speaks to the Civil Affairs authority's intent to rid social welfare work of its charitable essence: parents were responsible for covering living expenses and tuition while the child remained in the CTH's custody.<sup>494</sup> The duration of institutional care was to be based on the length of time it took to help the child in question bring about a desired change in thought and behavior, typically lasting no more than a year except in the case of those without identifiable families.

Upon admission, wayward youngsters were enrolled in a half-work, half-study program with particular attention given to cultivating disciplined habits and a solid ethical foundation.<sup>495</sup> Given the child's troubled background, there was as much emphasis placed on the teacher's methods in reshaping their moral outlook as the actual content of the academic curriculum. Serving in effect as both instructor and guardian, when teachers at the Anhui Provincial CTH were faced with instances of misbehavior (i.e. fighting, quarreling) they made a point of patiently explaining the improprieties to those involved until they recognized the error of their ways and changed accordingly, even though such lessons had to be repeated several times before sinking in.<sup>496</sup> But under their guidance, the vast majority of children gradually developed disciplined and

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<sup>493</sup> SMA B168-1-447, January 28, 1957: "jianli Shanghai shi di er ertongjiaoyangyuan gongzuo dasuan."

<sup>494</sup> Ibid., B168-1447. The family head was required to make payments, for example, in the amount of 7.5 *yuan* for food, 1.5 *yuan* for board, 1.5 *yuan* for miscellaneous expenses and 1 *yuan* for tuition at the CHI on the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month. The child was also expected to bring clothing and bedding materials from home.

<sup>495</sup> SMA B168-1-447, January 28, 1957, "jianli Shanghai shi di er ertongjiaoyangyuan gongzuo dasuan."

<sup>496</sup> Gu'er zhi jia – Anhui sheng ertong jiaoyangyuan jieshao," *Anhui ribao*," August 1, 1958.

industrious habits, as a reported 98% of wards showed up to class and submitted their homework on time, according to administrators. Moreover, an observer noted that the home's study halls were packed on Sundays and after class, a poignant sign that they had been rid of the mentality of "loving to play and abhorring hard work." In addition to standard academic coursework, thought education 思想教育 occupied a crucial part of the design to cultivate a moral disposition geared toward sacrificing personal interest for collectivist goals of socialism. At the Guangdong Provincial CTH, the entire student body gathered twice weekly in the evenings to listen to instructors expound upon the feats of revolutionary heroes from published biographies. Zhang Yun, a ward of the facility at the time, reported that most of his peers at the institute were able to "give up vice and return to virtue" (改邪归正), that is, reach back to their original uncorrupted nature after illustrative lessons like these for a one-year period.<sup>497</sup>

A secondary yet ultimately essential component to the reform program at Children's Training Homes was the organization of children into labor training groups. As pointed out in the chapters 2 and 3, the vast majority of institutions for uprooted youngsters in Republican times implemented vocational study as a path to self-reliance, the ultimate objective for marginalized persons in the quasi-capitalist system embraced by most private activists and state agents of the time. Reflecting the Mao-era ideal for organizing social and economic life along collectivist lines, the CTH sought to cultivate a lifelong love for labor and a respect for mutual assistance. The wards of these facilities were organized into various industrial arts (e.g. woodworking, painting, and sewing) and farming groups 组 (*zu*) in which they not only learned the value of labor but also the

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<sup>497</sup> Zhang, "Jiefang chuqi de Guangdong sheng Minzheng ting ertong jiaoyangyuan," *Wenshi ziliao*.

lesson that working with others in a cooperative manner is the most effective way to increase productivity and derive satisfaction from one's toil.<sup>498</sup> In conjunction with this principle, administrators from various CIH also dispatched contingents of the home's more senior wards (typically 13 *sui* or older) to rural areas where they participated in local agricultural activity. In many cases, the practice of sending teams of youngsters to help peasants bring in the harvest was just one of many edifying group-oriented extracurricular activities.<sup>499</sup> In some instances, though, home officers resettled large groups of older dependents semi-permanently in extra-provincial farming communities, where they became immersed in local production for the indefinite future.<sup>500</sup>

While the specific formula for corrective instruction could vary from facility to facility, the point is that the programs shared the goal of bringing about the inner transformation of children who exhibited anti-social tendencies. In the eyes of Civil Affairs officials, wayward youths, still in the formative years, occupied a place on the socialist welfare spectrum between defenseless waifs and hardened adults who'd become accustomed to a parasitic lifestyle. With the aid of the facility, the deviant adolescent could be expected to undergo a pronounced transformation in thought and behavior in a relatively short period of time, as the case of Chen Liyuan vividly demonstrates.

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<sup>498</sup> “Ta shi liulang er chengwei youyong de rencai – ben shi di yi ertong jiaoyang yuan fangwen ji,” *Jiefang ribao*, June 1, 1956.

<sup>499</sup> For example, see the description of Guilin Children's Training Home in “Dang sheng gu'er qin sheng niang,” *Guizhou ribao*, February 1, 1964. It should also be noted that children were placed in groups for a range of extracurricular activities outside of labor in a purposeful attempt to foster a spirit of mutual assistance.

<sup>500</sup> In fall 1956, the No. 2 Shanghai Children's Home, for example, sent 450 of its charges along with 18 instructors and 15 administrative staff to a southern Anhui farming community in which a satellite site was established. Two years later, in October 1958, the same satellite institute was closed down, and all 502 dependents along with 56 cadres and staff were transferred Zhangye County in Gansu province to participate in rural production. The home was reestablished in Shanghai in April 1963.

Orphaned and unsupported at a young age, Chen fell into the life of an aimless street urchin in Kunming city, where he learned the arts of stealing and snatching. When picked up and placed in the municipal CHI, he “stared blankly” 瞪瞪白眼 (*dengdeng baiyan*) at his instructors and classmates.<sup>501</sup> Within months, though, the defiant 15-year-old became engaged, polite, and aware of the folly of his ways, even returning stolen items to their rightful owners. Exerting himself in the home’s manual labor program, Chen also earned the distinction of model worker. On a broader level, reports pointed out that Chen’s counterparts at his and other peer institutions went on to join “the vanguard of socialist construction” in a variety of fields, with the largest numbers joining the factory workforce or the agricultural work teams.<sup>502</sup> The success story of Chen and other “naughty and unruly” children, much like dramatically improved health outcomes for abandoned babies, served to highlight the transformative dimension of state-run care, which lay at the very heart of the socialist welfare agenda in the early PRC.

## Conclusion

This research has cast light on what were arguably the two most historically significant developments in child welfare in mid 20<sup>th</sup> century China: the rise of state-managed care and a growing consensus that transforming the dependent into a contributing citizen-producer constituted the essence of the enterprise. Though not acknowledged by the CCP, the roots of these developments can be traced back to the War

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<sup>501</sup> Chen Liyuan’s life is profiled in “Shenghuo fankai le xin de yi ye – ji Kunming shi ertong jiaoyang yuan,” *Yunan ribao*, June 5, 1956.

<sup>502</sup> Aside from factory laborers and farmer commune members, wards went on to become miners, actors, transport workers and even to serve in the air force. See *Ibid.*, June 5, 1956; “Ta shi liulang er chengwei youyong de rencai,” *Jiefang ribao*, June 1, 1956; and “Gu’er zhi jia” *Anhui ribao*, January 8, 1958.

of Resistance (1937-45), when the GMD government established a network of facilities to absorb large numbers of child refugees. Reflecting anxieties over Japan's encroachment, these programs were geared toward molding uprooted youngsters into patriotic, productive defenders of the Chinese race and nation. Nevertheless, the GMD exhibited neither the intent nor the logistical strength to shut down or even become directly involved in the affairs of privately-organized foundling homes and orphanages operating at the time. On the eve of the 1949 revolution, the vast majority of relief organizations for the young in China remained under the management of non-state actors whose objectives, especially those infused by religious elements, did not necessarily reflect the mission of their government-run counterparts.

But by the mid 1950s the Communist party-state had thoroughly transformed the landscape of child welfare, in effect taking the GMD's burgeoning involvement in wartime and postwar relief efforts to its logical conclusion. As delineated above, this process occurred in two stages. During the New Democracy period (ca. 1950-1955), the Civil Affairs authorities adopted a mixed 'public-assisted private-run' format that, along with the consolidation of private charities, allowed them simultaneously to draw on the energies and experience of seasoned philanthropists and to eliminate practices and personnel deemed woefully out of step with the principles of socialist construction. In 1956, official proclamations that the nation had made the transition to unadulterated socialism signaled not only the demise of the mixed format but also, for the first time in Chinese history, the elimination of virtually all forms of private participation in social assistance. The state became the sole provider for dependent children, a position it began to relinquish only amid the sweeping overhaul of social welfare in the 1980s and 1990s.

The ‘stateification’ of social services for at-risk children was also connected to an emergent consensus on the transformative role that institutional care ought to provide. The CCP regarded charity in ‘old China’ as a unidirectional transaction that encouraged a culture of dependency among recipients. While a growing number of Republican-era philanthropists, in fact, undertook programs designed to transform the character and conduct of young dependents, their efforts were scattered, unregulated, and for the most part not directed toward socialist ideals. The war triggered the Chinese state’s initial plunge into a form of ‘active’ 积极 (*jiji*) relief aimed at equipping uprooted youths with the training to participation in the national salvation movement, but its organizations comprised only a small portion of relief for the young in Republican times. Having unified the nation under a coherent ideology and plan for reorganizing society, by contrast, Communist authorities would reach the conclusion that only state agencies could be entrusted to provide the kind of life-changing support that turned at-risk children into individuals capable and inclined to contribute to the project of socialist construction, constituting what may be called the first incarnation of a distinctively modern Chinese approach to child welfare.

## **Chapter 5: All in the Family: New Approaches to Child Relief in Post-Mao China**

### **Introduction**

By 1956, the PRC government had erected a nationwide system of care for the two categories of marginalized minors it deemed deserving of full state support: abandoned infants of unidentified parents and homeless street children. Throughout the Mao era, the state took full responsibility for sheltering these individuals based on the premise that government-run organizations were uniquely qualified to foster their physiological, mental, and ethical development in line with the objectives of socialist construction. Private individuals and charitable associations, the primary players in child relief during the Qing and much of the Republic, were suspected of operating under ulterior motives and virtually barred from participating in this undertaking. Though administrators followed the practice of placing foundlings in adoptive families, group-care institutes -- namely orphanages 儿童福利院 and youth correction homes 儿童教养院 -- were regarded as indispensable to carrying out the youngster's transformation into a skilled laborer devoted to constructing the motherland. Though relevant historical records from the Cultural Revolution decade (1966-1976) are scarce, there is little to suggest that the institutional framework for child relief developed in the mid-1950s was altered or expanded upon in any meaningful way by the end of the Mao era.

But the "closed" centrally coordinated system of child relief of previous decades has given way to an "open-ended" multifocal support structure during the course of the Reform Period (1978 - present). A continuously growing strain on the network of state-managed care facilities and the renewal of cultural and educational exchanges between China and the outside world in the 1980s has opened the field of child relief to new



groups of actors, led to a broader definition of those deserving support, and given rise to an emphasis on local initiative and experimentation. The Chinese government, particularly the Civil Affairs branch, has endorsed this cluster of trends, openly touting the need to “societalize” 社会化 social welfare work. Some scholars have interpreted this transition as a zero-sum shift from public to private sponsorship of social services for disadvantaged persons in China.<sup>503</sup> This chapter, however, shows that amid this change in policy the Chinese government has continued to play a pivotal role as both a provider and coordinator of initiatives to enhance the wellbeing of dependent children. Rather, the campaign to “societalize” social assistance has given birth to a novel configuration of service provision in which both official agencies and non-government groups have expanded their range of activities to address the growing needs, both real and perceived, of deprived youngsters.

The opening of this sector of public assistance to outside actors along with the relaxation of socialist ideology has also provoked a reconsideration of the particular challenges faced by at-risk children and the ways they can best be met. Throughout the 1980s, China’s state-managed facilities continued to employ a regimen of caregiving and youth training that had become the nationwide standard by the early 1960s. But Civil Affairs authorities as well as domestic and international civic organizations new to the scene have since broken from this mold, pursuing a multiplicity of approaches to target

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<sup>503</sup> For example, see Wong, “Privatization of Social Welfare in Post-Mao China” and Shang, et. al, 2005b, “Welfare Provision for Vulnerable Children: the Missing Role of the State.” Wong suggests that officials use the term “societalization” 社会化 instead of privatization 私有化, which she claims better captures the process of rolling back government support, due to negative connotations associated with the latter. Shang Xiaoyuan and her colleagues (2005b) posit that the state has failed to allocate sufficient financial and human resources to meet the growing social demand of caring for vulnerable children and has resisted providing the new non-government sector with the legal support they need to carry out welfare work efficiently.

the various developmental deficiencies – physiological, mental, social, emotional, etc. – of their charges. In conjunction with the embrace of “multi-approachism” 多元化, we can observe a paradigmatic shift within China’s child welfare sector from institution-based rearing toward family-centered care. As China entered the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a growing commitment among child relief practitioners to the notion that a family setting was best suited to foster the dependent child’s development was reshaping the field of care in a significant way for the first time since the welfare system in the mid-1950s.

### **Shock to the System: A Resurgence of Abandoned Infants and Homeless Children**

All records indicate that the national network of relief facilities had the capacity to admit and care for the number of China’s foundlings and street urchins throughout most of the Mao period. While a sudden spike placed an indomitable strain on these facilities during ‘three difficult years’ of famine (1959-61), the number of dependent children receded shortly thereafter to pre-Great Leap Forward (1958-59) levels. The government’s creation of a social safety net, the use of a household registration system to curtail the population’s mobility, and the success in creating an egalitarian society and narrowing the gap in living standards between city and countryside all worked to keep the totals of at-risk children from growing through the 1970s. In 1978, at the dawn of the Deng Xiaoping era, there were 49 state-run orphanages operating throughout the nation -- eight fewer than the total of those founded in 1956 – with a mere 3665 charges in their care.<sup>504</sup> Indeed, Civil Affairs officials in locations such as Shanghai noted that the yearly figures of foundlings entering the city orphanage gradually declined from 1962 through

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<sup>504</sup> *Minzheng tongji lishi ziliao huibian: 1949-1992*

the early 1980s.<sup>505</sup> The majority of Youth Correction Homes were shuttered by the onset of the Cultural Revolution, suggesting that the issue of delinquent and homeless youths ceased to be recognized as a pressing social problem by Civil Affairs units. But the forces that had kept the number of unprotected youngsters in check during the Mao years were increasingly undermined by the design of the state's modernization program and policies in the Reform Period.

*'Missing Daughters' and Disabled Foundlings*

Beginning in the late 1980s, a flurry of reports in the Chinese media laid bare a surge in infant abandonment that would persist well into the follow decade. The accounts appeared in a in a range of publications, from newspapers and legal periodicals to Civil Affairs journals, and showed that the uptick was occurring in regions throughout the country.<sup>506</sup> In Hengyang city, Hunan province in central China, officials noted that the number of forsaken babies rose from 233 in 1988 to 352 in 1989, before soaring to 854 the following year.<sup>507</sup> The annual number taken in by the orphanage in the southern metropolis of Guangzhou rose from 150 in 1987 to 200 in 1988, and then climbed once again to 240 in 1989.<sup>508</sup> Observers discerned a steep rise in northern cities as well. The number of foundlings picked up from Beijing's streets in 1987 alone comprised 37% of

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<sup>505</sup> Liu Jieyou, "Qi ying," *Wenhui bao*, May 22, 1989.

<sup>506</sup> "Shehui de yi ge ewai fudan: canji ying'er bei fumu yiqi xianxiang xianlu," *Renmin ribao*, December 15, 1988.

<sup>507</sup> Hunan Civil Affairs Dept, "Guanyu dangqian shehui qiying wenti de diaocha," *Zhongguo minzheng*, (January 1992) p. 34.

<sup>508</sup> "Guangzhou qiying cheng shang sheng qushi" *Xianggang Wenhui bao*, February 28, 1991.

the total retrieved in the capital over the previous ten years combined.<sup>509</sup> And, the figure of 725 abandoned infants found in Xi'an in the northwest during an 18-month stretch in 1988 and 1989 exceeded the total entering care giving units in the city during the nine-year period of 1951 to 1959.<sup>510</sup>

While a systematic nationwide survey of this social problem has not been undertaken, the findings in scattered local reports can help shed light on patterns of abandonment and the underlying factors behind its resurgence. First, these accounts make clear that female infants comprised an overwhelming majority -- typically between 75 and 95 percent -- of those forsaken by their birth parents in the post-Mao years.<sup>511</sup> While these percentages are not out of line with those of late imperial and Republican times, the PRC's aspirations to create a gender-equal society compelled many commentators to speculate on the reasons behind the substantially higher proportion of baby girls in the contemporary period. Chinese officials and reporters alike were wont to see the crisis grounded in a moral terms. Like many others, Vice Director of Hunan Provincial Civil Affairs Department, Li Dingkuan, posited that the persistence of a "feudal mentality" 封建态度, specifically an age-old cultural "preference for sons over daughters" 重男轻女 rooted in kinship organization and concerns over old-age support, was primarily to

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<sup>509</sup> "Shehui de yi ge ewai fudan: canji ying'er bei fumu yiqi xianxiang xianlu," *Renmin ribao*, December 15, 1988.

<sup>510</sup> "Dalu qiying rijian zengduo chengwei yanzhong shehui wenti," *Mingbao*, November 20, 1991.

<sup>511</sup> Some examples of female percentages among local orphan populations as cited in surveys include 75% percent in Shanghai (1989); 92% and 99% in Yueyang and Meng counties, respectively, Hunan province (1980-1987); 81.5% in Beijing's Haiding District; and to 91.6% in Hunan Province as a whole (1986-1990). See Liu Jieyou, "Qi ying," *Wenhui bao*, May 22, 1989; Hunan Civil Affairs Department, "Guanyu dangqian shehui qiying," 34; Liao and Zhu, "Qiantan qiying wenti," 21; and Liu, "Tuoshan chuli qiying," 11.

blame.<sup>512</sup> Members of the Civil Affairs bureaucracy and Chinese press also suggested that a breakdown in public morality and family responsibility amid the rapid economic and social change of the Reform Period was at the root of the problem.<sup>513</sup> As the austere and communal values of the Mao era lost favor to an ethic of individual pursuit, a growing number of ordinary Chinese betrayed an unwillingness to take responsibility for their kin.

By contrast, Western researchers and observers singled out the implementation of the government's birth planning program, known as the "one-child policy" in the West, as the primary factor behind the upswing in abandonment and the skewed gender ratio among the deserted. A series of demographic surveys found that the baseline of a natural sex-at-birth ratio of 105 to 106 boys per 100 girls rose to between 114 and 118 in the late 1980s due to underreporting of births by parents who feared punishment for violating the state's family planning policy. The co-authors of one study estimate that this amounted to an average of 500,000 'missing girls' per year from 1985 through 1987.<sup>514</sup> Investigators concluded that the practices of informal adoption, female infanticide, and female abandonment accounted for the large number of females missing from official registration rolls. In her pioneering research on foundling care in the central provinces of Hunan and Hubei, Kay Ann Johnson found a strong correlation between times when the birth planning policy was enforced rigidly and escalations in the number of abandoned infants entering increasingly overburdened orphanages. More to the point, Johnson's

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<sup>512</sup> WuDunn, Sheryl, "China's Castaway Babies: Cruel Practice Lives on," *New York Times*, February 26, 1991.

<sup>513</sup> Liao and Zhu, "Qiantan qiying wenti," 21; Hunan Civil Affairs Department, "Guanyu dangqian shehui qiying," 35.

<sup>514</sup> Johansson and Nygren, "The Missing Girls of China," 42-45

research showed that the majority of those funneled into the state-run orphanages in Changsha and Wuhan cities since the early 1980s were healthy baby girls, most likely second daughters; by contrast, she points out, it was quite uncommon for healthy daughters to be abandoned in the 1960s and 1970s except during times of famine.<sup>515</sup> She concludes that the “duress created by the draconian, coercive measures undertaken to implement of the [government’s] population control policies has revived practices that were dying.”<sup>516</sup> While the early investigative work carried out by Kay Ann Johnson and Western demographers have brought to light an important dimension of the resurgence in recent decades, further studies show that other policies and social forces have played a hand in aggravating the crisis as well.

Another noteworthy pattern among deserted infants is the preponderance of those who face serious medical complications. In spite of what Johnson found in central China, reports emerging from other areas of the country reveal staggering proportions of children who entered state-run orphanages with developmental disabilities and congenital diseases. Outside of Hunan province, the proportion of foundlings who suffered from a serious medical condition at the time of abandonment is roughly on par with skewed female ratios, typically reaching between 75 and 95 percent.<sup>517</sup> Moreover, the percentage of handicapped charges in some institutions has been on the rise in recent decades, such

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<sup>515</sup> Johnson, “Chinese Orphanages,” 73.

<sup>516</sup> *Ibid.*, 82.

<sup>517</sup> For example, individual local surveys reported that 75% of the children at Xian Orphanage in 1991, 94% of those at Beijing Social Welfare Institute in 1988, 81% of those at Shanghai Orphanage in 1989, and over 90% of those in Guangzhou Orphanage in 1993 suffered from disabilities or severe illnesses. See “Dalu qiying rijian zengduo chengwei yanzhong shehui wenti,” *Mingbao*, November 20, 1991; Lai Renjing, “Shehui de yige ewai fudan: canji ying’er bei fumu yiqi xianxiang jian xianlu,” *Renmin ribao*, December 15, 1988; Liu Jieyou, “Qi ying,” *Wenhui bao*, May 22, 1989; “Sui qiying wenti mianmian guan,” *Xianggang dagong*, July 13, 1993.

as Shanghai orphanage where it rose from 81% in 1989 to 98% in 2006.<sup>518</sup> Common abnormalities among the abandoned range from physical deformations, such as cleft lips and palates, clubbed feet, and syndactyl (webbed digits), to serious heart conditions and severe mental disabilities such as cerebral palsy and Down Syndrome.

The decision reached by growing numbers of couples to abandon their disabled and ill offspring appears to be driven by two developments in the Reform Period. First, scattered evidence suggests that the number of neonates with birth defects is on the rise. A study conducted in 1994 found that a total two million infants were born with disabilities over the previous five years, which comprised one half of the four million minors (i.e. 14 sui and under) living with congenital disorders in China at the time.<sup>519</sup> A survey carried out in 2006 by China's National Population and Family Planning Commission 国家卫生和计划生育委员会 (NPFPC) showed that the number of infants with birth defects has risen to an average of one million per year in recent years, and that the total number of those afflicted increased by 40% from 2001 to 2006.<sup>520</sup> The authors of the NPFPC report, along with those of a separate 1994 survey of the problem in Guangzhou, saw the rise of birth defects connected to worsening environmental pollution, particularly chemical waste pollution and toxic emissions, amid from China's scramble to develop its economy. Second, the shattering of the 'iron rice bowl' 铁饭碗 -- the colloquial term for the PRC's government-supported social safety net -- that came with

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<sup>518</sup> See note 15 above; Ren Chiyue (Deputy Division Chief, Social Welfare Department of Shanghai Civil Affairs Bureau), interview by the author, April 2006.

<sup>519</sup> "Qiying wenti bu rong hushi," 41.

<sup>520</sup> Hu Yinan, "Baby Born with Birth Defects Every 30 Seconds," *China Daily*, October 30, 2007; Chen Jia, "Birth defects soar due to pollution." *China Daily* January 31, 2009. According to a spokesperson for the NPFCC, up to 300,000 newborns, or roughly 30% of the total, have congenital defects at the time of birth.

decollectivization and the partial privatization of state-owned enterprises has meant that couples are now forced to bear the rising, and often times crushing, medical costs of raising a disabled child entirely on their own. Furthermore, concerns over the ability of a disabled only child to provide old-age support for parents who can no longer count on a pension and medical care from the state has most likely encouraged the decision to relinquish the youngster to the care of state institutions.

A third pattern tied the resurgence in infant abandonment is the large-scale movement of little bodies from countryside to city. Whereas the act of deserting one's kin often took place in urban centers, where China's state-run orphanages are concentrated, a sizeable majority of couples who resorted to this practice hailed from rural areas. For example, a survey of abandonment in Hunan province undertaken by Johnson and others in 1995 and 1996 revealed that 88% of those deserted were born into rural families, 8% into suburban households, and only 3% into urban homes.<sup>521</sup> In 1989, Shanghai Civil Affairs authorities disclosed that 70% of foundlings taken in by the municipal orphanage were born in the countryside, 15.1% in the suburbs, and 14.6% in the city.<sup>522</sup> Parents now travelled greater distances to abandon their kin, typically leaving them in crowded urban places, such as waiting rooms in railway stations, outside hospital gates, and on public piers where a speedy retrieval by a passerby was likely. Some cited the greater availability of resources and the larger greater number of kind-hearted people in the cities as their rationale.<sup>523</sup> Others had taken their infants with health problems to a city hospital,

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<sup>521</sup> See Johnson et. al., "Infant Abandonment," 474. Johnson and her colleagues collected data on abandonment through submitting questionnaires to 237 families who had abandoned children.

<sup>522</sup> Liu Jieyou, "Qi ying," *Wenhui bao*, May 22, 1989.

<sup>523</sup> "Dalu qiying rijian zeng duo chengwei yanzhong shehui wenti," *Mingbao*, November 20, 1991.



but decided to leave them behind upon failing to secure appropriate treatment.<sup>524</sup> It is clear that an awareness of the yawning gap between urban and rural living standards and availability of resources since the launch of China's reform program was shaping and perhaps even encouraging the practice of abandonment. In addition, in sharp contrast to the rigid social controls of the previous era, Reform-era China offered its citizens tremendous freedom to travel and become aware of conditions in distant cities. Facing greater limitations on social and medical assistance in the village, some couples determined it was in the best interest of their disabled child to channel him or her into the last edifice of the state's welfare apparatus, facilities that cared for those who fit into the "san wu" 三无 category of dependents (i.e. those who had no family upon to rely, no source of income, and no working ability).

When government officials and Chinese journalists began raising concern over the revived practice in the late 1980s, they argued for launching public education and health campaigns to curtail it. They advocated strengthening citizens' understanding of laws against abandoning one's kin. The PRC's Constitution, Penal Code, and the Marriage Law each contained clauses stipulating that those found guilty of committing the act would be subject to jail sentences, criminal detention, or surveillance for a period of up to five years.<sup>525</sup> Concerned with what they saw as a decline in public ethics, local officials also recommended initiatives designed to reinstall traditional Chinese values such as "revering the aged and loving the young" while rooting out the "preference for

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<sup>524</sup> Li, Shang, and Cheng, "Beijingshi gu'can ertong bei yiqi," 87.

<sup>525</sup> Yang and Zhu, "Qiantan qiying wenti," 21.

sons” mindset that they saw instilled in the masses.<sup>526</sup> The authors felt village and neighborhood committees were in the best position to detect a couple’s intention to abandon and to direct criticism-orientated education in a way that would deter them from doing so. Lastly, Civil Affairs authorities recommended that public health and birth planning authorities carry out research aimed at improving birthing techniques, conduct prenatal tests and postnatal checkups, and provide follow-up care for newborns with disabilities.<sup>527</sup> For the most part, though, the cluster of preventative proposals has failed to gain traction and produce noticeable results; the numbers of abandoned infants have continued to rise steadily in subsequent years.<sup>528</sup> One potentially positive sign, however, can be seen in the NPFPC’s launch of a free pre-pregnant screening program for women in the eight provinces most afflicted by congenital disorders following its 2006 study on birth defects.<sup>529</sup> It remains to be seen whether this initiative will have a substantial impact on lowering the rates of abandonment.

Unable to strike at the source of the problem, Civil Affairs authorities have instead pursued an unstated policy of coping with it through institutional expansion. According to statistical yearbooks compiled by the Civil Affairs Ministry, the number of state-run orphanages increased gradually from 49 to 67 during the years from 1978 to

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<sup>526</sup> Ibid., 21; “Jingcheng qiying xianxiang lu jin bu zhi,” *Xingdao ribao*, October 12, 1996.

<sup>527</sup> Yang and Zhu, “Qiantan qiying wenti,” 21.

<sup>528</sup> Moreover, a report published in fall 1994, only 10 cases against those who have deserted a child had been prosecuted since 1949.

<sup>529</sup> Chen Jia, “Birth defects soar due to pollution.” *China Daily* January 31, 2009. A spokesperson for the commission claimed that the program had benefitted “more than half” of the pregnancies in China from its launch in 2007 to early 2009, though did not specify the ways in which that benefit was being experienced.

1994, before skyrocketing to a total of 207 during the following decade.<sup>530</sup> The capacity of these facilities -- measured by the total number of cribs and beds -- more than quintupled from a 5,235 in 1980 to 29,592 in 2004.<sup>531</sup> The number of staff members working at orphanages increased by roughly the same ratio, from a baseline of 1,655 to 6,645, during the same time period.<sup>532</sup> But the most significant indicator of the government's commitment to expanding services for at-risk children is the escalating number of foundlings and orphans taken in by state-run facilities. The year-end total of dependents in orphanages grew more than seven-fold from 1978 to 2004, a jump from 3,665 to 26,140. Moreover, when including minors taken in by Children's Wards 儿童部 of Social Welfare Institutes, the total number of children placed in state care exceeded 56,000 (see Table 5.1 for yearly statistics).<sup>533</sup>

And yet, in spite of these efforts, there were clear indicators that the meteoric rise in the number of abandoned infants, particularly those with disabilities and disorders, was placing an undue strain on the system of state care. For example, in December 1988, the director of Tianjin City Orphanage disclosed regretfully that whereas 500 of the home's charges were in need of medical treatment, limitations on financial, material and human resources had allowed only 20 percent of the total to receive it.<sup>534</sup> But it was a controversy surrounding Shanghai Orphanage in the mid 1990s that exposed the heavy

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<sup>530</sup> See *Minzheng tongji lishi ziliao huibian: 1949-1992; Zhongguo minzheng tongji nianjian, 1993-2005*.

<sup>531</sup> Ibid.

<sup>532</sup> Ibid.

<sup>533</sup> Ibid.

<sup>534</sup> Lai Renjing, "Shehui de yige ewai fudan: canji ying'er bei fumu yiqi xianxiang jian xianlu," *Renmin ribao*, December 15, 1988

toll on the system most poignantly. In early 1996, Human Rights Watch, a New York City based organization, published a report outlining a string of abuses allegedly committed by facility administrators on the basis of testimony by former orphanage physician, Zhang Shuyun. Zhang, who had fled to Canada after failing to persuade authorities to investigate the matter, claimed that staff followed a policy of systematically singling out the most vulnerable orphans for “summary resolution,” placing them in separate chambers where they were denied proper care and left to perish.<sup>535</sup> According to Zhang, more than 1000 “unnatural deaths” occurred in the orphanage from 1986 through 1992. By her account, nearly half of the 200 orphan deaths that took place between November 1991 and October 1992 could be attributed to third-degree malnutrition.<sup>536</sup>

Irrespective of the accuracy of the charges, the contention over the state of caregiving at Shanghai Orphanage highlights the excessive burden being placed on the state’s network of relief homes for the young. The PRC government vehemently denied the allegations, viciously assailing the character and motivations of Zhang Shuyun and those who publicized the charges in a barrage of media reports.<sup>537</sup> Nevertheless, an article featuring an interview with Han Weichang, director of the facility during the time of the alleged maltreatment, exposed the depth of the orphanage’s difficulty in meeting the needs of its charges. While former director Han rejected the notion that the facility systematically denied care to the most vulnerable, he openly acknowledged that 20

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<sup>535</sup> Patrick Tyler, “Chilling Figures On Orphan Toll, China Cites ’89 Deaths,” *International Herald Tribune*, January 9, 1996.

<sup>536</sup> Ibid.

<sup>537</sup> Examples include “Shanghai gu’er yuan kaifang canguan bochi chuanyan,” *Zili zaobao*, January 9, 1996; “Shanghai ertong fuliyuan de zhenmao,” *Xianggang dagong*, March 7, 1996; Zhang Shuyun shexie xinchang lieji banban, *Xianggang wenhuibao* March 17, 1996

percent of the home's orphans in 1989 died that year due to the prevalence of illness and disease among its population. He also conceded that "freezing cold conditions" in the orphanage could have played a part in the high number of deaths.<sup>538</sup> Tacit recognition of these problems is also suggested by the fact that, within three years of the exposé's publication, the Shanghai Civil Affairs Bureau announced plans to relocate the home's orphans from the institute's original structure, built in 1911, to a newly-constructed, state-of-the-art compound designed to serve as a model facility for orphan care throughout the nation.<sup>539</sup>

*The Return of 'San Mao': Street Urchins in Post-Mao China*

At the onset of the Reform Period, the numbers of homeless children in Chinese cities appeared to be in decline as well. The vast majority of, if not all, Youth Correction Homes were shut down during the Cultural Revolution and not reopened in its aftermath, suggesting that Civil Affairs administrators did not view youth vagrancy as a pressing problem at the time. By the late 1980s, however, both the government and media outlets were launching studies and issuing reports on the renewed problem of street children. Some of these accounts were headlined by the title, "the new Sanmao" 新三毛, an allusion to a popular comic book and film character from the late 1930s and 1940s who lived a hardscrabble life on the streets of Shanghai alongside a cohort of fellow waifs.<sup>540</sup>

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<sup>538</sup> Ibid.

<sup>539</sup> "Gucan ertong tian fuyin – shi ertong fuli yuan, shi cishan jijinhui canji ertong kangfu zhongxin gongcheng," *Wenhui bao*, December 26, 1999.

<sup>540</sup> Artist Zhang Leping created the comic strip featuring Sanmao, a street orphan named after his signature three strands of hair, in 1935 and continued to publish it throughout the war and post-war period. The character became the subject of a film entitled 三毛流浪记 (*The Wanderings of Sanmao*) that was released in 1949.

But marked differences between the war torn social environment of the fictional figure from the past and that of his contemporary counterparts raises important questions into the ways in which China's reform program, despite its successes on many levels, has helped to revive a largely dormant social problem.

By all accounts, the number of homeless youngsters in China has been on the rise since the middle of the 1980s. A local survey found that authorities in Shanghai took in an average of 1765 street children per year from 1984 through 1987; that figure shot up to 2344 in 1988 and rose once again to 2870 in 1989.<sup>541</sup> The total number collected from Shanghai's streets in 1992 was well over 3000.<sup>542</sup> A separate study noted that the number of runaway children picked up in Jixi, a small city in the northeastern province of Heilongjiang, increased by 26 percent over a two-year period, from 198 in 1995 to 269 in 1997.<sup>543</sup> On a broader scale, the Vice Director for Social Affairs at the Civil Affairs Ministry, Li Mingchui, stated in 1991 that 60,000 to 70,000 homeless children were appearing in Chinese cities each year. Based on an investigation the Ministry undertook nearly a decade later, the agency estimated that the number of homeless children picked up across the nation had risen to 150,000 each year, a figure which outside experts nevertheless found low.<sup>544</sup>

Collectively, these studies offer an insightful glimpse into the backgrounds and lifestyles of China's fast-growing population of street children. They indicate that, in

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<sup>541</sup> Tao and Ding, "Liulang ertong," 20.

<sup>542</sup> "China Seeks to Help Children," *China News*, March 29, 1994.

<sup>543</sup> "Jingji fazhan bu jun: chengshi Shanghai ku'er liulang'er," *Zhongguo shibao*, September 15, 1991.

<sup>544</sup> Zhang Hong, "Jinlai guanxin liulang ertong," 11; Keyser (2009: 48) notes that unofficial estimates of the nation's total number of homeless children reach as high as 600,000.

sharp contrast to the population of abandoned infants, boys constituted the overwhelming bulk of minors living on the streets.<sup>545</sup> Like those deserted by their parents, however, the vast majority of young vagabonds were born in the countryside and eventually made their way to urban centers.<sup>546</sup> Though patterns of livelihood varied from one city to another, newcomers most commonly turned to begging, scrap collecting, the selling of fake goods, or busking in crowded areas such as railway stations, markets and public squares to subsist.<sup>547</sup> Those who were on the street longer were more inclined to steal, to pickpocket, or to pilfer goods from shipping yards and public areas. Whether thieving, pick pocketing, begging, or performing on the street, waifs rarely operated alone, preferring to work in groups of three or four. At night, they typically sought shelter in the waiting rooms of train stations, in vender stalls within local markets, in abandoned or partially constructed buildings, or under bridges.<sup>548</sup> Beyond the struggle to meet their subsistence needs, street children were exposed to a wide variety of abuses, from being discriminated against to being cheated, ridiculed and scolded, or being driven away by city residents who saw them as a nuisance, threat, or both.<sup>549</sup> The precarious conditions and harsh realities of

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<sup>545</sup> While boys clearly constitute the bulk of the homeless youth population, the actual percentages could vary widely from one study to the next. For example, a nationwide sample survey conducted by the Civil Affairs Ministry in 2000 revealed that 70% of street children were male. But boys made up a staggering proportion -- 95.6% -- of all homeless children picked up in Heilongjiang province during the period from 1995 through 1999. See Zhang Hong, "Jinlai guanxin liulang ertong," 11; Minzheng bu, "Liulang ertong jiuzhu diaocha," 13.

<sup>546</sup> See Ibid., 11, 13; See also Liu Shaowen "Liulang ertong: jia zai he fang," Dalian ribao, March 17, 2005. Taken together, these surveys indicate that roughly 75 to 90 percent of homeless children were born and reared in rural areas.

<sup>547</sup> See Zhang Hong, "Jinlai guanxin liulang ertong," 11.

<sup>548</sup> Tao and Ding, "Liulang ertong," 20; Li and Zuo, "Ertong liulang ji qi zonghe zhili," 28; Qi Ji. "Xin 'sanmao' liulang ji," 10-11; Zhang Hong, "Jinlai guanxin liulang ertong," 11.

<sup>549</sup> Zhang Hong, "Jinlai guanxin liulang ertong," 12.

street life encountered by wayward youngsters prompt us to ask why minors have been striking out on their own in dramatically increasing numbers during a time of rising prosperity across China.

Various explanations for the resurgence in child homelessness in recent decades have been put forth, but there appear to be three main social forces at work. First, a substantial rise in the number of broken families and discord in the home arguably serve as the chief factors behind the decision to run away.<sup>550</sup> In the past, a widespread adherence to Confucian family values and restrictive divorce laws functioned to thwart the dissolution of the kin unit. After 1980, though, the divorce rate in China began to climb appreciably for the first time in history due to changes in the economy and the relaxation of social and ideological controls.<sup>551</sup> In many cases the child of a divorced couple was subject to physical or psychological maltreatment at the hands of a step parent, compelling the youngster to flee. Children in disharmonious or broken families were also more likely to suffer neglect and not be provided with the socialization necessary for building strong and trusting relationships, leaving them emotionally disconnected and alienated. A number of independently-sponsored local surveys on homeless children, conducted in the early 1990s, revealed that roughly one in three came from divorced

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<sup>550</sup> Several independently conducted studies identify broken and disharmonious family environments as the number one cause behind the upswing in child homelessness. For example, see Dong Kewei, "Liulang ertong ye yinggai you ge jia," *Zhongguo gaige bao*, November 9, 2004; Wang and Liu, "Qing nian tan suo," 21; and Li et. al, "Beijing shi gu'can ertong bei yiqi de yuanyin fen xi," 88.

<sup>551</sup> In addition, the 1980 Marriage Law reaffirmed the right to initiate divorce for either spouse on a wide array of grounds. The Civil Affairs Ministry disclosed that the number of divorced couples in China in 1993 -- 909,000 -- represents a 3000 percent increase from 1990. See Sheila Tefft, "Lure of Chinese Cities Draws Runaway Children," *The Christian Science Monitor*, May 17, 1994. The divorce rate in Shanghai increased from 1.94% to 13.94% over the ten-year period of 1980 to 1989: "Jingji fazhan bu jun: chengshi Shanghai ku'er liulang'er," *Zhongguo shibao*, September 15, 1991.



households.<sup>552</sup> But unfavorable family conditions registered even more prominently in a larger-scale joint investigation undertaken by the Civil Affairs Ministry and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in 1992. Their findings revealed that two-thirds of the 1000 homeless children sampled ran away due to a parental divorce or to free themselves from mistreatment in the home.<sup>553</sup>

Second, heightened competition in China's education system has played a definitive role in the upsurge in child homelessness. The establishment and expansion of China's modern public education system in the twentieth century reshaped the everyday agenda of the country's youth while forging a new sense of identity tied to student status among them. In the Reform Period, the introduction of the one-child policy coupled with the disintegration of the state-sponsored pension program had the effect of saddling school-age children with immense parental pressure to succeed in the classroom. Couples came to view their single child's record of academic achievement as a key indicator of their eventual ability to provide for them after retirement. Critics inveighed against the education system for its near exclusive focus on knowledge acquisition and test-taking at the expense of moral learning and physical training, but competition in the schools system seems to have only intensified over the years. Students unable to excel in academics and advance in the ranks might find themselves the target of their parents' scorn, oftentimes manifest in verbal abuse or even physical punishment. For example, 739 of 2000 homeless children (27%) picked up in Shanghai in 1989 reported that they ran away because of being beaten or out of fear of suffering such abuse from their parents

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<sup>552</sup> See Qi Ji. "Xin "sanmao" liulang ji," 10-11; "Jingji fazhan bu jun: chengshi Shanghai ku'er liulang'er," *Zhongguo shibao*, September 15, 1991; Wang and Liu, "Qing nian tan suo," 21.

<sup>553</sup> "China Seeks to Help Children," *China News*, March 29, 1994.

due to poor academic performance.<sup>554</sup> For students under this kind of pressure, the decision to drop out of school went hand in hand with the decision to leave home.

Third, droves of children from rural areas have been pouring into China's bustling urban centers, lured by the prospects of a better and more exciting life in the city. In the early PRC, the government set about to eliminate the urban capitalist class, private enterprise, and disparities between municipality and countryside. The leveling of these differences provided little incentive for village youths to set out for urban areas during the Mao era, except in times of natural or manmade catastrophe.<sup>555</sup> But the model of economic development embraced by the reform-era authorities regenerated and widened inequalities between China's urban and rural sectors. Tantalized by the images of a prosperous and exciting city life on television screens across the countryside, a growing cohort of youths abandoned what they saw as a dull existence in the village to seek adventure and money-making opportunities in thriving commercial centers.<sup>556</sup> But being unskilled, semiliterate and underage, runaways have had to grapple with a limited availability of options after making it to the city, prompting them to resort to mendicancy, scrap collecting, or, for the more seasoned urban dwellers among them, a range of illicit activities to meet their subsistence needs.<sup>557</sup> Echoing concerns voiced by officials and

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<sup>554</sup> "Jingji fazhan bu jun: chengshi Shanghai ku'er liulang'er," *Zhongguo shibao*, September 15, 1991.

<sup>555</sup> Yang Huiming (Director, Shanghai Youth Correction Center), interview by the author, May 29, 2006.

<sup>556</sup> *Ibid.*; In an interview conducted in May 2006, the director of Shanghai's Youth Correction Center 上海市流浪儿童保护救助中心 pointed out that growing numbers of children left the village to pursue adventure and excitement in the city, a trend made possible by the government's relaxation of social controls in the Reform era. One survey showed that 23.3% of street children in Shanghai had drifted there expressly to find work. See Tao and Ding, "Liulang ertong," 20. A separate study found that children had left home in hope of finding a better job in the city to help supplement family income at home. See "Jingji fazhan bu jun: chengshi Shanghai ku'er liulang'er," *Zhongguo shibao*, September 15, 1991.

<sup>557</sup> Current law prohibits the employers from hiring individuals below 18 *sui*: "Jingji fazhan bu jun: chengshi Shanghai ku'er liulang'er," *Zhongguo shibao*, September 15, 1991.

reformers in the 1930s and 1940s, contemporary commentators feared that the packs of children currently roaming the streets would, if not placed on a disciplined path, naturally become tomorrow's criminal gangs.

Such warnings failed to resonate throughout the 1980s and into the early 1990s, as municipal Civil Affairs units stuck to a passive approach of collecting and releasing the young vagrants. As noted above, the Youth Correction Institutes 儿童教养院 founded in the early PRC had vanquished by the end of the Cultural Revolution. With child homelessness subsiding at the onset of the Reform era, China's new leadership chose not to revive fulltime care facilities, relying instead on an expansive set of repatriation (lit. "detain and send back") stations 收养遣送站. Standard procedure involved removing homeless children from the streets, placing them in one of the nation's 600 stations for a brief stint, and facilitating their return to their native places.<sup>558</sup> Most tellingly, child and adult vagrants were treated virtually the same. The system not only failed to staunch the torrent of runaways from rural areas but also proved particularly vulnerable to recidivism. Civil Affairs officials in Jiamisu, Heilongjiang province pointed to a seemingly endless stream of runaways entering the city, noting that, though an aggressive three-year campaign had successfully removed 600 youths from its streets from 1989 through 1991, 500 runaways were roaming them once again within a year.<sup>559</sup> Among a group of Shanghai-based homeless children that were interviewed in 1991, 37 percent reported

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<sup>558</sup> This is the national total reported for the total at the end of 1991; it most likely approaches the peak number, as the government would begin to supplant collection stations with a different type of organization by the mid 1990s. See "Gongke wanzheng de sisu – qiansong liulang ertong de wenti ji duice," *Zhongguo shehui bao*, December 13, 1991.

<sup>559</sup> "China seeks to help children," *China News*, March 19, 1995.

that they had run away from home more than once. One unnamed runaway was detained in Shanghai and returned to his home village seven times in 1987 only to make his way back to the city each time. While this case may be extreme, it exposed the then current infrastructure's inability to address the root of the problem.<sup>560</sup>

In the early 1990s, the Chinese government began sending signals that it recognized the inadequacy of its policy of simply detaining and sending runaways home. A turning point in official activism took place in 1992, when the Civil Affairs Ministry partnered with UNICEF to conduct a survey of 10,000 homeless children in Anhui, Guangdong, Hunan provinces and Shanghai city and to explore new types of support services for the afflicted.<sup>561</sup> In accord with the study's findings, the two agencies worked with relief institutes in the areas in question to launch a range of trial programs, from psychological counseling and sociological casework to labor skills training and hygienic instruction, for youngsters taken off the streets.<sup>562</sup> The transition from a reactive to interventionist approach was buttressed by new legal provisions and agreements. Ever since the 1930s, when the issue of homeless children first sparked public discussion in China, urban administrators and private reformers alike discussed it overwhelmingly in terms of its implications for the community, society, and the nation at large. The passage of the "Minors Protection Law" 未成年保护法 in September 1991 hinted at a shift from focusing exclusively on broader, collective concerns toward an interest in ensuring the individual child's wellbeing. One of the law's provisions obligated local civil affairs

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<sup>560</sup> Xu Qianfu. "Jinri xiao lazi," 12.

<sup>561</sup> "Mingzhengbu yu Lianheguo nishou bo erbai wan jiuzhu liulang er," *Mingbao*, October 27, 1993.

<sup>562</sup> *Ibid.*

offices to provide shelter, education, and care to street urchins until their parents or legal guardians could be identified.<sup>563</sup> The PRC government also became a signatory to the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child 儿童权利公约; the agreement, which took effect in China in April 1992, stipulated that homeless minors have the right to receive protection and assistance from the state.<sup>564</sup> These declarations, and ones that would follow, made a point of distinguishing young vagabonds from old, underscoring the special status and particular needs of the former.

The pilot programs and resolutions on children's rights would serve as a foundation for building a new set of institutions designed to protect and aid the growing ranks of homeless youths. In 1995, the State Council 国务院, a top-level administrative body in the central government, issued a directive calling for the institutionalization of both protection and education services for children who had been separated from home.<sup>565</sup> The circular stated somewhat broadly that all cities with large numbers of homeless minors ought to set up new care giving facilities known as 流浪儿童保护救助中心 (referred to hereafter as Youth Correction Centers), but noted that local governments, with Civil Affairs offices taking the lead, should handle this. This resulted in a sporadic, decentralized pattern of institutional growth based more on local need than central mandate: for example, Shanghai and Changsha opened centers in 1998, Beijing and Shijiazhuang in 2001, and Nanjing and Shenzhen as late as 2004. By 2005, 130

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<sup>563</sup> Li Lixi, "Liulang ertong jieshou 'qianli' jiaoyu," *Hunan ribao*, August 22, 2001.

<sup>564</sup> Ibid.

<sup>565</sup> Minzhengbu, "Liulang ertong jiuzhu diaocha," 13.

Youth Correction Centers had been set up in urban centers throughout the country.<sup>566</sup>

Unlike the network of repatriation stations, the centers were tasked with giving shelter for a period of up to one year while offering a non-standard curriculum of instruction and training specially designed to transform the character and habits of their charges. Finally, they were obliged to track down each child's legal guardians in order bring about the eventual reunification of the sundered family. Though the surge in youth homelessness had ignited a round of institutional expansion, it was not long before the administrators of these centers followed the lead of orphanages by experimenting with various family-based approaches to care giving, the subject of the following section.

### **“Multi-Approachism” and the Rise of Family-Centered Care**

Judging by the rapid proliferation of facilities alone, the mounting numbers of at-risk children in the Reform Period appears to have simply deepened the state's commitment to the model of collective care adopted initially in the 1950s. In the early PRC, the Civil Affairs apparatus and People's Welfare League had articulated the need to eliminate the irregular practices, eclectic objectives, and inefficiencies they identified in the operations of privately-run children's institutions from previous times. For the first time in history, the Chinese state showed itself determined and capable of building and assuming full managerial control of an integrated system of welfare for the young. In a time of ideological austerity, the erstwhile leaders in relief work -- religious figures, capitalist-philanthropists, foreign nationals -- were unsurprisingly suspected of acting in accord with motivations and objectives that ran counter to building a socialist society,

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<sup>566</sup> Xu Ziting, “Quanguo liulang ertong jiuzhu baohu gongzuo yanjiu taohui zai jing zhaokai,” *Zhongguo shehui bao*, March 8, 2005.

and thus were denied further participation in this sector. The party-state adopted the role of surrogate guardians for youngsters separated from their natal parents, claiming full responsibility for meeting their physiological needs, shaping their mental and ethical development, and expecting them to direct their future talents and labor to the construction of the motherland in return. Under the direction of the Civil Affairs Ministry, orphanages and youth correction homes offered the collective existence of a family that was ideally suited to the vulnerable child's proper socialization and inculcation of socialist values. The turnover in national leadership at the inception of the Reform Period did not engender a departure from the established approach to aiding dependent children and, given the overall trend of institutional expansion, it would seem that the group-care model remained predominant well into the new era.

Beneath this pattern of growth, however, there emerged an unmistakable change of direction in the way caregivers in post-Mao China have been thinking about the needs of at-risk children and the methods best suited for meeting them. Adherence to the singular approach of supporting the young in an institutional setting began giving way to a spirit of flexibility and experimentation with new techniques under the banner of *duoyuanhua* 多元化, a Chinese term that may be rendered “multi-approachism.”<sup>567</sup>

Beijing's decision to reopen its borders to the outside world in 1979 allowed for the flow of new ideas on child development, drawn primarily from the Western fields of psychology and social work, into China. From the mid-1990s onward, Civil Affairs officers and orphanage administrators began working with foreign specialists and

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<sup>567</sup> The shift toward 多元化, or “multi-approachism,” in orphan care has been touted by authorities ranging from the vice director of Shanghai orphanage (Xue Feng, interview by the author, April 23, 2006) up to the Director of Social Welfare at the Civil Affairs Ministry, Wang Suying (“Shanghai can ertong zoujing,” *Shanghai minzheng*, 32).

international aid organizations to develop new types of services tailored to the specific needs of vulnerable youngsters. Amid the bustle of local initiative and embrace of diversification, we can discern a paradigmatic shift from institutional-based assistance to family-centered support, marking the most significant development in the PRC's system of child welfare since it was set up in the 1950s.

*Legacies of the Mao Era: The Group-Care Approach to Aiding the Young*

In order to grasp the extent to which this shift is altering the larger framework of child relief in contemporary China, it will be helpful first to sketch out the fundamental components of institutional care. Moreover, in spite of the trend toward family-centered support, many policies and procedures associated with the older approach remain in effect. In short, the system at the time of this writing is in a transitional state, consisting of a mix of both formats. The description of institutional care below focuses primarily on the operations at the sole state-run orphanage in Shanghai. The case of Shanghai orphanage 上海市儿童福利院 is particularly revealing given its dual status as the largest institution of its kind in China in terms of total children housed and as a leading force in creating and implementing family-care programs for the young.<sup>568</sup> The account that follows is based largely on interviews conducted at this facility and at the Shanghai Civil Affairs Bureau by the author in spring 2006, supplemented by data drawn from local gazetteers and reports in the Chinese media.

China's state-run orphanages have responded to the rampancy of abandonment in contemporary times by developing an elaborate set of procedures to streamline the process by which foundlings are admitted and guardianship is transferred. Any individual

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<sup>568</sup> In May 2006, Shanghai orphanage had a total of 1800 wards for which it served as a legal guardian, a figure including some 600 placed with foster care families.



who identifies and picks up a deserted infant is required to take her to the nearest police station, which logs the time and location of the sighting and any identifying markers (i.e. the cut and color of the child's clothes) before delivering the youngster to a nearby hospital.<sup>569</sup> The hospital is required to conduct a physical checkup to determine if the foundling suffers from a congenital disorder, administer any medical attention, and then arrange for their charge to be transported to the city orphanage.<sup>570</sup> The rights and responsibilities associated with guardianship follow the abandoned child in each step of this process, transferring automatically from birth parents, to the city Public Security Bureau 公安局 to the municipal Public Health Bureau 卫生局 and finally to local Civil Affairs authorities.<sup>571</sup> During the foundling's first three months at the orphanage, its administrators arrange to have photos and a brief description of the youngster publicized in local newspapers for a period of three months in an effort to track down the child's natal parents and reunite the kin group.<sup>572</sup> If still unclaimed by the end of this term, the orphanage issues the foundling a residence permit, carrying with it the rights and access to services accorded to registered local inhabitants.<sup>573</sup>

Care for the wards of the orphanage is structured around a three-pronged approach of “nurturing, treating, and educating” 养治教. Initially touted by central

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<sup>569</sup> Huang Jiachun (Director, Shanghai orphanage), interview by the author, May 24, 2006.

<sup>570</sup> Ibid.

<sup>571</sup> Ibid.

<sup>572</sup> Parents who wish to reclaim a son or daughter must deal with the Public Security Bureau rather than the orphanage. In order to ensure it is a legitimate claim, they are asked to supply details connected to the abandonment of the child and must submit to a DNA-based paternity or maternity test. Huang Jiachun, Director of Shanghai orphanage in 2006, indicated that while reclamation attempts are a relatively rare occurrence natal parents who successfully demonstrate blood ties are generally permitted to take the child without further scrutiny or punishment.

<sup>573</sup> Huang Jiachun (Director, Shanghai orphanage), interview by the author, May 24, 2006.

authorities in a 1964 circular as a policy to be extended throughout the country, the formula found renewed endorsement at a conference on urban social welfare work convened by the Civil Affairs Ministry in 1982.<sup>574</sup> In the context of institutional orphan care, nurturing was defined primarily as providing nutrition, clothing and a level of hygiene necessary for healthy physiological development.<sup>575</sup> The second leg of institutional care, medical treatment, took several different forms. A roster of fulltime pediatricians and nurses at Shanghai orphanage -- totaling over 35 for some 550 charges in 1996 -- administer regular check-ups and treat children who had contracted common ailments or regularly occurring diseases in the institution's designated sick room.<sup>576</sup> A child in need of corrective surgery for a treatable congenital disorder or defect such as club feet, heart disease, a cleft lip or palate, etc. is sent to one of three hospitals with which the orphanage has special ties to undergo necessary operations.<sup>577</sup> Increased awareness of the special needs of orphaned and disabled children 孤残儿童 has prompted an expansion of medical treatment procedures in the reform period. In 1985, the municipal Civil Affairs agency set up Shanghai Rehabilitation Center for Handicapped Children 上海市伤残儿童康复中心 to provide a range of services such as assessment, physical therapy, acupuncture, and massage for children with physical defects as well as evaluations and a special education track for those with mental deficiencies or paralysis.

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<sup>574</sup> Fan ed., *Shanghai minzheng zhi*, 166; Wang, *Zhongguo shehui fuli shi*, 331.

<sup>575</sup> Li Ping, "Shanghai ertong fuliyuan de zhen mao," *Xianggang wenhui bao*, March 8, 1996.

<sup>576</sup> Ibid.; Huang Jiachun (Director, Shanghai orphanage), interview by the author, May 24, 2006.

<sup>577</sup> Huang Jiachun (Director, Shanghai orphanage), interview by the author, May 24, 2006.

Four years later, the center added testing and speech therapy services for children with hearing problems and speech impediments.<sup>578</sup>

The stated objective of education, the third component of the institutional care model, was teaching the wards of the state a set of skills that would enable them to be reintegrated into mainstream society and to provide for their own livelihood.<sup>579</sup> The educational enterprise was limited initially to sending children deemed mentally normal to public elementary and middle schools, where they sat and learned alongside students from the community. The growing attention to meeting the particular challenges of children with developmental problems, however, can also be observed in more recent education initiatives. In June 1993, the orphanage opened Zhenchan school 真神学校 on its premises to offer a program of learning for children with mental and other disabilities too severe to allow for outside education. Its curriculum consisted of specially tailored courses in language and literature, mathematics, music and art, physical education, and ethics. Within two years, more than one-third of the orphanage's charges were enrolled in the school. More recently, the orphanage has established an on-site preschool program based on the U.S. model that focuses on character development and building confidence, an emphasis in line with the needs of those who suffer the psychological loss of abandonment at an early age.<sup>580</sup>

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<sup>578</sup> Fan ed., *Shanghai minzheng zhi*, 166.

<sup>579</sup> Zhang Xiaolin, "Ai de le zhang – ji shanghai shi ertong fuliyuan," *Wenhui bao*, May 27, 1987; Li Qiong, "Beijing shi gu'can ertong fuliyuan caifang ji," *Huasheng bao*, May 23, 1986; Peng, "Jianchi gaige xietiao fazhan," 7.

<sup>580</sup> The director of the orphanage specifically identified these two features of the preschool system they've adopted. Huang Jiachun (Director, Shanghai orphanage), interview by the author, May 24, 2006.

Broadly speaking, there are three pathways out of institutionalized orphan care for the young. Placement in an adoptive family, the first of these, had served as the exit strategy pursued most vigorously by administrators of group-care facilities for foundlings from the early Qing through the Mao years, a point underscored by consistently high adoption rates. An overriding commitment to meeting birth planning objectives, however, had the effect of severely constricting the pool of couples eligible to adopt throughout the 1980s and the early 1990s. In the absence of a uniform, national law on adoption, it was left up to local agencies to formulate policy for their jurisdictions. For example, the Shanghai Civil Affairs Bureau issued a set of regulations on adoption in October 1981, stipulating that only childless couples from Shanghai and other areas were eligible to adopt.<sup>581</sup> The Chinese government has not released statistics on domestic adoptions in the 1980s, but the imposition of such restrictions suggest that legal adoption remained a particularly narrow outlet for minors in state custody throughout the decade.

The promulgation of the PRC Adoption Law 中华人民共和国收养法 in 1992, most likely in response to a sustained surge in infant abandonment, would create something of a safety valve for China's increasingly overcrowded orphanages. Two of the law's basic restrictions -- prospective parents must be childless and may not adopt more than one kid -- were waived for those who adopted an orphan, a disabled child, or an abandoned infant of unknown parents from an orphanage or social welfare institute.<sup>582</sup> The annual number of legal domestic adoptions shot up from just over 2800 in 1991 to

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<sup>581</sup> Fan ed., *Shanghai minzheng zhi*, 165.

<sup>582</sup> *Zhonghua renmin gongheguo shouyangfa*, 7. The law also required adoptive parents to be at least 35 years old and to be free of any chronic disease. Article 8 of the Adoption Law provided for exceptions to the stipulation on childlessness and the limit to one child for those who sought to adopt children from group-care institutions.

more than 20,000 in 1998, before nearly doubling to 40,084 in 2004. The establishment of the Center for Chinese Adoption Affairs, also in 1992, helped facilitate a steady increase in intercountry placements, which rose from a mere 252 in 1992 to some 5,900 in 1998, and then more than doubled to 12,590 in 2004 (see Table 5.2 for a fuller set of statistics).<sup>583</sup> Put in other terms, the total number of domestic and international adoptions had risen to a sum by 2004 that amounted to a near halving of the children in institutional care.<sup>584</sup>

There were two main routes out of the orphanage for those not placed with an adoptive family: either assignment to an outside work unit or transfer to a separate relief facility. It was up to local officials to make arrangements for this group of dependents. In 1998, Shanghai municipal authorities issued a directive mandating that the government of the district or county in which an orphaned and disabled child resides – Minhang District in the case of Shanghai orphanage – is responsible for arranging employment for the dependent when he or she becomes an adult.<sup>585</sup> Naturally, many of those who grow up in the institution are unable to establish a normal working existence. Wards of Shanghai orphanage who have severe disabilities and thus lack the ability to provide for themselves are sent, upon turning 18 *sui*, to Shanghai Number Two Social Welfare Institute 上海第

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<sup>583</sup> In 1992, the PRC established international adoption agreements with 14 countries. The United States has consistently been the top receiving county since 1991, serving as the destination for 70 to 80% of China's intercountry adoptions each year. See Cheng, "Zhongguo dangdai de ertong fuli," 10.

<sup>584</sup> The total number of domestic and international placements in 2004 was 52,603 whereas 56,206 children remained in institutional care at the end of that year. Calculations based on these totals would suggest that adoptive placements led to a reduction in China's population of institutionalized minors of 47.8%. It must be noted, however, that these figures do not account for those who died, who were transferred to other relief organizations, or who were released to work or pursue study during the course of the year. See *Zhongguo minzheng tongji nianjian*, 52.

<sup>585</sup> Peng, "Jianchi gaige xietiao fazhan," 7. The mandate applied not only to those residing at Shanghai orphanage, but also children placed in foster care homes, the subject of the following subsection below.

二社会福利院 in Chongming county, where they would continue to receive full support from the state.<sup>586</sup> Those who have partial labor ability are transferred to one of Shanghai's welfare enterprises 福利企业, which offer job training, arrange participation in productive activities, and provide subsidies to help cover living costs. Beyond these established outlets, wards of the orphanage who gain admittance to a college or university receive full support for tuition and living expenses while pursuing an undergraduate degree.<sup>587</sup>

### *The “Family-ization” of Orphan Care*

In the late 1990s, administrators from various orphanages across China began experimenting with a new approach to aiding the young in their custody – foster care. They insisted that a family-based support system was capable of addressing the individual needs of the dependent child in ways that an institutional framework could not. And while adoption also provides a bridge to family life, the numbers of permanent home placements, growing as rapidly as they have, lag further and further behind the total number of those who remain in institutional care with each passing year. The origins of China's foster care enterprise can be traced back to an activity sponsored by Shanghai orphanage in 1994 called 好心人抱一抱孤儿 (lit. “kind-hearted people hug orphans”). Just prior to the Chinese lunar New Year, the facility's officers arranged for some 1000 volunteer city residents to give hugs to children in their care, a type of physical

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<sup>586</sup> Fan ed., *Shanghai minzheng zhi*, 163; Zhang Xiaolin, “Ai de le zhang – ji shanghai shi ertong fuliyuan,” *Wenhui bao*, May 27, 1987; Huang Jiachun (Director, Shanghai orphanage), interview by the author, May 24, 2006.

<sup>587</sup> In 2006, the Director Huang of Shanghai orphanage put this author in contact with one Cheng Lin 程琳 who had grown up in the facility and was currently studying at East China Normal University 华东师范大学 with the government's financial backing.

connection rarely experienced by those long severed from family life.<sup>588</sup> Following this, 103 couples each took home a vulnerable youngster for the weekend so that the child could celebrate the national holiday in a family setting.<sup>589</sup> Huang Jiachun, vice director of the orphanage at the time, pointed out that this initiative was designed “to foster a warm feeling of attachment to others” (产生感情依恋) in the recipients.<sup>590</sup>

Buoyed by the success of these activities, Shanghai orphanage launched the country’s first foster care 家庭寄养 program in July 1997. The first step involved issuing a public call for interested and qualified couples to submit an application. To be eligible to participate, prospective foster parents had to demonstrate that they met certain education and economic requirements, had established a stable family environment, and that neither individual had a communicable disease or history of criminal activity. Through a rigorous screening process that involved the dispatch of a social worker to conduct home interviews and on-the-spot investigations as well as several rounds of review, the officers of Shanghai orphanage selected a total of 100 couples from a pool of 200 who applied during the first year of the program’s existence.<sup>591</sup> Each placement began with a three-month trial period. If, at the end of the provisional phase, both the child and couple were satisfied with the arrangements, the term of care was formally

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<sup>588</sup> Huang Jiachun (Director, Shanghai orphanage), interview by the author, May 24, 2006.

<sup>589</sup> Li Ping, “Shanghai ertong fuliyuan de zhen mao,” *Xianggang wenhui bao*, March 8, 1996.

<sup>590</sup> Huang Jiachun (Director, Shanghai orphanage), interview by the author, May 24, 2006.

<sup>591</sup> Zhou and Lu, “Gucan ertong jiating jiyang moshi tansu,” 24.

extended to a period of three years as specified in a contract signed by orphanage officials and foster parents.<sup>592</sup>

Over the following years, Shanghai's foster care pilot project blossomed into a regulated and thriving program for youngsters otherwise bereft of a family. Notably, in contrast to the statutory terms of adoption, the legal guardianship of a child placed in a foster home remains in the hands of the local Civil Affairs agency, a situation that demanded a regular and open channel of communication between authorities and caregivers. Shanghai orphanage set up a foster care office 家庭寄养办事处 to help with the logistics of exchange.<sup>593</sup> On the one hand, the office has provided foster couples with specialized training to assist with the emotional growth and education of disabled and orphaned kids.<sup>594</sup> On the other hand, it strives to monitor the wellbeing of the child in his or her new environment. Throughout the trial stage, the office conducts telephone interviews with the foster parents once weekly and requires them to proceed to the office to meet with staff and submit a completed status report, known as a "situation feedback form" 情况反馈表, each month.<sup>595</sup> Thereafter, representatives of the office schedule a minimum of four meetings per year with the couple and child, two of which are mandatory home visits, to ensure that the family is still furnishing the support that was

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<sup>592</sup> Ibid.; Huang Jiachun (Director, Shanghai orphanage), interview by the author, May 24, 2006. The standard contract was known as 孤残儿童家庭寄养委托协议书.

<sup>593</sup> Zhou and Lu, "Gucan ertong jiating jiyang moshi tansu," 24. The office has since been renamed 孤残儿童家庭寄养办事处.

<sup>594</sup> Seventy-five of the first 100 children who enrolled in Shanghai's foster care program suffered from mental disabilities.

<sup>595</sup> Zhou and Lu, "Gucan ertong jiating jiyang moshi tansu," 24.



needed.<sup>596</sup> The Shanghai program continued to flourish over the following decade: the number of children in foster homes increased by more than two-fold from July 1998 (100) to June 2000 (220), and nearly doubled again (to over 400) within two years.<sup>597</sup> By 2006, fully one-third of the 1800 children in the custody of Shanghai orphanage were living in foster homes.<sup>598</sup>

Shanghai's family-care alternative was upheld as a model worthy of emulation by a number of orphanage administrators in other Chinese cities. The leaders of Guiyang orphanage in the south central region founded a foster care program in 1998 in part to cope with overcrowded conditions of the facility.<sup>599</sup> Beijing's state-run orphanage followed suit the next year, but deviated from the policy of Shanghai's flagship program by sending its charges to foster homes located exclusively in rural areas. From the program's inception in 1999 through the end of 2003, more than 30 percent of all children admitted to the capital's orphanage were entrusted to the care of foster parents.<sup>600</sup> Meanwhile, the successive establishment of foster care services in Kunming, Nanjing, and Wuhan in the year 2000 was reshaping the structure of orphan support in these cities. By the end of that year, just over two-thirds of children at Kunming's facility had been placed in foster families.<sup>601</sup> The Wuhan case, in particular, points up the degree

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<sup>596</sup> Huang Jiachun (Director, Shanghai orphanage), interview by the author, May 24, 2006.

<sup>597</sup> "Shanghai gucan er jiyang you zhangfa," *Wenhui bao*, July 10, 2000; "Rang gucan ertong zoujin," 31.

<sup>598</sup> Huang Jiachun (Director, Shanghai orphanage), interview by the author, May 24, 2006.

<sup>599</sup> Tong Fugui, "Jiating jiyang ertong fuli shiye zou xiang shehui," *Zhongguo shehui bao*, December 7, 2002.

<sup>600</sup> Cheng Haijun, "Zhongguo dangdai de ertong fuli," 9.

<sup>601</sup> Sun Yongxiang and Duan Xiqi, "Kunming shi ertong fuliyuan da li tuozhan fazhan kongjian," *Zhongguo shehui bao*, February 22, 2003.

of flexibility in shaping foster care policies during this wave of decentralized expansion. While Wuhan's program followed the Shanghai model of implementing a three-month trial phase, it developed a notably more rigorous set of provisions for monitoring the conditions and development of children who face special challenges thereafter. These included dispatching agents to make home visits at a more frequent rate of one time per month, conducting physical exams at fixed intervals on the basis of the child's age, and sending medical specialists to foster homes on a regular basis to provide assessments and guidance for putting rehabilitative training schemes for disabled children into action.<sup>602</sup> During its first two years of existence, Wuhan's program placed a total of 240 children – three-quarters of whom were disabled and thus prime candidates for physical or mental rehabilitation – from the municipal orphanage with foster families.<sup>603</sup>

After half a decade of initiative by local administrators, central-level authorities began championing foster care as preferable to group-care arrangements and adopted a standard set of regulations and policies for broader implementation. This marked a bottom-up pattern of expansion at variance with the top-down formation of the county's child welfare system in the Mao and early reform periods. As a harbinger of changes in the official position, Shanghai's Civil Affairs Bureau organized a conference on the city's foster care services that brought together a mix of foreign specialists, upper-tier Civil

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<sup>602</sup> Hu Xianzhen, "Wei gucan ertong gougui 'hui jia zhi lu'," *Zhongguo shehuibao*, May 18, 2002. According to Wuhan orphanage's foster policy, infants under six months of age received a physical exam every month; those between six months and one year received were given one every three months; those between one and three years old received one every six months; and those aged older than three years on an annual basis.

<sup>603</sup> Ibid.

Affairs officials, and orphanage administrators from other Chinese cities in July 2002.<sup>604</sup> Conference participant Wang Suying, director of the Civil Affairs Ministry's Department of Social Welfare, expressed his unequivocal support for foster care initiatives, which he insisted were emblematic of a necessary shift in Chinese orphan care from "placing emphasis on institutional development" 重机构发展 to "focusing on human resources" 以人为本.<sup>605</sup> A little over a year later, in late October 2003, the Civil Affairs Ministry underscored its growing commitment to this transition by issuing a set of "Provisional methods for managing foster care" 家庭寄养管理暂行办法 for the nation. The text specified basic requirements for foster parent and child eligibility and affirmed that the local Civil Affairs organ (county level or above) retained custodial rights and bore full responsibility for assuming the expenses associated with the child's upbringing for the duration of the placement period.<sup>606</sup> The circulation of these regulations, along with renewed endorsements made by ministry officers, was designed to serve as a push for the wider adoption of family-care alternatives in the provinces and cities.<sup>607</sup>

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<sup>604</sup> The conference, held at Shanghai Hotel Equatorial 上海市国际贵都大酒店, was sponsored jointly by the Shanghai Civil Affairs Bureau and Shanghai Charitable Federation 上海慈善基金会. The federation had been founded by the city government in 1994 as an official conduit for soliciting, managing, and allocating donations from urban residents for a variety of philanthropic causes.

<sup>605</sup> "Rang gucan ertong zoujin," 32.

<sup>606</sup> Foster care parents must 1) have a residence permit and fixed residence in the jurisdiction of the foster care office in question; 2) have as much living space as the average resident in the area; 3) have a stable income (as high as the local average); 4) be free of communicable diseases; and 5) have no criminal record. Aside from these restrictions, prospective guardians must be between the ages of 30 and 65 *sui* and in good physical and mental health. Those eligible for placement, on the other hand, were limited to orphans or foundlings between the ages of 10 and 18, whose parents could not be identified, and who were willing to enter a foster care arrangement. See "Wei hu huigui jiating de guer qiying hefa quanyi: 'jiating jiyang guanli zanzheng ban fa' jiedu," *Fazhi bao*, November 6, 2003.

<sup>607</sup> Both Li Baoku 李宝库, Vice Director of the Ministry of Civil Affairs, and Li Hao 李浩 (no relation), of the ministry's Social Welfare Department independently voiced their unequivocal support for foster

The foster care movement was built upon a framework of joint government, community, and family participation that was novel to China's system of public assistance for the young.<sup>608</sup> According to layout of this scheme, the government, in particular the municipal-level Bureau of Finance 财政局, was responsible for allocating the funds necessary for meeting the everyday needs of the fostered child.<sup>609</sup> Support from the community, the second leg of the program, included the capacity of local kindergartens and public schools to admit children from foster care homes, to reduce or simply waive their tuition, and to educate those among them with special learning needs. Community support also encompassed the appointment of various specialists such as psychologists, physical therapists, and social workers to help the child cope with the particular challenges in his or her daily life. Other elements of community assistance included the provision of free medical care by doctors and local hospitals as well as donations from private individuals and groups.<sup>610</sup> The third component of the model, the foster family, was essential for creating the loving and nurturing environment that officials had come to see as indispensable to the vulnerable child's healthy development. The newly-touted tripartite formula was part and parcel of the Civil Affairs Ministry's campaign to 'societalize' social welfare, an effort clearly centered on the formation of

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methods within a few week's of the passage of provisions. See text below for a fuller discussion of their remarks.

<sup>608</sup> The official policy was referred to as “政府主导，社会支持，家庭寄养，统一监护” (“government leadership, societal support, family foster care: unified guardianship”).

<sup>609</sup> “Rang gucan ertong zoujin,”<sup>32</sup>. Typically this took the form of a regular monthly subsidy paid out to the contracted foster parents. The amount varied over time and from one location to the next, based in part on the local cost of living. For example, the foster parents in received a monthly sum of, whereas those in Guangzhou in early 2005 were entitled to an amount of 825 RMB (about US\$125).

<sup>610</sup> Ibid., 31; Huang Jiachun (Director, Shanghai orphanage), interview by the author, May 24, 2006.

partnerships among state and non-state actors rather than simply the relegation of responsibility for social services to private players.<sup>611</sup>

The proponents of foster care framed their support for the enterprise by stressing how family-centered rearing could shore up many of the glaring insufficiencies of an institutional upbringing. As an alternative to the longstanding collective ideal of 养治教, foster care “enabled orphaned and disabled children to have the warmth of family” and to “feel the love of a mother and father.”<sup>612</sup> The smaller setting helped to facilitate the child’s socialization, particularly the formation of emotional bonds, to build self-confidence, and to further their intellectual development in ways that the facility could not.<sup>613</sup> Li Hao, an official in the Ministry’s Social Welfare Division, pointed out that his agency’s support for foster care reflected a newfound emphasis on the child’s “spiritual needs, psychological needs, character development along with their physical needs.”<sup>614</sup> In a radical departure from the Mao period and early reform era, Li Hao’s colleague, Li Baoku, the Vice Director of the Ministry, emphasized how the mainstream approach to orphan care in China fell short of global standards. The Vice Director noted that internationally recognized research and the record of social work make clear that the child welfare institute’s “collective model is severely inadequate to meet the needs for child’s emotional development, and furthermore that foster care can provide a

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<sup>611</sup> “政府主导，社会支持，家庭寄养，统一监护”。

<sup>612</sup> Zhou and Lu, “Gucan ertong jiating jiyang moshi tansu,” 23.

<sup>613</sup> Peng, “Jianchi gaige xietiao fazhan,” 7; Chen Guang, “Guangzhou tuichu jiating jiyang shequ shidian,” *Zhongguo shehui bao*, January 1, 2005.

<sup>614</sup> Zhu Yan, “Jiating jiyang: guanzhu gucan er de jingshen xuqiu,” *Zhongguo funü bao*, November 19, 2003.

supplement to these deficiencies.”<sup>615</sup> At the same time, official acknowledgement of the advantages of family care began to inspire alternative approaches to supporting homeless children as well.

### *Early Signs of Family-style Support for Homeless Children*

Disillusioned by high rates of recidivism among homeless youths, Civil Affairs authorities sought, beginning in the late 1990s, to resurrect the juvenile reform facilities that had been shuttered by the close of China’s Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). The revived Youth Correction Centers, reaching a total of 130 by the end of 2003, were designed to provide shelter and reform education to the adolescents who had been pouring into the nation’s urban centers in droves since the late 1980s. They were set up to tackle the problem of youth homelessness in ways that the detention stations 收容遣送站 had seemingly failed to. Whereas the latter served as mere collection points from which street urchins were returned to their native communities, the revival of Youth Correction Centers was predicated on the notion that the adolescent’s inner makeup – sense of discipline, ability to discern right from wrong, outlook on the law, etc. – had to be recalibrated. Simply shuttling them back to their hometowns without undertaking this transformation, officials concluded, neither struck at the root of the problem nor did much to thwart the reappearance of runaway youths on the city streets. The child’s family and, to a lesser extent, educational environment were to blame for setting him or her on the wrong path. Placement in a highly structured institutional setting was upheld as an antidote to deviance, a pivotal step toward course correction.

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<sup>615</sup> Li Baoku, “Jiji kaizhan gucan ertong jiating jiyang gongzuo quanmian tuijin ertong fuli shiye de shehuihua jin Cheng,” *Zhongguo shehui bao*, October 29, 2003. The term Li uses, child welfare institute 儿童福利院, is official parlance for state-managed orphanage.

In a seemingly paradoxical twist of developments, the proliferation of state-run institutions for street children was occurring at the very time that operators of China's orphanages were increasingly turning away from the collective care model. The new lineup of Youth Correction Centers functioned as full service, round-the-clock facilities, but they were not meant to become permanent or even long-term homes for those admitted.<sup>616</sup> The idea was to extract wayward children from the unforgiving conditions of the urban netherworld and provide them with a protected space and the tools necessary to make a fresh start. Indeed, the state's recent acknowledgement of its responsibility to protect the well-being of uprooted minors was written into the official moniker for these institutions.<sup>617</sup> While each facility adopted its own particular policies, the centers typically took in street children along with petty criminals and delinquents between the ages of seven and sixteen 岁 (*sui*), for a maximum stay of six months to one year.<sup>618</sup> It was determined that by the end of this term they could be sent home with the confidence that they would not be compelled to rejoin the ranks of urban street dwellers.

In addition to establishing a refuge from the negative influences of the city, each facility developed a highly regimented schedule of activities designed to serve as a bridge from the impulsive rhythms of street living to the stability of a student's existence. Subject to a detailed body of regulations, the formerly homeless child learned to live a collective life in a uniform manner from the waking hour to bedtime. The rigid structure

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<sup>616</sup> With funds allocated by the local Bureau of Finance 财务局, each center established residential dormitories and onsite classrooms, hired a full-time retinue of instructors, and employed a few doctors to monitor the health of their charges.

<sup>617</sup> As noted above, the Youth Correction Centers that reappeared in the 1990s and 2000s were known officially as 流浪儿童保护救助中心 (literally, "Centers for protecting and aiding street children").

<sup>618</sup> October 8, 2001. Sun Jiwu, "Liulang ertong jia zai he fang," *Fazhi ribao*, December 19, 2002.

of daily life at the center was, however, somewhat counterbalanced by the softer approaches of moral suasion, participation in cultural activities, and meditation sessions aimed at molding healthy sentiments, identifying individual strengths, and engaging in self reflection.<sup>619</sup> A central component of the child's daily agenda was the center's nonstandard educational curriculum, specially tailored to the social and psychological needs of young drifters. Typical subjects of study included legal system education 法制教育 to help them accurately recognize their past transgressions; education in ethics 道德教育 to teach them how to become morally upstanding persons; and education for daily life 生活常识教育 to cultivate proper habits, speech, and behavior.<sup>620</sup> Given the background of their charges, Youth Correction Centers hired instructors specially trained in psychological education to teach and provide psychological counseling 心里咨讯.<sup>621</sup> The impact of these programs on a national scale remains to be seen, but anecdotal evidence from the north-eastern city of Dalian, in March 2005, suggest their potential positive effect: less than 10% of those who undertook a two-month session of psychological consultation and education at the municipal Youth Correction Center relapsed into a state of homelessness on the port city's streets.<sup>622</sup>

While reform-era programs for street children were still in their infancy, some correction centers began to experiment with family-support schemes that were taking root in orphan care. Their introduction signified an unprecedented development in the

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<sup>619</sup> Ge Xusong et. al., "Wei liulang ertong zhang qi yi pian lan tian," *Hebei ribao*, December 15, 2002; Yang Huiming (Director, Shanghai Youth Correction Center), interview by the author, May 29, 2006.

<sup>620</sup> "Wo sheng jiji jiuzhu he baohu liulang ertong," *Liaoning ribao*, July 25, 2004.

<sup>621</sup> Ge Xusong et. al., "Wei liulang ertong zhang qi yi pian lan tian," *Hebei ribao*, December 15, 2002.

<sup>622</sup> Li Zhiyou, "Liulang ertong: jia zai he fang," *Dalian ribao*, March 17, 2005



country's history of organized assistance for street urchins that stretched back to the late 1930s. From the late Republican years through the mid 1960s, organizers extolled the benefits that institutionalized rearing bore for placing the lives of homeless youths back on a proper track. This model, they contended, was particularly well-suited to fostering disciplined habits, a spirit of self-sacrifice, and a set of skills that would help restore stability in urban communities and contribute to the nation's productivity. In their discussions of corrective measures the family was considered an afterthought at best, an incubator of private interests and maladjusted tendencies at worst. As noted above, their reform-era successors also championed the corrective powers of a routinized, rule-laden mode of life at the institution, but there was a simmering recognition among center directors that a strictly collective approach was inadequate for treating the emotional scarring that beset a runaway child. Naturally, the hiring of specialists in psychology and social work to help street children work through individual loss spoke to a burgeoning opinion that a minor's emotional health was crucial to his or her overall development. But beyond this level of engagement, directors also began to solicit the participation of families in new programs devised to help their charges establish bonds of affection and trust that either never existed or had been sundered long ago.

The addition of family-care programs to the operations of Youth Correction Centers is particularly noteworthy given the current policy of limiting a child's stay to a year or less. The leaders of the center in Shijiazhuang city not only wanted to provide a family for runaways, but in particular to "find a 'mom' for kids who were bereft of love and affection" 为缺少疼爱的孩子找个'妈'. On June 1, 2002, marking Children's Day in China, the organization launched a drive to 'recruit parents' (‘寻亲聘父母’) in local

media outlets, prompting nearly 200 people from the community to sign up to become ‘weekend fathers and mothers’ (‘周末父母’).<sup>623</sup> Among them, an initial group of 16 couples were selected to take home and care for one of the center’s children on weekends. The initiative was formalized and branded the ‘temporary mothers’ (‘临时妈妈’) program, a title which underscored a view of maternal affection as indispensable to healthy childhood development.<sup>624</sup> Those enrolled Shijiazhuang’s program continued to reside at the center during the week, but spending weekends in a caring home allowed them, in the words of Xiu Yuhua, a lawyer and advocate for systemizing care for street children, to “feel the warmth of family” 感受家庭的温暖.<sup>625</sup>

Meanwhile, Youth Correction Centers based in the cities of Lanzhou and Changsha launched foster care programs closer in format to those of Chinese orphanages.<sup>626</sup> The ‘mock family’ 类家庭 projects established at these institutes were designed expressly to assist children who had run away from home multiple times or whose parents could not be identified. They represented a divergence from the standard policy of late Republican and Mao-era reform institutes, where young vagabonds remained under institutional care until they reached the age of 16 and were deemed capable of earning a living, irrespective of whether their guardians could be tracked down.

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<sup>623</sup> Ge Xusong et. al., “Wei liulang ertong zhang qi yi pian lan tian,” *Hebei ribao*, December 15, 2002.

<sup>624</sup> Wang Hongwen, “Zhongguo ying jianli liulang ertong jiuzhu zhidu,” *Beijing fazhi ribao*, November 19, 2003.

<sup>625</sup> Ibid.

<sup>626</sup> Chen Lumin, “Quanguo jijian 128 ge liulang ertong jiuzhu baohu zhongxin” *Zhongguo shehui bao*, October, 23, 2003. Tao Qingchun, head of the Social Welfare Division in the Civil Affairs Ministry, pointed out that centers in Lanzhou and Changsha began to undertake experimental “mock family” 模撕家庭 programs in 2001.

Eligibility for participation in Lanzhou's program required that the youth must be between the ages of 8 and 14 *sui*, of "normal" mental capacity and without physical disabilities, and personally willing to be placed in a home.<sup>627</sup> Based on individual proclivities and interests, the child could decide whether to pursue studies at a nearby school or alternatively undertake a training program to acquire occupational skills. Youngsters bereft of a nurturing environment in their birth families would now have a support structure to help them grow up in a healthy manner, to fit into society in the future, and to establish an acceptable path to self-sufficiency. The development of foster care programs in Shijiazhuang, Lanzhou and Changsha ought to be seen as the early sprouts of a family-centered approach for today's homeless kids and part of a broader movement that has been gaining traction in the arena of Chinese child welfare.

## **Conclusion**

Beijing's pursuit of a reformist agenda geared toward rapid modernization along with its opening to the outside world since 1980 has had crucial implications for marginalized children and the types of support they receive. The implementation of the nation's family planning program led to a dramatic resurgence in the numbers of abandoned infants, especially baby girls, in the 1980s and 1990s. This trend was particularly disturbing to Civil Affairs workers, scholars, and other voices in the Chinese media given the leveling off or even steady decline in such numbers from the mid 1960s through the 1970s. While some of these commentators locate the source of the problem in a breakdown in family morality and responsibility that came with disintegration of the

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<sup>627</sup> Liu Jianping and Zhang Shuican, "Lanzhou shi yunzuo 'lei jiating' jiuzhu moshi," *Zhongguo shehui bao*, October 16, 2003.

collectivist model of the Mao years, lengthier studies by Kay Ann Johnson and a number of Western demographers point up a strong correlation between times when the one-child policy was enforced rigidly, on the one hand, and times in which we can observe a notable rise in the numbers of China's 'missing daughters,' many of whom end up in the nation's increasingly overburdened orphanage system. More recently, scholars such as Catherine Keyser have drawn a link between infant abandonment and environmental hazards. The national drive to modernize with little concern for the environment has resulted in dangerous levels of water and air pollution, which, in turn, has given rise to growing numbers of babies born with birth defects and congenital diseases. Unable to afford medical treatment, parents of these children have also been resorting to abandonment in growing numbers.

There has also been a sharp rise in the number of homeless youths in Chinese cities since the mid 1980s. We have seen that three social forces have contributed to the resurgence in youth vagrancy. First, the breakdown of the Chinese family unit and abuse at home has left a growing number of adolescents with a desire to strike out on their own. In many cases this has been linked to higher divorce rates since the beginning of the Reform period and the suffering of physical or psychological abuse at the hands of step-parents. Second, the pressures springing from crushing competition in the field of education have generated a sense of alienation in youngsters who perform less well, compelling them to leave the school house behind. Third, the growing gap between living standards in the urban and rural sectors has galvanized children to leave the countryside to relocate to the city. After settling in the city, though, street children have found themselves lacking the necessary skills and training to make a legitimate living. Like

generations of homeless youths before them, they rely on begging or illicit activities such as pick pocketing, scalping, or thieving to meet their subsistence needs.

The Civil Affairs bureaucracy has responded vigorously and creatively to the elevated numbers of dependent children. On the one hand, it greatly expanded the number of state-run orphanages over the quarter century period stretching from 1980 to 2004; the number of facilities more than tripled during these years, from 59 to 205. But the government has also sought to replace the standard of “nurturing, treating, and educating” 养治教 in the realm of orphan care with a “multi-approachism” framework. This endorsement has paved the way for state-run orphanages to partner with international organizations in staking out new paths to treatment and developing ways to address the lone child’s individual psychological and emotional needs. The most significant component of the “multi-approachism” model has involved a shift from institutional based care to family-centered rearing. The codification of China’s National Adoption Law in 1992, in response to a continuously growing demand for international placements, and the spread of foster-care programs throughout the nation from the mid 1990s to the present underscore the state’s embrace of the new family ideal. The warmth and emotional bonds formed with adoptive and foster parents are now seen as a preferable alternative to the collective existence and rearing regimen within the walls of the facility. While orphan care remains in a transitional state, all indicators suggest that family-based care initiatives will become the standard that supplants group rearing in the decades to come.

The structure of support for homeless children in Reform-era China has undergone a transformation as radical as that seen in the system of care for foundlings.

Virtually all of the Youth Correction Institutes established during the Mao years were shuttered by 1980 due to the shrinking number of street urchins in the 1970s. After officials and scholars began reporting on an escalation in the numbers in the late 1980s, the state came to treat homeless minors the same as they did adult vagrants: the youngsters were simply rounded up and placed in detention centers before being shipped back to their native village or town in short order. Since the late 1990s, however, the problem of recidivism along with an overall increasing population of homeless youngsters has prompted the pursuit of new approaches. The state has revived the Youth Correction Institutes of the early PRC under the new name, *Liulang ertong baohu jiuju zhongxin* 流浪儿童保护救助中心, drawing on a set of new techniques for rehabilitating the young vagabond before sending him or her back home. Whereas learning production methods and receiving instruction grounded in Communist ideology formed the cornerstone of these institutes' agenda in the Mao years, the street urchin of today is enrolled in a special curriculum that includes courses on the law, correct speech and behavior, and meditation and quiet reflection. The goal is not to transform the child into a dedicated worker-citizen, as before, but rather to enable each individual to come to terms with their transgressions and ways in which they can rectify their behavior. Moreover, a small but growing number of directors of these institutes have begun experimenting with family foster care programs, underscoring a recognition that a child's rehabilitation cannot be complete until he or she is able to form strong bonds within a kin group, be it a surrogate or birth family.

**Table 5.1: Statistics on Institutional Care for Children in the PRC, 1978-2004**

Year	Child Welfare Institutes (CWI)	Capacity (measured in numbers of beds)	Staff	Total Number of Minors in CWI	Total Number of Minors in SWI & CWI
1978	49	-	1055	3665	-
1979	-	-	-	-	-
1980	59	5235	1658	-	-
1981	63	5726	1920	-	-
1982	64	5929	1983	3347	-
1983	60	5682	2003	3217	-
1984	63	5500	2172	3017	-
1985	59	5485	2142	4102	-
1986	58	6266	2267	4316	-
1987	60	5709	2411	4626	-
1988	63	6248	2730	4868	-
1989	64	6830	2722	4756	-
1990	62	8332	2831	5227	-
1991	63	7450	2906	5399	-
1992	67	8426	3054	6342	15,787
1993	67	8645	3122	7002	17,163
1994	73	9120	3280	7593	18,901
1995	77	10,641	3998	9654	-
1996	84	12,207	3970	11,083	24,433
1997	91	13,534	4207	12,163	-
1998	105	15,452	4450	13,667	-
1999	110	15,750	4712	14,109	35,191
2000	-	-	-	-	-
2001	160	22,554	5576	19,419	42,341
2002	178	25,110	5950	21,369	45,601
2003	192	26,676	6237	22,986	50,478
2004	208	29,592	6645	26,140	56,206

Sources: These statistics are culled from *Minzheng tongji lishi ziliao huibian: 1949-1992* and *Zhongguo minzheng tongji nianjian, 1993-2005*. Each figure represents a year-end total. The acronym SWI denotes Social Welfare Institutes 社会福利院, many of which include a Children's Division 儿童部 to provide support for foundlings and orphans in areas not serviced by orphanages (i.e. Children's Welfare Institutes).

**Table 5.2. Numbers of Registered Adoptions in China**

Year	<b>1990</b>	<b>1991</b>	<b>1992</b>	<b>1993</b>	<b>1994</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>1997</b>
Domestic								17,193
To U.S.	29	61	206	330	787	2,130	3,333	3,597
Intercountry			252	679	1,328	2,559		4,355
Total		2,900*						21,548
Year	<b>1998</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>
Domestic	20,611			36,089	35,372	39,045	40,084	35,500
To U.S.	4,206	4,108	5,058	4,705	6,116	6,857	7,038	7,903
Intercountry	5,887	5,948	7,460	8,644	10,218	10,243	12,519	14,493
Total	26,498			44,733	45,590	49,288	52,603	49,500

Sources: Domestic figures and totals are sourced from *Zhongguo minzheng tongji nianjian, 1993-2005*. Figures for intercountry and U.S. adoptions from China are taken from Wm. Robert Johnston's table found at <http://www.johnstonsarchive.net/policy/adoptionstatsintl.html>, accessed on August 8, 2012.

**Table 5.3: Weekday Schedule for Shanghai Youth Correction Center (2005)**

Time/Day	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
6:30am	Wake up	Wake up	Wake up	Wake up	Wake up
6:30-7:30am	Wash face, eat breakfast	Wash face, eat breakfast	Wash face, eat breakfast	Wash face, eat breakfast	Wash face, eat breakfast
7:30-8:00am	Meditation	meditation	meditation	Meditation	Meditation
8:00-10:00am	physical ed.	Self-study / singing	Language study	Physical ed.	Self-study /singing
10:00-11:00am	-----	Self-study	Or	doctor visits	-----
11:00-12:00pm	Eat lunch	Eat lunch	Eat lunch	Eat lunch	Eat lunch
12:00-1:30pm	Afternoon nap	Afternoon nap	Afternoon nap	Afternoon nap	Afternoon nap
1:30-2:00pm	-----	Organize	belongings	and meditation	-----
2:00-4:00pm	Correct Behavior and speech training	Study of laws and regulations	Correct Behavior and speech training	Study of laws and regulations	Class matters / Self-study
4:00-5:00pm	Self-study / meditation	Self-study / meditation	Self-study / meditation	Self-study / meditation	Self-study / meditation
5:00-6:30pm	Eat dinner / wash up	Eat dinner / wash up	Eat dinner / wash up	Eat dinner / wash up	Eat dinner / wash up
6:30-8:45pm	Activities and entertainment	Activities and entertainment	Activities and entertainment	Activities and entertainment	Activities and entertainment
8:45pm	Go to bed	Go to bed	Go to bed	Go to bed	Go to bed



Source: This daily schedule for minors at Shanghai Youth Correction Center was presented to the author during an interview with the facility's director, Yang Huiming, on May 23, 2006.

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