

THE SUBJECTIVITIES OF BENEVOLENCE: SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND
CIVIL GOVERNANCE IN TIANJIN'S URBAN WELFARE, 1911-1949

By

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ABSTRACT

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This dissertation seeks to answer the following question: “What is the place of philanthropy in a modernizing society?” It draws from rich archival sources that represent the international and trans-local influences that reshaped the ethics of social responsibility in early twentieth century Tianjin, China. The complex relationship between national identity, diverse civil governance, and institutional legitimacy form the context for each of the dissertation’s chapters. The first chapter records the foundation of the Tianjin Chamber of Commerce and its philanthropic work, analyzes transformations in urban policing that presented new expectations placed on state institutions, and examines the journalistic responses to two significant regional disasters that involved the city in 1917 and 1920. The second chapter centers on the powerful effects of Nationalist discourse on social welfare even in the absence of strong state institutions using communications between different branches of the municipal government and multiple non-state actors to reveal new ways that civil society interpreted and transmitted state ideologies. The third chapter takes a step back from Tianjin to talk about how the secular and spiritual aspects of philanthropy overlapped and reacted to one another in the context of growing nationalism and anti-Japanese sentiment, arguing that small religious associations could have a significant impact on shaping the contours of institutional relief. The concluding chapter examines the conflicting outcomes of philanthropic work under Japanese occupation and discusses the intimate responses of the nationalist

government to refugee suffering as bureaucratic control dissolved towards the end of
China's civil war.

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This study uses *pinyin*

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KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS

BSA	Bureau of Social Affairs
BYHB	Beiyang Huabao
CCC	China Continuation Committee
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
DGB	Dagongbao
GMD	Guomindang
GNH	Committee for Working through Hardship
GRT	Tianjin Hall for Spreading Benevolence
IJA	Imperial Japanese Army
JCP	Japanese Communist Party
MGQK	Minguo Qikan (Republican full text periodical database)
NCC	National Christian Council of China
NCCWRC	National Christian Council War Relief Committee
PJRRRA	Pingjin Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, Tianjin Branch
SZGB	Tianjin Municipal Gazetteer (Shizheng Gongbao)
TCRA	Tianjin Christian Relief Association
TJCOC	Tianjin Chamber of Commerce
TMA	Tianjin Archives
TJRC	Tianjin branch of the Red Cross
TSMO	Tianjin Security Maintenance Organization
TXH	Native Place Associations (Tongxianghui)
UCR	The United China Relief, New York

WMC	World Missionary Conference
YMCA	Young Men's Christian Association
YWCA	Young Women's Christian Association
YSB	Yishibao

INTRODUCTION

In the past two decades, both scholarly and popular attention have drawn to the plight of rural migrants in Chinese cities as the victims of neoliberal market reform and a kind of Maoist apartheid that rigidly severed rural migrants from urban public services.¹ In Dorothy Solinger's work, *Contesting Citizenship in Urban China*, she discusses the difficulties of China's "floating population" which is cut off from urban entitlements, arguing that rural *hukou* holders have become second-class citizens in their own country.² While this divide between the city and the countryside in the post reform-era is certainly a unique manifestation of contemporary social policies, the problems of rural refugees in the city and wealth inequality are certainly not new ones. Republican China faced a similar dilemma, but not so much because the state exerted its will to enforce clear regional distinctions, but because state power was often diffuse, contradictory, and incapable of meeting the needs of the poor.

This narrative of a weak and inept Nationalist government permeates much of the scholarship on this period; my work seeks to complicate this assessment. I argue that from the chaos of the early twentieth century, emerged incredibly vibrant and diverse responses, among non-state actors, to the problems of social welfare that were both simultaneously divergent and fundamentally linked to Nationalist discourse. The fall of

¹ Zheng Tiantian, *Red Lights: The Lives of Sex Workers in Post-Socialist China* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 48. For examples of this in popular circulation see: Rob Gifford, *China Road: A Journey into the Future of a Rising Power* (New York: Random House, 2007). Peter Hessler, 2011. *Country Driving: A Chinese Road Trip* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2011), and Evan Osnos, *Age of Ambition: Chasing Fortune, Truth, and Faith in the New China* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2014).

² Dorothy J. Solinger, *Contesting Citizenship in Urban China: Peasant Migrants, the State, and the Logic of the Market* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999). Also see: Huang Xiyi, *Power, Entitlement, and Social Practice: Resource Distribution in North China Villages* (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 2007).

the Qing Dynasty in 1912 marked the end to any illusion of imperial Confucian ideological hegemony. Poverty could not be neatly hidden away by state institutions (no matter how hard the Nationalists tried), but it was something that spilled out onto the streets, something that was entirely unavoidable.³ That the Nationalists could not meet these needs does not mean they were entirely unmet. Instead, weak government institutions provided the freedom and impetus necessary for the proliferation of China's public sphere and civil society to respond to China's social welfare needs. At the same time, Guomintang discourse resonated inescapably with the nationalism felt individually by many Chinese philanthropists, meaning that Chinese civil society remained interconnected with state ideology and priorities.⁴

Since the late 1980s, historians of Chinese history have largely adopted a neo-culturalist approach to inquiry that emphasizes civil society as “autonomous activities free from state influence or tutelage” more or less distinct from the political sphere.⁵ As Fredric Wakemen has argued, this has led to a much more complex, precise, and nuanced historical narrative of Chinese cities that incorporates a much wider array of historical

³ Shame and humiliation are often discussed, within the context of colonialism and memory, as central to contemporary Chinese nationalism. Early twentieth-century Guomintang discourse placed Chinese poverty within a similar international context which shaped how non-state actors imagined and carried out charity and poverty relief. See: William A. Callahan, “National Insecurities: Humiliation, Salvation, and Chinese Nationalism,” *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political* 29, no.2 (2004): 199–218, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40645112>. Also, see David Scott, *China and the International System, 1840-1949: Power, Presence, and Perceptions in a Century of Humiliation*, (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2008).

⁴ A good example of how nationalism mitigated the autonomy of non-state associations see: Wang Zuoyue's article in the monthly magazine, *Science Magazine Kexue Zazhi* (科学杂志): Wang Zuoyue, “Saving China Through Science: The Science Society of China, Scientific Nationalism, and Civil Society in Republican China,” *Osiris* 17, (2002): 291-322, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3655275>.

⁵ Frederic E. Wakeman and Richard L. Edmonds, 2000. *Reappraising Republican China* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 57-58.

non-state actors than previous works that centered on economic and political theory.⁶ However, the consequence of applying cultural/anthropological methods to Chinese urban history has been to strip away much of the chronological context, in such a way, that at times the reality of lived experience is precariously obscured. In response, my work discusses a broad range of discrete non-state actors, including business groups, voluntary associations, indigenous and foreign religious groups and other international forces that explicitly diverged from Guomindang interests and practice, while remaining firmly rooted in a careful consideration of Tianjin's urban political structure and developments in the narrative of China's Nationalist political identity. There are no activities that take place completely outside the influence of the state, although that influence does not always manifest in traditionally expected ways.

This work also seeks to expand the definition of public sphere in modern Chinese history by exploring how the spaces of disaster relief management, fundraising, and other demonstrations of social responsibility acted as contexts for political participation and public opinion formation. I argue that the meetings that brought together diverse state and non-state actors to respond to the urgent needs of flood devastation and massive population displacement articulate the communicative elements associated with a Habermasian public sphere.

Philanthropy drew diverse minority powers together, each with their own motivations for relieving suffering and ideas about how it could be accomplished. In using minority here, I am engaging with the much broader interpretation of the term: "Minority implies being at once part of and alternative to society. It means living in

⁶ Wakeman, *Reappraising*, 2000, 63.

common with other groups while maintaining national, ethnic, racial, linguistic, religious, gender, sexual, class, and other differences.”⁷ From this crucible of uncertainty emerged opportunities for individual participation in civilian government and the networking of diverse interests that may not have come together in any other context. This dissertation represents my attempt to write a history of Chinese philanthropy by drawing attention to the numerous ways that “doing good” can have profound implications for creating spaces where state power can be engaged and influenced.

Yet, while the Nationalists may have been unable to achieve much of their plans for social welfare reform themselves, Nationalist ideas often inspired the institutional development and cultural transformation that influenced local community leaders. For example, while many legal protections for poor labor remained largely theoretical, Guomindang leadership institutionalized these expectations and created the bureaucratic structure that both the Japanese occupation and Chinese Communists would eventually work within.

This study brings critical attention to examples when these vulnerable populations protected themselves, participating in processes of modern and urban identity formations. As Lu Hanchao has demonstrated in his *Cultural History of Chinese Beggars*, members of the underclass were far from passive recipients of philanthropic aid.⁸ My work traces both how the suffering organized, and at times individually appealed to the mercies of state actors and philanthropists by examining the letters they sent to government relief

⁷ Cheung Siu Keung, *Marginalization in China: Recasting Minority Politics* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 3.

⁸ Lu Hanchao, *Street Criers: A Cultural History of Chinese Beggars* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005).

institutions, bureaucratic institutions, and civilian led organizations like the Tianjin Chamber of Commerce, foreign missionary organizations, and traditional shelters and charities.

The written language used to describe the suffering of China's poor and displaced diversified exponentially during the early twentieth century. This public discourse, which appeared in print journalism and later radio broadcasts, reveals much about the values defining human dignity among the urban literati. It gradually became a critical vocabulary in the creation and expansion of Chinese national identity. As Rana Mitter has argued, although China had existed as a country for millennia, it was the particular challenges of the twentieth century that galvanized it into becoming a nation-state.⁹ Where Mitter places his emphasis on the cataclysm of the Japanese occupation of Manchuria, I suggest that the continual relief of poverty, within the context of a growing public discourse, provides a parallel narrative of national awakening of equal importance.

Likewise, John Fitzgerald has argued that the basis of most political conflict emanates from a wounded sense of national pride and that the modern states of the early twentieth century were fundamentally driven by notions of status among nations.¹⁰ The self-awareness among Guomindang leaders of how China's poverty among urban residents in particular affected its international standing is carefully discussed in Ziwa

⁹ Mitter argues that for preponderance of the Chinese, before this earth shattering event, "China was more of a geographical expression than a country," that the myth of Japanese terror tactics and Chinese collective resistance became the catalyst for creating a truly universal public notion of Chinese national identity that could be influenced and contested by the Communist and Nationalist parties, see: Rana Mitter, *The Manchurian Myth: Nationalism, Resistance and Collaboration in Modern China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

¹⁰ John Fitzgerald and Yongxiang Qian, *The Dignity of Nations: Equality, Competition, and Honor in East Asian Nationalism* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2006).

Lipkin's work.¹¹ I hope to further insist that this self-awareness, while certainly contributing to the criminalization of poverty as illustrated with nuance by Janet Chen, also inspired heightened sensitivity to public discussions of equality and an unprecedented awareness of universal human dignity.¹²

While nationalism, inspired by resisting Japanese occupation, led to the growth of authoritarian control, public shame over China's wandering population often proved a much more fertile territory for cultivating civic participation, public discussion, and heightened awareness of the suffering caused by wealth inequality.¹³ Throughout the Nanjing Decade (1927-1937), Tianjin was the focal point of a transnational response to Chinese poverty. Common descriptions of suffering for both poor residents of Tianjin and migrant refugees from throughout North China encouraged a myth of national identity that emanated from a collective social responsibility.¹⁴

While Chinese philanthropy must be understood within this international context, its discussion must also consider the traditions of Chinese philosophy as well. As Joanna Smith has effectively demonstrated, the roots of Chinese philanthropy have a long and complex history that did not evaporate under the pressures of modern international

¹¹ Lipkin's work begins with a discussion of two very different reactions to Chinese poverty, see: Zvia Lipkin, *Useless to the State* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center: Distributed by Harvard University Press, 2006).

¹² Janet Y. Chen, *Guilty of Indigence: The Urban Poor in China, 1900-1953* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012).

¹³ For more on the foundations of Chinese Fascism and its relationship to nationalism, see: Maria Chang's work: Maria Hsia Chang, *The Chinese Blue Shirt Society: Fascism and Developmental Nationalism* (Berkeley, CA: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California-Berkeley, Center for Chinese Studies, 1985), and William C. Kirby, "Images and Realities of Chinese Fascism," ed. Ugelvik Larsen Stein in *Fascism Outside Europe: The European Impulse Against Domestic Conditions in the Diffusion of Global Fascism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 233–268.

¹⁴ Narratives of poverty without a parallel narrative of social responsibility could be used to stimulate militant forms of nationalism as seen in "Speaking Bitterness."

moralties.¹⁵ Yu-Yue Tsu explained: “Ancient (Chinese) ethico-political thinkers have always thought of ethics and politics as closely allied. The state is regarded as existing for the promotion of human happiness; the best government is one which is truly benevolent in its solicitude for the welfare of the people.”¹⁶ Tsu’s explanation also highlights another fundamental point I wish to bring to bear throughout this discussion; that the act of philanthropic giving is intimately associated with negotiating social legitimacy.

The urban setting provided the space where diverse agents of philanthropy concentrated, networked, and strategized. The city was also the primary destination for refugees seeking aid, and it is where so much of Nationalist welfare policy focused.¹⁷ Tianjin, while smaller than Shanghai, was the largest city and economic heart of North China. As an international treaty port, Tianjin was host to retired warlords, *maiban* traders, foreign missionaries, and *hunhunr* ruffians. Tianjin was and remains an immigrant city. Established as a walled garrison in 1404, it gradually grew from a military trading post to the central grain and salt trade center for North China. The placing of this study in a single city also supports establishing a clear context where the transformations of China’s social welfare systems took place. Tianjin was also the focus

¹⁵ Joanna Handlin Smith, *The Art of Doing Good: Charity in Late Ming China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009).

¹⁶ Tsu Yu Yue, *The Spirit of Chinese Philanthropy: A Study in Mutual Aid* (New York: Columbia University, 1912), 19.

¹⁷ There is a small but important scholarship on Nanjing Decade nationalist rural welfare programs which were part of the Nationalist Reconstruction Movement. For example, see: Yip Ka-che, *Health and National Reconstruction in Nationalist China: The Development of Modern Health Services, 1928-1937* (Ann Arbor, MI: Association for Asian Studies, 1995). Also see: Stig Thøgersen, *A County of Culture: Twentieth-Century China Seen from the Village Schools of Zouping, Shandong* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002).

of Yuan Shikai's police modernization and provides the perfect setting for studying how Chinese policing intersected with new expectations for state benevolence.

Decline and fragmentation of state authority provide the fertile context for a study of Tianjin's civil society in the first chapter. The collapse of China's traditional imperial system saw no one power emerge to retake control until the end of China's civil war in 1949. Rather than consider the ill effects of weak government, this chapter explores how chaos gave birth to rich new interpretations of individual behavior and collective responsibility for social welfare, and inspired the creation of diverse passionate voluntary associations that worked alongside state authority and shared in its governing responsibilities. State power throughout the early twentieth century was fragmentary and multiple. Working from the argument that providing for the needs of the poor and displaced conveyed a powerful source of legitimacy to any public institution, I discuss how the Tianjin Chamber of Commerce, municipal and provincial governments, and private charities together navigated the many disasters of this period. The interactions of these institutions cultivated the expansion of Tianjin's public sphere by drawing public scrutiny over the actions of each, in a way that was mirrored throughout China's cities. In the backdrop, the institutionalization of modern values like nationalism, bureaucratization, and journalistic expression provided both the die which cast these actors, and the source materials on which this chapter is based.¹⁸ Drawing from the vast

¹⁸ Although bureaucratization may not be typically considered a "value" per se, I am placing it within Max Weber's concept of the "rationalization of society," which suggests that modernization brings with it a set of increasing concerns for efficiency, predictability, and dehumanization. For a careful exploration and translation of Weber's ideas regarding bureaucracy see: Max Weber, Tony Waters, and Dagmar Waters, *Weber's Rationalism and Modern Society: New Translations on Politics, Bureaucracy, and Social Stratification* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015). Also see: Stephen Kalberg, "Max Weber's Types of Rationality: Cornerstones for the Analysis of Rationalization processes in History," *The American Journal of Sociology* 85, no. 5 (March 1980): 1145-1179.

Tianjin archival collection and key published documents, the chapter concludes with an analysis of philanthropy as a transnational enterprise which further diffused authority and broadened state accountability.

In 1928, at the completion of the Northern Expedition, Tianjin was officially reestablished as a municipality under Guomindang leadership. In reality, the Nationalists were not the exclusive contenders for state authority. In the second chapter, I will argue that occupation of a Northern city by a Southern state was itself a kind of colonial endeavor where the reach of the Nanjing Government almost always far exceeded its grasp. Despite the relative weakness of this fledgling bureaucracy, its reinterpretation of the place floating populations of wandering refugees, prostitutes, and poor made a significant impact on the opinions of wider Chinese society in ways that continued to reverberate into the communist era. Administrators dreamed of a settled society; one that was achievable through greater levels of bureaucratic control and efficient use of scarce resources.

This chapter delves into archival documents and the internally published *Tianjin Municipal Gazetteer* to examine the promises of government and how Tianjin society responded. One of the most practical areas where this manifested was in the form of new labor regulations. While never effectively enforced, Nanjing perceptions of fair practices influenced the running of several municipal charities designed to harness the labor power of the homeless. Even when unkept, the promises of labor regulation and access to basic employment, quickly became demands among the disaffected unemployed poor. Here I move my discussion of philanthropy as a source of legitimacy from state power to ideological conveyance. Examining more individualized examples of giving will shed

light on what types of social capital philanthropy helped create. Municipal charities were the laboratories where the state could recreate China's social order to match its progressive policies. I will explore specifically how this worked to redefine the place of women in Republican Tianjin. The chapter concludes with a discussion of how foreign charities functioned in the context of greater state authority and the fetishization of Tianjin's few foreign refugees.

The third chapter takes a step back from Tianjin to discuss in greater depth the role of faith-based charity in creating a modern Chinese ethic of philanthropic giving. While humanism was emerging in the West as a competing basis for ethical living, the most energetic foreign advocacy for protecting China's vulnerable populations clearly emanated from the Christian missionary movement. Utilizing the extensive archival holdings of the international YMCA held at the University of Minnesota and two unpublished collections of newspaper articles related to the organization's work in Tianjin, this chapter seeks to understand how foreign charity shaped Nanjing Decade social welfare, industrial fairness, and public health. On the other hand, the endeavor to cultivate a unified Christian response to China's problems helped to dull denominational differences, creating an imagined Christian social order that was uniquely Chinese. Also, as conflict with Japan spread, I compare the role YMCA members played in encouraging militant nationalism in southern China with the organization's greater emphasis on civilian led disaster relief in the occupied North. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the interfaith alliance which emerged and grew quickly in the 1920s and utilized ideas from Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, and Daoism to develop a nationwide network of emergency relief, the World Red Swastika Society.

The fourth and final chapter addresses the twin themes of collaboration and futility as they relate to philanthropy. When the city fell to the Japanese, philanthropy became increasingly complicated as the legitimacy and social stability that charity work enabled helped to further establish the occupation regime. Both Chinese nationals and foreign aid workers struggled with this reality. While journalism was severely compromised by Japanese censorship, print media's participation in the city's social welfare did not entirely evaporate. Not only did newspapers continue to raise financial support for refugees, they even occasionally pointed out the appalling conditions of shelters to the collaboration regime. The chapter concludes by examining the gradual collapse of Guomindang control to the Communists. As central policy and municipal reality increasingly diverged, desperation gave way to unique government responses which are analyzed in the final section.

This study of the place of philanthropy in a modernizing society broadens the scholarly discussion on early twentieth century Chinese social policy and draws new light towards the expansion of civil governance in Tianjin. Ultimately, this work seeks to encourage scholars to rethink the ways that nationalist governance in Republican China interacted with emerging forms of post-dynastic moral autonomy that reveal the multiple subjectivities at work in alleviating urban poverty, and more broadly, in defining benevolence.¹⁹ One of the marks of Republican China was the growing diversity of interest groups and associations. These associations, from Marxists to anarchists, each worked to represent various new claims on individual moral autonomy, the fundamental

¹⁹ John Christman, "Autonomy in Moral and Political Philosophy," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta (Spring 2015) <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2015/entries/autonomy-moral/>.

organizing principles of moral law in modernizing Chinese society. While these organizations invented their own new types of subjectivity, each simultaneously developed within a context of powerful state narratives which brought their own claims on individual identity even in the absence of strong state institutions.²⁰

²⁰ He Yan describes this interaction between the state and non-state associations as relational. See: He Yan “Overseas Chinese in France and the World Society: Culture, Business State and Transnational Connections, 1906-1949,” in Mechthild Leutner and Izabella Goikhman, *State, Society and Governance in Republican China* (Berlin: Lit, 2014), 54.

CHAPTER 1: FAMINE AND FLOOD – TWIN CRUCIBLES FOR CHANGE IN THE PUBLIC SPHERE, LATE QING THROUGH THE BEIYANG GOVERNMENT ERA 1895 - 1927.



Figure 1.1: Image of a Tianjin Beggar.¹

¹ Image of Tianjin Beggar YMCA Image file, Kautz Family YMCA Archives, Flat Files Collection, Collection Number: Y.USA.51.

The decline of empire in China and the ensuing chaos of early Beiyang government rule created vast opportunities for Tianjin village gentry and other local elite to claim a stake in the politics of charity and disaster relief. Republican China was a period when famine could affect multiple provinces and threaten the very existence of entire towns and villages and famine relief could represent substantial sums of both foreign and domestic capital. While the disintegration of Qing rule marked the ultimate dissolution of what Pierre-Etienne Will has described as the “golden age of famine relief,” its death created a verdant space for the expansion of the public sphere and its negotiation with government authority.² While recent scholars have drawn attention to the role of the state in policing and criminalizing poverty in China, the motivations for attending to social welfare by civil society deserve a greater hearing, as does the vigorous discussion regarding the relationship between state and society that has marked recent Chinese scholarship.³

This chapter examines the history of charity in Tianjin from the late Qing through the end of the Beiyang government period from the perspective of institutional transformations and public discussions of suffering and relief. Using these perspectives, I attempt to offset the emphasis on state dominated correctional institutions by addressing

² Pierre-Etienne Will’s work provides a helpful discussion on the dominance of the Qing state in advancing a comprehensive famine relief system during the mid-1700s and helps to lay out the growing expectations for state provisioned relief during this period, see: Pierre-Etienne Will, *Bureaucracy and Famine in Eighteenth-Century China* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1990). On the changing relationship between the state and civil society during the Qing, see: Kathryn Bernhardt, Philip C. Huang and Mark A. Allee, *Civil Law in Qing and Republican China* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994). Also see: Linda Grove and Christian Daniels, *State and Society in China: Japanese Perspectives on Ming-Qing Social and Economic History* (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1984).

³ For a recent discussion of fighting poverty in the first half of the twentieth century China, see: Janet Chen, *Guilty of Indigence*, 2012. For recent work detailing the relationship between state and society in Tianjin, see: Ren Yunlan, *Jindai Tianjin de Cishan yu Shehui Jiuji* 近代天津的慈善与社会救济 [Charity and Social Relief in Modern Tianjin] (Tianjin Renmin Chubanshe, 2007).

public displays of individual social responsibility and the predominance of non-government managed charity relief.⁴ The first perspective endeavors to pursue a systematic study of the institutions active in poverty and disaster relief, and address how some of these organizations, which were holdovers from the Qing Period, began to change to address contemporary concerns. These organizations had to contend with many new competing groups that emphasized modern values like national salvation and the entrenchment of foreign charities since the opening of Tianjin as a treaty port in 1860. Taking center stage in this discussion will be the Tianjin Chamber of Commerce, an alliance of the Tianjin elite that was often left to manage both the operation of the city's charity institutions and respond to emergency disasters which afflicted the city's hinterland and surrounding provinces.⁵

Another institution that played a leading role in disaster relief and supporting charity work was the modernized Tianjin police force.⁶ In order to compensate for the restrictions placed on the buildup of Chinese troops within the city limits of Tianjin after the Boxer Protocol was signed in 1901, Yuan Shikai began training a squad of approximately 2500 court bannermen in the Zhili capital of Baodi as police officers to send to the city. This well-trained police force would play an important role in Tianjin

⁴ For an excellent article which demonstrates this emphasis on the importance of modern government institutions dominating social welfare policies specifically within the context of regulating prostitution, see: Elizabeth J. Remick, "Police-Run Brothels in Republican Kunming," *Modern China* 33, no. 4 (2007): 423-461.

⁵ For an introduction to the history of the Tianjin Chamber of Commerce, see: Song Meiyun, *Jindai Tianjin Shanghui* 近代天津商会 [Modern Tianjin Chamber of Commerce], (Tianjin Shehui Kexueyuan Chubanshe, 2002).

⁶ Ding Rui, "Qingmo Tianjin Jingcha yu Chengshi Zhian Guanli Xiandaihua 清末天津警察与城市治安管
理现代化 [Modernization of Tianjin's Police and Public Security in the Late Qing]," *Tianjin Shehui Kexueyuan Lishi Yanjiusuo*, 2013).

poverty relief, refugee protection, and perform many other functions not usually associated with law enforcement.⁷

While the instability of the Warlord Period may have led to much corruption and graft, it also marked the rapid development of public debate and expanding limits of individual expression through print media. In particular, I will examine how the 1917 North China flood and the 1920-1921 famine were described in news reports. While these were not necessarily the largest regional disasters in Tianjin's history, they were unprecedented in the amount of global attention they drew.⁸

Starting in the late Qing, journalism underwent a radical transformation from the single state organ, *The Imperial Gazette*, to numerous popularized newspapers. Many of these papers were started by foreign missionaries, and the most widely printed in Tianjin were no exception.⁹ Tianjin newspapers carried detailed accounts of natural disasters and their effects both within the city and in many of the surrounding villages and towns, connecting urban residents to the plight of refugees and encouraging a broader sense of civic identity and regional community. Moreover, Tianjin newspapers printed criticisms of local government policies, published charity donations to hold officials accountable,

⁷ For a comparison between public perceptions of the modernized police force of Chengdu versus the yamen staff that hallmarked Qing law enforcement, see: Kristin Eileen Stapleton, "Chapter 3 – The Key to Urban Reform: The New Police," in *Civilizing Chengdu: Chinese Urban Reform, 1895-1937* (Cambridge, MA: Published by the Harvard University Asia Center, 2000), 79-110.

⁸ For a comprehensive examination of Tianjin newspapers between 1880-1949, see: Ma Yi, *Tianjin Xinwen Chuanboshi Gangyao* [An Outline History of the Propagation of Tianjin's Newspapers], (Yi Beijing: Xinhua Chubanshe, 2005).

⁹ A newspaper that I will primarily rely on, the *Yishibao* (益世报) was started by a Catholic missionary. For an analysis of the connection between foreign missionaries and the history of print journalism, see: Zhang Xiantao, *The Origins of the Modern Chinese Press: The Influence of the Protestant Missionary Press in Late Qing China* (London: Routledge, 2007).

and drew attention to charity events cultivating a new and modern sense of social responsibility among a rapidly growing urban middle class.¹⁰

Fragmented Authority: Tianjin's Complex Urban Power Structure.

Located at the muddy intersection of several rivers and prone to flooding, Tianjin nevertheless became a major economic center in Northern China by the Ming Dynasty as a transportation hub for salt and grain distribution as well as a coastal defense area protecting the capital city of Beijing.¹¹ In 1860, the city became a treaty port which eventually became host to concessions from nine different nations. Although the city's economic capacity relied largely on small cottage industries, with some foreign investment, the city quickly developed into the largest center for commerce in North China. After its designation as a treaty port, the ruling structure of the city became increasingly fragmented. Each of the nine countries claiming concession territory operated their own public works, maintained separate police jurisdictions, and collected separate taxes.

¹⁰ An interesting example of this was the Save the Nation Fund *jiuguo chujin* (救国储金) active in the 1920s which both raised money to purchase weapons to fight the Japanese and support Chinese workers striking at Japanese factories. Although the donations to the Tianjin chapter of this national organization primarily came from the compradors *maiban* (买办), who became wealthy working as intermediaries for foreign business in Tianjin, it also received offerings from local beggars and prostitutes. One wonders how reporting of these donations may have reflected public consciousness towards these members of the social underclass. I argue that this kind of public participation represents a positive way that increasingly marginalized groups could exert some influence in negotiating their continued importance to the modern national community.

¹¹ Gail Hershatter, *The Workers of Tianjin, 1900-1949* (Stanford University Press, 1986). Also, Kwan Man Bun argues the significance of salt merchants to stabilizing the urban and economic development of Tianjin into one of China's most important cities from the Ming dynasty onward. Particularly relevant to my discussion here, is his assertion that responsibilities taken on by these salt merchants resemble the emergence of a public sphere where these elites took on civic responsibilities like opening charities and organizing disaster relief, see: Kwan Man Bun, *The Salt Merchants of Tianjin: State-Making and Civil Society in Late Imperial China*. (University of Hawaii Press, 2001).

How did the Chinese native authorities, including city civil administrators, military elites like Yuan Shikai and later competing warlords from the Beiyang Army, local merchants, *maiban* (compradors), and factory owners, each influence the city's operation of charity measures and transform expectations regarding urban welfare?¹² When state power was weak or non-existent, in what ways did poor Tianjin residents or refugees from the surrounding countryside protect themselves or claim entitlement? What were the informal or non-governmental networks that supported philanthropy during times of natural and war related disaster? Investigation of these questions, in terms of urban history and migration of refugees from the countryside to the city, will broaden understanding of the development of early modern Chinese civil society as it relates to formation of community identity.¹³

Profit and Misfortune: The Tianjin Chamber of Commerce.

After the defeat by the Eight Nation Alliance and the signing of the Boxer Protocol on September 7th 1901, Tianjin's position as a military outpost was temporarily nullified. The Tianjin Arsenal was not allowed to manufacture arms for two years, the Dagu Forts were raised to the ground, and Beiyang forces were kicked out of the city. However, these setbacks to Tianjin's military prominence secured its position as Northern China's economic capital. One event which marked this important development was the founding in 1903 of the Tianjin Chamber of Commerce.¹⁴ The

¹² Maiban are Chinese who became rich working for foreign trade companies.

¹³ Mary R. Anderson, *Community Identity and Political Behavior* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), and Mary R. Anderson, "Beyond Membership: A Sense of Community and Political Behavior," *Political Behavior* 31 no. 4 (2009): 603–627. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40587301>.

¹⁴ Although the Shanghai Chamber of Commerce is often lauded as setting the precedent for all of China's other chambers that were set up during the late Qing, the Tianjin Chamber was nearly as influential and set up the same year, five years before the Beijing Chamber was established. David Strand details the role of

Tianjin Chamber was established primarily to protect the interests of Chinese business leaders in the city and to develop the Zhili regional economic network, by local members of local merchant associations, or *huiguan*, which had been organizing in the city since the 1690s and distinguished most commonly by native place.¹⁵ At the same time, many of its members were not business leaders but other social elite that embodied emergent power brokers in early Republican Tianjin.¹⁶ As the city was home to many of the richest capitalists and merchants in Northern China, this chamber quickly became a leading force within the local and provincial economies. Chamber members often sat on city governing councils.¹⁷

Despite its economic power, the Tianjin Chamber's reputation often hinged on its involvement with charitable causes.¹⁸ As the Qing government administration crumbled,

the Beijing Chamber of Commerce in relation to maintaining public order, welfare policy and city planning in his work: David Strand, *Rickshaw Beijing: City, People, and Politics in the 1920s* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 98-120. Especially Chapter 5, "Jeweler, Banker, and Restaurateur: Power Struggles in the Beijing Chamber."

¹⁵ It's worth mentioning here that Zhili was a province established under the Ming Dynasty that was dissolved in 1928 after the Guomindang successfully concluded their Northern Expedition Campaign. Zhili literally means "direct rule" which indicates that the area was administered by the imperial government. The area included parts of modern Hebei, Henan, Shandong and administration of Beijing and Tianjin. Zhang Xuejun 张学军, "Zhili shanghai yu xiangcun shehui jingji (1903-1937) 直隶商会与乡村社会经济 [Commercial Association of Zhili Province and Rural Social Economy]," (PhD diss., Hebei Shifan Daxue, Zhongguo Jin Xiandaishi, 2007). Also see: Zhang Jiajia, "The Tianjin Chamber of Commerce and the Undertaking of Charity Relief," *Journal of Hubei University of Economics, Humanities and Social Sciences* 9, no. 6 (2012). Regarding Tianjin's huiguan, see: Zhang Xiaobo's third chapter, "Treaty Port Tianjin," in his dissertation Zhang Xiaobo "Merchant Associational Activism in Early Twentieth-Century China: The Tianjin Chamber of Commerce, 1904-1928" (PhD Dissertation. Columbia University, 1995).

¹⁶ For example, Zhang Boling was a member of the chamber of commerce, the founder of Nankai University and eventually served as the director of the Tianjin YMCA, see: Dorothy Borg, "People's Political Council," *Far East Survey* 10, no. 8 (May 5, 1941): 94-95.

¹⁷ Mary Backus Rankin, *Elite Activism and Political Transformation in China: Zhejiang Province, 1865-1911*, (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1986), 84.

¹⁸ Sean Sayers, "Identity and Community," *Journal of Social Philosophy* 30, no. 1 (1999): 147-60. Also see: Song Meiyun, *Jindai Tianjin Shanghui* [The Modern Tianjin Chamber of Commerce], Tianjin Shehui Kexueyuan Chubanshe, (2002). Song Meiyun argues that after the Xinhai revolution, the relationship

the chamber would take on many functions of government both within the city and in the surrounding Zhili Province. By examining the charitable functions of the Tianjin Chamber, I will argue that welfare provision was fundamental to effective political authority and that community expectations evolved alongside shifts in individual moral identity. Zhang Xuejun and Sun Bingfang have suggested that the development of the Tianjin and Zhili Chambers of Commerce created important economic networks through rural associations that proved essential for improving rural welfare. Chambers provided direct relief during natural disasters, assisted the government to ban the sale of illegal drugs, improved transportation routes which were particularly important for grain distribution, and helped to improve local security.¹⁹

A passage from the chairman of the Foreign Relief Committee in Tianjin captures both the city's importance to disaster relief in Zhili Province and the problem of poor communication and distribution networks that plagued the area before this infrastructure was developed:

In November, 1877, the aspect of affairs was simply terrible. The autumn crops over the whole of Shansi and the greater part of Chihli, Honan, and Shensi had failed... Tientsin was inundated with supplies from every available port. The Bund was piled mountain high with grain, the Government storehouses were full, all the boats were impressed for the conveyance of supplies towards Shansi and the Hochien districts of Chihli. Carts and wagons were all taken up and the cumbersome machinery of the Chinese Government was strained to the utmost to meet the enormous peril which stared it in the face. During the winter and spring of 1877-78, the most frightful disorder reigned supreme along the route to Shansi. Hwailu-hsien, the starting point was filled with officials and traders all intent on getting their convoys over the pass. Fugitives, beggars, and

between the Tianjin Chamber of Commerce and the government epitomized civil society as a negotiation process.

¹⁹ Zhang Xuejun 张学军 and Sun Bingfang, *Zhili shanghui yu xiangcun shehui jingji* 直隶商会与乡村社会经济 [The Zhili Chamber of Commerce and Rural Society and Economy 1903-1937], (Beijing: Renmin Chubanshe, 2010). Especially see Chapter 6.

thieves absolutely swarmed. The officials were powerless to create any sort of order among the mountains. The track was completely worn out, and until a new one was made, a dead block ensued. Camels, oxen, mules, and donkeys were hurried along in the wildest confusion, and so many perished or were killed by the desperate people in the hills, for the sake of their flesh, that the transit could continue on only by the banded vigilance of the interested owners of grain assisted by the train bands or militia, which had been hastily got together, some of whom were armed with breech-loaders.

Night traveling was out of the question. The way was marked by the carcasses or skeletons of men and beasts and the wolves, dogs, and foxes soon put an end to the sufferings of any wretch who lay down to recover from or die of his sickness in those terrible defiles... Broken carts scattered grain bags, dying men and animals so frequently stopped the way that it was often necessary to prevent for days together the entry of convoys on the one side in order to let the trains from the other come over. No idea of employing the starving people in making a new, or improving the old road ever presented itself to the authorities; and passengers, thankful for their escape from the dangers of the journey, were lost in wonder that the enormous traffic was possible.²⁰

In each of the major disasters that afflicted the Zhili area, from its creation until its dissolution, village leaders and Beiyang government officials called on or commanded the chamber to lend its financial support and administrative leadership. From 1903 to 1927, northern China experienced four periods of natural disaster in which Tianjin was affected: flood and drought from 1907-1908, a flood from 1911-1912, a flood and drought in 1917, and drought that affected five provinces from 1920 to 1924.²¹ At the same time, North China experienced a series of major clashes between warlord armies starting with the Zhili-Anhui War in 1920, the First Zhili-Fengtian War in 1922, and the

²⁰ Quoted from Walter H. Mallory, *China: Land of Famine* (New York, NY: American Geographical Society, 1926), 29-30.

²¹ Ren Yunlan, "On the Relief Measures of Tianjin Chamber of Commerce in the Natural Calamity of North China (1903-1936): The Relation between State and Society in Modern Charities and Social Relief," *Lishi Yuekan* [Tianjin: Tianjin Shehui Kexueyuan Lishisuo 4] (2006).

Second Zhili-Fengtian War in 1924, as well as countless minor skirmishes.²² After each of these disasters, the Tianjin Chamber called on its members to give donations and lead or supervise government and non-government charity groups.²³

A significant problem that faced any kind of relief work was ensuring that the distribution of relief materials concentrated on areas that were the most severely affected by disaster and taking care that the same areas were not relieved multiple times by charities working independently from one another. This represents a departure from the way that charity work was conducted during the Qing Dynasty. Rather than organize disaster relief that would save the most lives, the Qing emphasized rescuing those who could most quickly begin stimulating agricultural production and stabilize the economy.²⁴ By the late Qing and early Republican Period, the value of individual human life for its own sake began to have a greater influence on what defined effective governance. To encourage relief work that met these expectations, the Zhili Provincial Government and Tianjin county government often delegated the Tianjin Chamber to send its members to conduct careful surveys of disaster areas, keep records of all families helped and act as an umbrella organization directing different private charities, the city police, and Beiyang

²² James E. Sheridan, *China in Disintegration: The Republican Era in Chinese History, 1912-1949*, (New York: Free Press; London: Collier Macmillan, 1975), 88.

²³ This trend appears both within the internal documents of the chamber of commerce including meeting minutes and in communications with various municipal government departments. These donations were also publicized in local newspaper accounts in a way that held individual donations to public scrutiny. Tianjinshi Danganguan, Tianjin Shehui Kexueyuan, and Tianjinshi Gongshangye Lianhehui, *Tianjin shanghui dang'an huibian, 1912-1928* [The Archival Records of the Tianjin Chamber of Commerce], (Tianjinshi: Tianjin Renmin Chubanshe, 1992) in Chapter 9, "Zhenji yu Cishan," 3386-3456.

²⁴ For a description of charity in the late Qing see: Lillian M. Li, *Fighting Famine in North China: State, Market, and Environmental Decline, 1690s – 1990s* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007), 221-246. Especially Chapter 8, "Famine Relief: High Qing Model."

military personnel to work within specific areas.²⁵ The Tianjin Chamber also required charities to report their monthly donations and expenses to ensure financial accountability.²⁶

The financial success of chamber members and their close interaction with the local and provincial governments made members valuable leaders in many of the charity organizations which provided emergency relief and long-term shelter for the city's homeless. For instance, Li Xingbei, a founding member of the Tianjin Chamber, was active in the *Shantang Lianhehui* (善堂联合会), a united charity organization, and at the same time worked as head of the Tianjin *Jiujiyuan* (救济院), the government operated multipurpose homeless shelter.²⁷

The management of charity organizations and disaster relief both locally in Tianjin and throughout North China demonstrates the growing political legitimacy of the chamber of commerce as a governing body.²⁸ However, much Chinese scholarship, even from the last ten years, attributes this success and influence to large investments of foreign capital which supposedly prevented members from participating in nationalistic

²⁵ For archival documents from the Tianjin Chamber of Commerce during the late Qing see: Tianjinshi Danganguan, Tianjin Shehui Kexueyuan, and Tianjinshi Gongshangye Lianhehui, *Tianjin Shanghui Dangan Huibian, 1903-1911* 天津商会档案汇编 [The Archival Records of the Tianjin Chamber of Commerce], Vol. 1 (Tianjinshi: Tianjin Renmin Chubanshe, 1989).

²⁶ TMA, J0128-3-002594, 1912, provides a series of letters between the Tianjin police chief, provincial police and finance bureau, Beiyang military governor and the TJCOG regarding how to use money stored at the Baoshang bank in an account set up for refugee relief in May 1912.

²⁷ Throughout the dissertation I provide the Chinese names for various charity organizations because the English translations for their names are often so similar. As captured in a local gossip jingle: "Tianjin dili maimai zazi 天津地理买卖杂字," *Zhuan niankao* 撰年考, 1926. Similar examples can be found in chambers throughout China. For example, the first chamber of commerce chairman in Hangzhou, Fan Gongxu, was also the head of the city's welfare association holding both positions for several years, see: Rankin, *Elite Activism*, 228.

²⁸ Josephine Fox, "Common Sense in Shanghai: The General Chamber of Commerce and Political Legitimacy in Republican China," *History Workshop Journal* 50 (Autumn 2000): 22-44.

movements.²⁹ While this may be true to a degree, the record of aggressive proactive involvement of many members suggests that charity was an important way that the Tianjin elite conceived of potentially offsetting some of the negative consequences of collaborating with foreign capital.³⁰

The importance of the Tianjin Chamber to the Zhili regional social welfare environment was clearly demonstrated by the bewildering variety of groups and individuals that drifted into the city requesting aid. Even when disaster struck areas of Baodi, the provincial capital, refugees went to Tianjin to seek relief rather than appeal to their own chamber of commerce directly.³¹ The Tianjin Chamber was involved in all stages of disaster and poverty relief. For example, during the 1917 flood, members conducted surveys of affected areas and hired boats to rescue stranded villagers as part of their immediate relief efforts. As winter approached, the chamber organized soup kitchens, used refugee and poor laborers (like residents from the city's *Jiaoyangyuan*) to construct temporary housing, and purchased and distributed heavy sets of clothes for the

²⁹ A particularly important group of Chinese elite who would fit this category were compradors who made their living primarily working for foreigners. For a perspective on the role of Chinese compradors see: "The Chinese Comprador," *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts* 71, no. 3690 (August 10, 1923): 670-671. Tsai Jungfang has argued that the Chinese word for comprador, maiban, was used in Chinese Marxist scholarship as a term for historical analysis beginning with the writings of Mao in 1935. Terms like "comprador thought," "comprador character," "comprador tendency" etc. were primarily used to refer to the comprador's subservience to imperialist interests, see: Tsai Jungfeng, "The Predicament of the Comprador Ideologists: He Qi (Ho Kai, 1859-1914) and Hu Liyuan (1847-1916)," *Modern China* 7, no. 2 (April 1981): 191-225.

³⁰ For a discussion of how these Chinese compradors influenced Guomindang politics see: Parks M. Coble, *The Shanghai Capitalists and the Nationalist Government, 1927-1937* (Cambridge, MA: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1980).

³¹ TMA, J0128-3-0086991, September 1914. After a major fire in the provincial capital of Baodi, hundreds of refugees fled to Tianjin. For the most part, while the municipal government encouraged the police and social bureau to send these refugees back home, they were not systematically barred from the city as they were during the Chinese civil war in the 1940s.

homeless.³² By the spring of 1918, the chamber oversaw reconstruction efforts, both helping small business owners reopen their shops and family-owned cottage industries purchase materials to restart production.³³ The Tianjin Chamber raised funds for and organized water works projects in collaboration with the city's foreign community.³⁴ As the civil war between warlords began to terrorize large areas of northern China, tens of thousands of refugees began to make their way to Tianjin. In response, the chamber organized building teams to construct temporary housing in areas outside of the city and worked on reclaiming land projects to allow refugees to settle down, or provided for transportation costs so that refugees could return home after the fighting had died down.³⁵

As an association of business leaders, the Tianjin Chamber could quickly organize specific manufactured goods that were lifesaving during times of trouble. With the onset of winter after the 1917 flood, producers of silk, foreign cloth, and cotton cloth were organized and sometimes coerced by chamber leaders to provide winter clothes to relieve refugees.³⁶ By donating clothes for winter relief, these businesses also received benefits

³² William Rowe suggested that as Chinese chambers of commerce began collaborating with charity halls, one of the negative consequences was the deterioration of class relations. However, for most of the archival documents I've dealt with throughout the Beijing Government period in Tianjin, this deterioration is not immediately apparent and the record instead shows a continuity in both the language used to address the suffering of the poor and a similar ethical framework for encouraging philanthropic giving. For Rowe's comment see: William T. Rowe, *Hankow: Conflict and Community in a Chinese City, 1796-1895* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1989), 133.

³³ TMA, J0128-2-002939, January 1918. Reports to Tianjin Chamber of Commerce regarding preparations for winter relief and a summary of river reconstruction work underway near Beijing after flood water began to recede.

³⁴ For an early example of the Hankow Chamber of Commerce's involvement with water control projects, see: William T. Rowe, *Hankow: Commerce and Society in a Chinese City, 1796-1889* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1984), 157.

³⁵ TMA, J0128-2-002161, December 1925. A letter from one of the board members of the Tianjin Chamber of Commerce to military governor Lin of the Beiyang army.

³⁶ TMA, J0128-2-002939-003, August 10, 1917, Producers sometimes did everything they could to reduce the amount they had to donate or to extend donation deadlines. The city's police could be used to force

like tax waivers, public recognition, or other incentives.³⁷ Relief from the chamber often targeted specific industries that would both benefit the general welfare of the city while rebuilding infrastructure critical for businesses to reopen. For example, in April of 1919, the chamber began distributing food, clothing, and monetary aid to ferry boatmen who had their livelihoods destroyed by the recent floods.³⁸ This kind of focused relief to reestablish vital industries reflects the emphasis on reinstating agricultural production that was the hallmark of Late Qing disaster relief models.

The members of the chamber often financially supported, supervised, or coordinated the work of religious organizations during this period as well. In the summer of 1926, the World Red Swastika Society gained the chamber's approval and funding to begin constructing shelters for homeless war refugees and resettling them.³⁹ This sort of collaboration was mutually beneficial for the chamber and the religious groups with which it worked. Other groups like the Tianjin Christian Federation (天津基督教联合会), which itself was an umbrella organization for Christian philanthropy and evangelism in the city, and Tianjin Buddhist orphanages and women's shelters, had established their reputation by operating their own schools and other acts of philanthropy.⁴⁰ What's more,

shop owners to hand over their donations. However, the chamber had many other ways to encourage participation like denying merchants the right to sell goods or publically shaming those who refused to participate.

³⁷ TMA, J0128-2-002939-072, 1918. Letter to Tianjin Chamber of Commerce from Wei Xilin.

³⁸ TMA, J0128-3-004826-003, April 18, 1919.

³⁹ TMA, J0128-2-000528, May 1926. The Red Swastika Society was the charity arm of the redemptive religious society, the Guiyi Daoyuan. In many ways it was modeled after the international red cross, but distinctly derived from Chinese traditions and values. Although the Red Swastika Society was the most prominent, numerous other swastika societies, represented by other colors, were also active in providing charitable relief.

their connections with volunteers experienced in managing emergency and poverty relief made them essential to successful operations.⁴¹ By supporting these well-respected and popular organizations in the community, the Tianjin Chamber also gained a positive reputation. In Chapter 3, I will look more into how their participation in chamber relief work also helped to legitimate their significance in a modernizing China that increasingly dismissed religious belief as superstition.⁴²

Although writing regarding current state-faith interactions, Susan McCarthy makes a compelling case that religious social service activities enable adherents to resist and repurpose state activities associated with charitable relief.⁴³ Just as the Tianjin Chamber's participation in relief work furthered the reach of China's civil society, the collaboration between faith-based organizations and the Tianjin Chamber fostered the broadening of public participation in governance which in turn shaped Nationalist welfare and labor policies, especially how those policies were interpreted on a local level. This provides an excellent example of how the protection and promotion of active religious participation in civil governing can work to expand and diversify the public sphere. McCarthy argues this positive participation is only possible when the state remains a strong regulating entity and secular, not supporting any one particular religious

⁴⁰ For an article on the development of the Tianjin indigenous church, see: Pu Wenqi 濮文起 and Mo Zhenliang 莫振良, "Tianjin Zongjiao de Lishi yu Xianzhuang 天津宗教的历史与现状 [The History and Current Situation of Religion in Tianjin]," *Tianjin Shehui Kexueyuan Zhexue Yanjiusu*, (2001).

⁴¹ Collaborating with foreign religious charities also was an important way to raise financial support.

⁴² This represents an important departure from imperial governance that while, not necessarily claiming the same degree of divine appointment seen in medieval Europe, was certainly bolstered by an enduring tradition of Confucian hierarchy and heavenly mandate. For a discussion of how the Chinese Republican government began associating religion with national weakness, see: Poon Shuk Wah, "Refashioning Festivals in Republican Guangzhou," *Modern China* 30, no. 2 (April 2004): 199-227.

⁴³ Susan K. McCarthy, "Serving Society, Repurposing the State: Religious Charity and Resistance in China," *The China Journal*, no. 70 (July 2013): 48-72.

identity. However, we see neither case in Tianjin. Instead, the sheer demand for relief work meant that there was plenty opportunity for any charity to find work.⁴⁴

Even in the presence of a weak secular state, religious participation in the public sphere helped to increase civil participation in Tianjin and was mutually beneficial.⁴⁵ For example, the Tianjin Christian Federation set up an association for relieving women and children to protect them from trafficking during famine periods. The Tianjin county government dictated the skills taught in these shelters, extending state influence beyond the reach of its purse strings. While at the same time, allowing private organizations to help carry the burden of housing and protecting these women, created a venue for spreading religious ideas that might otherwise have been unavailable.⁴⁶

While some business leaders in Tianjin made charitable donations during times of crisis from a desire to participate in local governance, the financial incentives offered by the Tianjin Chamber as it gained greater control and autonomy to relieve natural disasters became increasingly attractive to potential donors. The business of refugee relief could be quite lucrative. By the late 19th century, Tianjin was already a major hub for distributing grain throughout the Northern provinces. Modernizations in transportation

⁴⁴ Jürgen Habermas discusses the potential benefits of religious participation in the public sphere in his work: Jürgen Habermas, “Religion in the Public Sphere,” *European Journal of Philosophy* 14, no. 1 (April 2006): 1-25, see also: Jürgen Habermas, “A ‘Post-Secular’ Society – What Does that Mean?” *Reset DOC*: June 2008, part 5, <http://www.resetdoc.org/story/00000000926>.

⁴⁵ Habermas argues that religious participation in the public sphere is primarily beneficial within the presence of a strong liberal state. However, the context of Republican China offers an interesting alternative: numerous competing secular states emerging but not in a position of complete dominance, declining influence of the majority religions of Buddhism and Daoism in public affairs, the emergence of transnational ecumenical movements and the specially protected position of minority foreign religions. For Habermas’s discussion of religious participation in the public sphere in the presence of a strong liberal democratic state see: Habermas, “Religion in the Public Sphere,” 9.

⁴⁶ TMA, J0128-3-005429, mostly from April 1922, contains a series of letters to the Tianjin Chamber regarding the protection of women and children.

infrastructure helped to facilitate this further especially through the development of several railways, like the Jin Han in 1905, the Jing Feng in 1907, the Jing Zhang in 1909, and the Jin Pu in 1912.⁴⁷ During the drought that afflicted five Northern provinces, Mallory credits the construction of these railways as responsible for the greater success of government and private charity relief.⁴⁸

Transformations in grain distribution are not only important for understanding how famine relief was adapting to incorporate modern technologies to increase efficiency, it also represents an important indicator of governance, transitioning from primarily a state enterprise to economic and social control marginally shared with a burgeoning civil society.⁴⁹ As Mary Rankin explains “...even though guilds (during the late Qing) performed public functions like fire prevention and welfare. The chambers of commerce... formally brought private guild leadership into the public sphere.”⁵⁰ From this perspective, even apparently mundane responsibilities of the Tianjin Chamber of Commerce acquire greater significance. Although grain storage proliferated during the late Qing, many restrictions on grain movement during famine persisted. This meant the passes distributed to merchants to purchase grain represented a monopoly that could be very profitable. After the Xinhai Revolution, which began in earnest after the Wuchang uprising on October 10, 1911 and ended on February 12, 1912 with the abdication of the

⁴⁷ “Jin Bu Liangshi Jiaoyi Zhuangkuang” [The Trading Status of Grain in Tianjin’s Port], *YSB*, January 8, 1928.

⁴⁸ Mallory, *Land of Famine*, 30.

⁴⁹ For a discussion of the creation of Chinese chamber of commerce and the growth of the public sphere see: Chen Zhongping, “The Origins of Chinese Chambers of Commerce in the Lower Yangzi Region,” *Modern China* 27, no. 2 (April, 2001): 155-201.

⁵⁰ Mary Backus Rankin, *Elite Activism and Political Transformation in China: Zhejiang Province, 1865-1911* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1986).

six-year-old child emperor Puyi, the national government built upon a foundation already well-established by the chambers of commerce that rapidly spread throughout the country since 1903 to ensure the free movement of supplies for disaster relief.⁵¹

As the Beiyang government consolidated control, especially in the Zhili provincial area, members from the finance ministry worked to remove restrictions on the transporting of relief grain throughout the five Northern provinces.⁵² Besides removing restrictions, the Beiyang government also prevented multiple fees as grains passed through different provinces and encouraged merchants to move grain by minimizing other taxes and transport fees. The finance ministry placed higher taxes on the production of alcohol using grains during famines to help lower grain prices. Nevertheless, while it was the Beiyang government which set many of these objectives, it was the Tianjin Chamber which carried them out.⁵³ This helps to further illustrate the relationship between the chamber of commerce and the municipal government. City administrators relied on the efficiency of private enterprise to respond to and resolve welfare crises. On one level, this insulated the government from the repercussions of failed relief programs by placing the onus of charitable giving on urban enterprise. At the

⁵¹ The success of national government reforms to stabilize grain prices is one of the reasons Chinese scholars have argued that strong national government control of civil society was necessary in the form of a participatory civil society, see: Yu Jianxing and Zhou Jun, “Chinese Civil Society Research in Recent Years: A Critical Review,” *The China Review* 12, no. 2 (Autumn 2012): 111-140.

⁵² Chen Ling describes the disaster relief provisions of the Beiyang government, see: Chen Ling 陈凌, “Beiyang Zhengfu Shiqi Huang Zheng Shu Lun 北洋政府时期荒政述论 [Comment on the Relief Policy during the Period of Bei Yang Government],” *Heze Xueyuan Xuebao* 28, no. 1 (February 2006): 86-89.

⁵³ For a comparison of some of the methods used to control grain prices during famine used in southern China, see: Cen Dali and Chen Ming (2011) “Qingmo Minchu Jiangzhe Diqu Mi Jia Bodong ji Difang Zhengfu de Duice” [Late Qing Early Republican Grain Price Fluctuation in Jiangsu and Zhejiang Provinces and Local Government Countermeasures], *Ming Qing Lun Cong* [A Collection of Essays on the Ming and Qing Dynasties] Zhonggong Zhongyang Dangxiao Wenshibu, Tianjin Jinnanqu Shuangyang Zhen Dangwei Bangongshi.

same time, this gave the Tianjin Chamber the power to both alleviate the rising price of grain during disaster and ensure that its members could reap the most benefit from transporting food-stuffs.⁵⁴ The relationship between the private sector economy and municipal governance was often most effectively negotiated within the territory of philanthropic relief. As Morvaridi explains: “Private aid and Philanthropic charities are often considered part of a ... strategy to reduce state responsibility for the provision of many services considered essential to securing social rights, with the devolution of welfare responsibilities to non-state actors as a means to minimizing social expenditures.”⁵⁵

By providing tax exemptions for the movement of grain and reducing transportation fees, Tianjin merchants were encouraged to participate in the moving of the massive amounts of grain from surrounding provinces.⁵⁶ By the time of the 1920-21 famine, all grain transportation between provinces and within Zhili were organized by the Tianjin Chamber.⁵⁷ In 1921, the Zhili Provincial Government created a *pingtiaojū* (平糶局), a bureau for stabilizing the cost of rice and other grains throughout the province, and

⁵⁴ Ren Yunlan, “Minguo Shiqi Huabei Zaihuang yu Tianjin Liangshi Shichang, 1912-1936 Nian” [Republican Era Famine in Huabei and the Tianjin Grain Market: 1912 to 1936] *Zhongguo Nongshi* 2, (2006): 69-77.

⁵⁵ Although describing the Reaganomics of the 1980s, Morvaridi’s discussion of why a government might seek to outsource its charitable responsibilities provides useful insight into the relationship between the Tianjin Chamber of Commerce and the municipal government, see: Behrooz Morvaridi, “The Politics of Philanthropy and Welfare Governance: The Case of Turkey,” *The European Journal of Development Research* 25, no. 2 (2013): 305-321. Also see: Angela M. Eikenberry, “Philanthropy and Governance,” *Administrative Theory & Praxis* 28, no. 4 (2006): 586-592.

⁵⁶ TMA, J0128-3-004986-006, August 18, 1920. During the harsh famine of the early 1920s, the TJCO ordered stocked grains from cities like Canzhou to be used for saving refugees.

⁵⁷ Ren Yunlan, “Minguo shiqi Huabei zaihuang yu Tianjin liangshi shichang, 1912-1936 nian, 民国时期华北灾荒与天津粮食市场 [Natural Calamity in North China and Tianjin Grain Market in the Period of Republic], *Zhongguo Nongshi* (2006), 74.

placed the department under the management of the Tianjin Chamber.⁵⁸ Even in the 1930s, not just anyone could buy grain and then transport and sell it in the city. The Zhili government issued passes to purchase grain from local vendors; without these passes, vendors were restricted from selling their goods to merchants.

The Zhili government delegated the job of distributing these passes to the Tianjin Chamber, which certainly provided preferential treatment to its members. Normally, after the passes were distributed to the merchants, they would use their own money to purchase the grain. However, in times of disaster, the chamber could lend charity relief money to the merchants to purchase grain at low interest rates. In this way, the chamber functioned to relieve famine and also coordinate and stabilize some of the risks for merchants. Along with alleviating famine through encouraging the smooth operation of internal trade, the chamber also oversaw Tianjin's integration into the global market for grains and other foodstuffs. Thus, at the beginning of the Republican Period, Tianjin only imported several thousand *dan* of grain. But after 1921, the city imported nearly 100,000 *dan*, by 1922 more than 1 million (although much of this was from global famine donations) and by 1931 to 1932, this number reached its highest points of 27 million and 30 million *dan* respectively.⁵⁹ With such lucrative prospects, why would some merchants shy away from participating in this moneymaking opportunity? In fact, transporting grain could carry with it some significant risk. In October 1920, a train transporting grains from Xuzhou to relieve a food shortage in Tianjin was intercepted by bandits and all of

⁵⁸ Yang Tao describes the relationship between the Zhili provincial relief bureau and the TJCOG in some detail, see: Yang Tao, "Qingmo Beiyang Jituan de Zhenzai Jiuji Zhengce: Yi Zhili Zhenfujue wei Kaocha Zhongxin," [Late Qing and Beiyang Government Relief Policy: According to the Zhili Relief Bureau Investigation Center], *Lanzhou Xuekan*, 2011.

⁵⁹ Xu Daofu, *Zhongguo Jindai Nongye Shengchan ji Maoyi Tongji Ziliao*, [Chinese Modern Agricultural Production and Trade Statistics], (Shanghai: Shanghai Renmin Chubanshe, 1983), 138.

its cargo was stolen.⁶⁰ Even if grains were not stolen outright, shipments could be impeded for long periods of time due to the frequent wars in the area.⁶¹ Another problem was that the fees for chamber membership meant that many smaller family operations saw membership as more of a burden than opportunity.⁶²

As a governing body, the chamber possessed the authority to regulate taxation, so it utilized this power to cultivate charity. Besides directly budgeting certain taxes for the operations cost of charitable organizations like the *Jiaoyangshuo* (a method which recalls the incredibly obscure tax collecting methods of late imperial China), the chamber also approved a wide range of special tax incentives and exemptions. For example, the goods produced by the city's poor workhouses, as well as the materials they purchased, were not taxed or received a reduced rate.⁶³ The chamber of commerce also used its authority over Tianjin's electric trolley system to levy donations to assist the city's poor.⁶⁴ By providing tax benefits such as these, the chamber encouraged private charities to operate in the open and under the chamber's direction.

⁶⁰ TMA, J0128-3-004986-053, October 20, 1920.

⁶¹ Tianjinshi Danganguan, Tianjin Shehui Kexueyuan, and Tianjinshi Gongshangye Lianhehui *Tianjin Shanghui Dangan Huibian, 1912-1928* [The Archival Records of the Tianjin Chamber of Commerce], Vol. 2, Tianjinshi: Tianjin Renmin Chubanshe, (1992): 1698-1707.

⁶² The bitter rivalry between petty merchants and the influence of the small commercial elite that composed the chamber's leadership eventually lead to the organization by these merchants, in the early 1930s, into the Tianjin Association of Merchants (Tianjin Shangmin Xiehui) with the sponsorship of the local Guomindang party office see: Zhang Xiaobo, "Merchant Associational Activism in Early Twentieth-Century China: The Tianjin General Chamber of Commerce, 1904-1928" (PhD diss., Columbia University, 1995), 290-291.

⁶³ TMA, J0128-3-002890, 1912.

⁶⁴ TMA, J0128-3-002581-047, 1911.

The Tianjin Chamber also took part in international relief projects during the Great Kantō Earthquake that devastated Japan in 1923. In addition to sending cash donations and working with the Tianjin's branch of the Red Cross, the TJCOG arranged famine relief in the aftermath of the earthquake.⁶⁵ Tokyo and the surrounding areas were completely devastated by the severity of the earthquake. Although Chinese philanthropists responded to the tragedy in a variety of forms, much of the relief was specifically targeted at Chinese living in Japan like the Yokohama Chinese Association.⁶⁶ Tianjin's international relief work also extended to Europe as well. Xiong Xiling, who was previously appointed as the head of disaster relief in Tianjin after the 1917 flood, later became the chairman for the Russian Famine Relief Association and worked with the TJCOG to raise donations to help relieve the famine in Russia in 1922 and 1923.⁶⁷

Central planning for disaster prevention and post-disaster relief was not something new to Republican China. Qing famine relief centered on the establishment of local granaries with central government support. However, by the late Imperial Period, this system was woefully inadequate and rife with corruption.⁶⁸ After Yuan Shikai was

⁶⁵ TMA, J0128-3-005574-002. On September 6, 1923, the Tianjin Red Cross sent a letter to the chamber asking for approval to send donations to Japan. Also see articles from the *YSB*, "Yiyuanbaode Zhi Ribenren," [The Japanese Return Evil for Good] October 23, 1923; *New York Times*, "Prepared to Rush Relief," September 3, 1923. For a recent analysis of the Kanto Earthquake see: Charles J. Schenking, *The Great Kanto Earthquake and the Chimera of National Reconstruction in Japan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013).

⁶⁶ TMA, J0128-3-005574-009, September 22, 1923. There was also fear that Japanese citizens would attack foreigners, especially Koreans; several accounts witnessed Korean laborers being crucified. "Refugees bring Tales of Danger," *New York Times*, (September 11, 1923): Frontpage; "Reconstruction in Japan: The Korean Scare," *The Times* [London], (December 13, 1923): 11; "Japan," *The Capricornian* (October 20, 1923): 9.

⁶⁷ TMA, J0128-3-005999-033, December 20, 1922. China was an active participant in international famine relief even when it was just recovering from famine itself, see: "Russian Famine," *The Maitland Daily Mercury* (October 8, 1921): 5.

⁶⁸ Carol H. Shiue provides useful analysis of the Qing dynasty granary system and provides several suggestions on why it eventually failed, see: Carol H. Shiue, "Local Granaries and Central Government

promoted viceroy of Zhili Province in June 1902, he began issuing urgent requests to the Tianjin Chamber demanding their immediate support for specific disasters. However, the chamber was largely left on its own to organize charitable institutions and come up with a plan of response. After a disaster occurred, the first issue was usually the question of how to settle refugees who would come in great number to the city. The chamber would initiate relief work by holding a meeting to begin collecting funds for relief.

As a result of one such meeting, Yuan Shikai ordered the chamber to begin urgently relieving the disaster victims of the Yongding flood in 1907. The chamber invited board members of each charity to discuss the disaster relief solutions in detail and create an urgent relief group to borrow and distribute money to meet the families' immediate needs. This funding was distributed to each family, which could include extended family members. In the winter of 1907, the combined charity groups distributed more than 10,000 yuan and winter clothes in Baodi, Tianjin, Ninghe, and Wuqing. Goods and money were often directly distributed by chamber board members.

To solve local relief problems, the chamber sometimes turned to the Tianjin Emergency Societies, *jiuji shanhui* (天津救急善会). During the Yongding river bank flood mentioned above, the TJCOG directed this group to go to Wuqing County to distribute relief goods.⁶⁹ A similar institution for emergency relief was the Tianjin Life Saving Society, *Jishengshe*, which worked with both the chamber and the Zhili

Disaster Relief: Moral Hazards and Intergovernmental Finance in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century China," *The Journal of Economic History* 64, no. 1 (March 2004): 100-124.

⁶⁹ TMA, J0128-3-000757, 1907.

government relief agency, the *Zhili zhenfuju*. The TJCOG would dispatch the Jishengshe to meet the individual requests of village representatives for relief.⁷⁰

Besides working to relieve poverty or disaster stricken areas, the Tianjin Chamber also assisted with individual business losses due to isolated disasters including a fire that destroyed a Zhonghe cigarette factory.⁷¹ The TJCOG also received requests for help from socially marginalized groups like the disabled. That disabled individuals were organizing at all, although with some precedent, demonstrates an important shift. Traditionally those with physical or mental deficiencies would be cast away by their families or isolated from public view for fear of embarrassment. However, in this request, these blind individuals worked together to obtain relief from the chamber.⁷² As wealth and power shifted to the nouveau riche class of factory owners and foreign trade firms, embodied by the Tianjin Chamber, expectations of common people followed these new lines of power. By providing for the charity needs of the city's residents and the surrounding villages, the chamber presented a positive impression to urban society, particularly the exponentially growing number of newspaper readers, and brought legitimacy to this shift.

With so many disasters plaguing North China during the 1910s and 1920s, donations and funding for charity operations were always lacking to the extent that private donations were required to fund government-initiated programs. In response, the Beiyang government developed a program to establish special banks for loaning money

⁷⁰ TMA, J0128-3-001469-008, 1909.

⁷¹ TMA, J0128-3-000983, 1908. series of letters between the Zhonghe cigarette shop and other shops which were affected by a fire and requested relief.

⁷² TMA, J0128-3-002567-049, 1911. The names of two of the blind representatives were attached to the letter, Li Changqing and Xu Shusen. The appeal uses very traditional language of extreme deference and humility, comparing themselves to insects and typical of Chinese Buddhist concern for the value of preserving all forms of life.

after a disaster. Much like the granaries of the late Qing, these loans were targeted at helping small farmers and cottage industries back into production. Although this type of relief did not specifically distinguish between the deserving and undeserving poor, it did focus on those seen as most capable of rebuilding the local economy and carried with it an expectation that recipients would participate in their own salvation.⁷³ After the flood in 1917, Bian Yinchang, who held key positions in the Tianjin Chamber from 1912-1926 and came from one of “Tianjin’s Eight Great Families,” *ba da jia*, approached Xiong Xiling to set up a flood river works department and to build up a *yinli* bureau to give loans to poor people so that they could restart their small businesses.^{74 75} While Xiong Xiling may be best known for his brief service as prime minister for Yuan Shikai in 1913, and as a late imperial Qing reformer, his career after he retired from politics was equally important when he acted as one of China’s most vocal philanthropists.⁷⁶

⁷³ For a seminal work that discusses the distinction between the deserving and undeserving poor, see: Michael B. Katz, *Undeserving Poor: America's Enduring Confrontation with Poverty: Fully Updated and Revised*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, USA, 2013). For a similar discussion which looks at debates among Ming literati on how to alleviate poverty, see: Joanna Handlin Smith, “Lectures for the Poor—and the Rich,” in *The Art of Doing Good: Charity in Late Ming China*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009): 102-122.

⁷⁴ For more on Bian Yinchang’s career in the TJCO from 1912-1926, see: Zhang Xiaobo, “Merchant Associational Activism in Early Twentieth Century China: The Tianjin General Chamber of Commerce, 1904-1928,” (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1995), 317-321.

⁷⁵ Xiong Xiling had long been an advocate of creating banks specifically for providing small loans. In his words: “China is an agricultural country. There are vast areas of uncultivated land which must be utilized. Our farming methods should be improved. Agriculture in the United States is highly developed and her products find a good market in Europe. The people are thereby enriched, and industry and commerce consequently prosper. We propose that as soon as the financial condition of this country becomes more stable, we will establish agricultural banks in all the provinces, so that poor farmers may borrow money to cultivate the land.” Xiong Xiling, *The General Policy of the Chinese Government* (Peking: Printed by The Peking Daily News, 1913): 18.

⁷⁶ Zhou Qiuguang provides an excellent study on Xiong Xiling’s career as a philanthropist, see: Zhou Qiugang, *Xiong Xiling yu Cishan Jiaoyu Shiye* [Xiong Xiling and the Cause of Philanthropic Education], (Changsha: Hunan Jiaoyu Chubanshe, 1991).

The operational cost of the charity bureaus, *yinliju*, were either borrowed from the local government or gathered together by the local gentry in each charity group in order to protect the legal rights of each gentry and businessman, and guarantee the *yinliju* could open successfully. While it was really chamber members who were providing the funds, the Beiyang government fixed interest rates on loans to limit exploitation.⁷⁷ Typically these kinds of loans charged an interest rate of only around 3 – 4%. During the flood of 1917, there were a total of 309 *yinli* bureaus established in the Zhili area which provided 316,213 yuan to around 4,400 families.⁷⁸

Historically, Zhili Province was a center for producing cotton and fabric in North China.⁷⁹ When the flood disaster struck major weaving areas like Gaoyang, Raoyang, Xianxian and the Suning areas, it directly impacted the market in Tianjin which was a major distribution center for these goods. After the 1917 flood, local weavers in the city proper also struggled to get supplies. To alleviate the difficulties of these small industries, the Tianjin Chamber worked with the Zhili Provincial Chamber to lend money at fixed minimal rates of interest and searched for alternative sources to stabilize the price of yarn and encourage the recovery of these small businesses. The chambers also encouraged businesses to purchase goods produced in disaster areas by providing tax incentives and issuing low interest loans to companies that were willing to purchase from these areas.

⁷⁷ Tianjinshi Danganguan, *Tianjin Shanghui Dangan Huibian, 1912-1928*, (1992), 3390.

⁷⁸ Li Mingzhu, *Tianjin yu ta de Fudi* [Tianjin and its Mansions], (Tianjin: Shehui Kexueyuan Chubanshe, 2002), 406.

⁷⁹ Xu Daofu, *Zhongguo Jindai Nongye Shenchan ji Maoyi Tongji Ziliao* [Chinese Modern Agricultural Production and Trade Statistics], (Shanghai: Renmin Chubanshe, 1983), 203.

The Zhili Provincial Government offered to pay for more than 50% of the interest allowed on loans made to companies buying yarn and fabric produced in these areas.⁸⁰ These policies favoring locally sourced goods to jumpstart post-disaster recovery resemble the traditional pressure the Imperial government could utilize to recover the agrarian economy. While the chamber worked to support the interests of members when disaster struck, the Beiyang government helped to insulate local markets from cheap international goods which might undermine post-disaster recovery. For example, the Beiyang government set restrictions on purchases made from *Sanjingyanghang*, a Japanese distributor.

After purchasing yarn and cloth, Tianjin merchandisers distributed the materials to each household in the disaster area. From this illustration, we not only see how the economic controls implemented by the chamber of commerce, working in conjunction with the Zhili government, could help to heal shattered industries which were at the core of providing subsistence for the majority of those living at that level, we also gain a better understanding of the hierarchical relationship between organs of civil society, like the chamber of commerce and provincial military government.

While commands regarding relief work were made by the Beiyang leadership in Baodi, the state relied heavily on the Tianjin and Zhili Chambers of Commerce who in turn directed smaller provincial chambers who finally directed the actual purchasing practices of merchants, vendors, and lenders.⁸¹ The solution

⁸⁰ Tianjinshi Danganguan, *Tianjin Shanghui Dangan Huibian, 1912-1928*, (1992), 2579.

⁸¹ *YSB*, February 1, 1918.

for recovering the weaving industry during the 1917 flood demonstrates continuity with the tradition of restoring agricultural production during the Qing Period. They both supported and stimulated the economy in the disaster area and required the disaster refugees to produce and save themselves. The primary difference was that now, in addition to focusing on reestablishing agricultural production, maintaining subsistence became a fundamental responsibility of the governing elite.⁸²

The traditional value of focusing relief efforts on reconstructing previously productive aspects of the local economy after disaster was also reflected in the training efforts used to educate disaster refugees who were temporarily sheltered in Tianjin. Refugee relief used charity donations to teach skills of self-reliance to the displaced. During the drought of 1920, the demands placed on Tianjin's orphanages far exceeded their capacity. In response, the Tianjin Chamber sent children to an orphanage in Shanghai where they lived while working as apprentices at the Housheng Weaving Factory. After two years of training, the children returned to Tianjin where the Tianjin Chamber helped them to find jobs.⁸³ This type of solution was very common during periods of famine. When compared to the millions displaced by these disasters, recruiting several hundred refugee children to work in the factories may seem trifling, but it demonstrates the philosophy of charity that informed chamber member decisions and the importance of national networks of charity which allowed for distant support during times of intense disaster.

⁸² Li Mingzhu, *Tianjin yu ta de Fudi*, 407.

⁸³ Tianjinshi Danganguan, *Tianjin Shanghui Dangan Huibian, 1912-1928*, (1992), 3417-3419.

Relief for Tianjin's villages also came from a branch of the Beiyang government in Baodi. Under the initiative of Yuan Shikai, the provincial government established a *zhenfuju* (賑抚局) or relief bureau. In the late Qing when Yang Shixiang became the governor of Zhili, he worked with elite circles to create a large relief fund dedicated to helping the province. Along with distributing funds and rebuilding materials, the Zhili Relief Bureau worked with water conservation, price stabilization, long-term welfare, and organized land reclamation. It was an important relief organization which responded to Zhili's many disasters in the early twentieth century.⁸⁴ This relief bureau was another way for individual citizens to interact directly with their government. Requests for aid often came from local village gentry in affected areas.⁸⁵ Providing disaster relief was an important element of modern governance, a fact that new or minor political parties sometimes utilized to increase their recognition. For example, the Hebei Progressive Party was active in relieving Baodi after a flood in 1914 and trumpeted its efforts to the local populace in order to win support.⁸⁶

By taking the responsibility to respond to natural disasters and seasonal relief, the philanthropic work of the Tianjin Chamber of Commerce also represents an important connection between the city and its hinterland. Regional rural networks, often organized into native place associations in the city, created alliances and informed transactions between merchants in Tianjin and throughout China.⁸⁷ In the face of major disaster,

⁸⁴ TMA, J0128-3-002567, 1911. Representatives from villages around Tianjin approached the Tianjin Chamber to relay their need to the relief bureau.

⁸⁵ TMA, J0128-3-001469, 1909, contains a series of requests for aid from villager elected representatives.

⁸⁶ TMA, J0128-3-008699, 1914.

⁸⁷ Bryna Goodman, "The Locality as Microcosm of the Nation? Native Place Networks and Early Urban Nationalism in China," *Modern China* 21, no. 4 (1995): 387–419.

native place associations connected cities into national networks of charitable giving.⁸⁸ Confronted with overwhelming disasters, village leaders appealed directly to the Tianjin Chamber first and foremost on the basis of these ties. Many of these letters followed a standard appeal that represented the bureaucratic language of requesting aid by describing the helplessness of the villagers and their total dependence on the mercy of the chamber for continued existence. Probably, the language of these letters conformed to similar patterns because they were prepared by poor unemployed scholars living in Tianjin who would offer their writing skills to petitioners for a small price. However, not all these communications fit this standard appeal and several describe a horrific scene. In one letter to the Tianjin Chamber, a villager named Chen Ling begged for food, explaining that people in his village had resorted to eating each other. While I did not find many letters that discussed cannibalism, such materials represent an alternative picture of suffering to the published narratives found in newspapers.⁸⁹

Native place associations were important sponsors of urban charity. In January of 1926, the Anhui Association based in Tianjin began raising funds and conducting relief activities to assist war refugees in the city.⁹⁰ The Yantai (烟台) Chamber of Commerce helped raise relief monies by convincing its members to purchase lottery tickets from the Tianjin Poor Factory, *pinmin gongchang* (贫民工厂).⁹¹ Associations not only worked to

⁸⁸ Toby Lincoln, "Fleeing from Firestorms: Government, Cities, Native Place Associations and Refugees in the Anti-Japanese War of Resistance," *Urban History* 38, no.3 (2011): 437-456. Karla Simon contextualizes these native place associations within the history of China's civil society in her work: Karla W. Simon, *Civil Society in China the Legal Framework from Ancient Times to the New Reform Era* (Oxford [UK]: Oxford University Press, 2013).

⁸⁹ TMA, J0128-3-000306-009, 1907. Chen Ling, "Wei Muji Zhenzai Gushi zhi Tianjin Shangwu Zonghui de han" [A letter about raising relief sent to the Tianjin Chamber of Commerce].

⁹⁰ TMA, J0134-1-00046, January 1926.

provide relief in the city, they were also an important advocate when disaster or poverty struck. In 1912, representatives from Jiangxi Province collected donations from members of the Tianjin Chamber for setting up a poor children's school.⁹² Even gangs of *hunhunr* (the iron-willed gangsters that prowled the city's trade routes) controlled portions of the city and contributed programs that benefited the social welfare.⁹³

Besides a growing number of government bureaus for responding to disasters and the various chambers of commerce, several charity organizations arose seeking to better regulate and evenly distribute and coordinate charity efforts. Two groups active in Tianjin included the Tianjin *Shantang Lianhehui* (善堂联合会) and the *Bashantang* (八善堂).⁹⁴ The Tianjin Federation of Benevolent Halls, *Shantang Lianhehui* helped to coordinate donations for the various institutions sheltering the city's homeless similar to the Tianjin Jiaoyangyuan.⁹⁵ The Temporary Emergency Battlefield Relief Association, *Bashantang*, provided both emergency relief and sustained charity. By the mid-1920s, as

⁹¹ TMA, J0128-3-004898, 1919. Increasingly, displays of wealth were often associated with charity.

⁹² TMA, J0128-3-003045, 1912.

⁹³ Kwan Man Bun, "Order in Chaos: Tianjin's Hunhunr and Urban Identity in Modern China," *Journal of Urban History* 27 (2000):75. Bun argues that while most Chinese scholarship has overlooked the Tianjin hunhunr as another example of pre-communist lawlessness indicative of the fragmentation of urban society, hunhunr were also important to social welfare: "to earn the respect of their fellow citizens, many hunhunr preformed community services ranging from conflict resolution to firefighting..." (80) They also policed neighborhoods and fundraised for charity causes.

⁹⁴ TMA, J0128-3-004382, 1916. Along with its activities to support relief work in Tianjin and its surrounding villages, the Tianjin Shangtang also helped to raise donations for disasters throughout the country. In this series of letters from 1916, the TJCOOC requests this organization's help to relieve refugees in Jiangsu and Anhui. This kind of cross provincial charity work was very important during the early Republican period and national charity networks were often reciprocal. For example, during the floods a year later in 1917 that decimated much of northern China, Shanghai sent millions of yuan and thousands of volunteers to help with relief efforts.

⁹⁵ TMA, J0131-1-000089, 1916. In April 1916, the Shantang Lianhehui provided female winter coats to the Tianjin Jiaoyangyuan.

warlord skirmishes intensified in the areas surrounding Tianjin, the Bashantang established a specific branch to help war widows and orphans who had fled to Tianjin to escape the fighting and now lived homeless on the streets in the city.⁹⁶ The charity also helped to pay the medical bills of wounded soldiers.⁹⁷ In the winter, the association opened soup kitchens and received donations from the Rice Shop Association.⁹⁸ After 1928, the Guomintang municipal leaders would press charities towards ever greater levels of consolidation and administration. However, it is important to note here that well before the GMD formally took control of the city, Tianjin's charities were already coordinating their relief efforts and voluntarily consolidating their efforts. While the Guomintang laid much of the administrative groundwork and bureaucratic infrastructure that would be expanded under the communists, these institutions must also be considered within the context of a semi-autonomous civic society that was applying the lessons of a growing private sector economy to increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of non- (参事) government philanthropy.

Traditional charitable institutions that continued to persist from the Qing Period took on new responsibilities while continuing certain cultural norms. One such institution was the Hall for Nurturing the Multitude, *Yulitang* (育黎堂). While the institution provided for basic needs like clothing, its focus began to shift towards provisioning medical services and epidemic prevention.⁹⁹ Reports from this charity also

⁹⁶ TMA, J0128-2-002161, 1925. provides a collection of letters between the Bashantang Temporary Emergency Battlefield Relief Association and the Tianjin County Canshihui (参事会).

⁹⁷ TMA, J0128-2-002161-024, February 7, 1926.

⁹⁸ TMA, J0128-2-002589-063, July 26, 1927.

demonstrate the increasing scrutiny placed on charities that received public donations. Each month, the Yulitang sent the Tianjin City Hall a booklet detailing the monies it received, expenses, and an account of the number of poor people residing at the institution.¹⁰⁰ In July 1913, the Yulitang expanded by adding an orphanage school.¹⁰¹ Under the new Republican government, specific taxes were levied to support and expand government charity work. For example, the Tianjin Salt Merchants Orphanage, *Changlu Yuyingtang* (长芦育婴堂) was partially supported by a tax levied by the Tianjin Chamber on public transportation.¹⁰² All clear examples of state modernization in charity.

Changes in the policies of the Tianjin Hall for Spreading Benevolence, *Guangrentang* (GRT) are emblematic of the influence of modernization on the traditional ethics of social responsibility. The GRT was one of the largest and longest lasting late Qing institutions for charity relief in China. It has been the subject of several recent studies, most likely because of its success in adapting to the demands of modern social welfare.¹⁰³ Established in 1878 in response to the Great Northern Famine, the institution embodied many of the values of Confucian morality focusing on preserving women's

⁹⁹ TMA, J0131-1-000021, June 1916. Request from the Yulitang for used clothing to give to its poor residents.

¹⁰⁰ TMA, J0131-1-000022, 1912. A series of these reports made in 1912 are held in the file group.

¹⁰¹ TMA, J0131-1-000024, July 1913.

¹⁰² TMA, J0128-2-000813-031, November 23, 1925.

¹⁰³ It's incredibly detailed and extensive records have been digitized by the Tianjin City Archives, much of which are available on their website, see: Vivienne Shue, "The Quality of Mercy: Confucian Charity and the Mixed Metaphors of Modernity in Tianjin," *Modern China* 32, no. 4 (2006): 411-52. Also see: Ruth Rogaski, "Beyond Benevolence: A Confucian Women's Shelter in Treaty-Port China," *Journal of Women's History* 8, no. 4 (1997): 54-90. Su Minqiang provides detailed exposition of the Guangrentang archives in his dissertation: Su Minqiang 武民强. "Tuiguang huangren: qingji Tianjin guanrentang ji qi furu cishan sheye yanjiu 推广皇仁—清季天津广仁堂及其妇孺慈善事业研究 [Promotion Emperor's Benevolence-Research on Tianjin Guangren Tang and its Women and Children Charities in the End of Qing Dynasty]." PhD diss., Nankai daxue, zhongguo jinxiandiashi, 2012.

chastity. Along with maintaining a shelter for women and their young children, the GRT also had its own clinic that was equipped with foreign medicines.¹⁰⁴ The GRT helped children to find adoptive homes and young women to find husbands.¹⁰⁵ Another primary role was to help rehabilitate young girls who had been taken in as nuns at Buddhist temples to reenter normal life and evade the cloister.¹⁰⁶ By the early 1880s, the GRT expanded to include a drug rehabilitation clinic and helped to collect and bury dead bodies on the street.¹⁰⁷

In the mid-1880s, the GRT continued to expand, adding a place for people to recover from sickness *Yangbingsuo* (养病所) and a ward for protecting and raising infants at the Bureau for Infant Protection, *Baoyingju* (保婴局).¹⁰⁸ While initially established to protect women's chastity, the GRT developed a women's education program that sent women to local schools, and upon graduation, placed them in various factories to work.¹⁰⁹ By 1906, the GRT expanded again to build a kindergarten that included art classes.¹¹⁰ Education classes emphasized both modern skills like spinning and weaving and traditional moral education.¹¹¹ Another important expansion of the GRT

¹⁰⁴ TMA, J0130-1-000008, 1878.

¹⁰⁵ TMA, J0130-1-000020, 1878.

¹⁰⁶ TMA, J0130-1-000047, 1878.

¹⁰⁷ TMA, J0130-1-000031 and 000043, 1880.

¹⁰⁸ TMA, J0130-1-000030, 1884.

¹⁰⁹ TMA, J0130-1-000042, 1885.

¹¹⁰ TMA, J0130-1-000084, October 1906.

¹¹¹ TMA, J0130-1-000209, 1916. For example, in June 1916, the Guangrentang set up a Xizihui, an organization for advocating Confucianism through teaching people how to read. Several years later, in May 1921, the GRT organized a group of refugee children to go to several factories in the city for training, see: TMA, J0130-1-000188, 1921.

took place in July 1923 when they rebuilt a factory that exclusively employed women.¹¹² On the one hand, this compromised with the traditional view that women should not work outside of the home, but at the same time preserved a strict gendered separation.¹¹³

Support for the GRT came from a variety of places. From the beginning, it received direct donations from the Zhili government.¹¹⁴ It also received specific tax allotments including a special tax on foreign medicines and various assessed fines.¹¹⁵ The GRT also received direct donations from foreign dignitaries.¹¹⁶ So important were the activities of the GRT that the provincial government, on occasion, strong-armed Tianjin Chamber of Commerce members into giving donations. For example, after the flooding in 1911, the archives contain a series of letters between shop owners and the TJCOG begging for donation extensions or reduced donation amounts.¹¹⁷ The chamber also received threatening letters from provincial government authority about pressuring shop owners to donate to the GRT.¹¹⁸ While the relationship between the Tianjin Chamber of

¹¹² TMA, J0130-1-000296. July, 1923.

¹¹³ The modernization of women's labor and how traditional Confucian values influenced its transition is the topic of several important monographs. Gail Hershatler's historiography provides an excellent discussion: Gail Hershatler, *Women in China's Long Twentieth Century* (Berkeley: Global, Area, and International Archive, 2007). Jacka's recent work connects China's imperial past to issues of gender and the family in contemporary China, see: Tamara Jacka, Andrew B. Kipnis and Sally Sargeson, *Contemporary China: Society and Social Change* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013). A volume of essays edited by Bryna Goodman and Wendy Larson begins with a discussion of the gendered separation of labor and the legacies of the imperial period, see: Bryna Goodman and Wendy Larson, *Gender in Motion: Divisions of Labor and Cultural Change in Late Imperial and Modern China*. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2005).

¹¹⁴ TMA, J0130-1-000002, 1879.

¹¹⁵ TMA, J0130-1-000010, 1879.

¹¹⁶ TMA, J0130-1-000099, 1909. The Japanese consular donated money to the Guangrentang.

¹¹⁷ TMA, J0128-2-002800-016, November 9, 1912.

¹¹⁸ TMA, J0128-2-002800-024, September 18, 1913.

Commerce and the provincial government could be mutually supportive, as Mann points out, merchants usually organized in the first place to resist attempts at control and were bound to have an ambivalent relationship with the state.¹¹⁹ The local municipal and provincial governments could impose their will upon local commerce, especially because there was not any clear legal protections against state appropriations from the private sector. Merchants responded with passive resistance in the form of delays and negotiation or through collective actions to protest government demands.

Although the Guangrentang was primarily active in providing long-term training and housing of poor women, it also collaborated with national charity organizations to coordinate regional relief. In the early 1920s, the shelter helped to increase funding for the Tianjin Red Cross during the North China Famine.¹²⁰ Rather than accepting only women, the shelter also adopted whole families who were displaced by disaster and cast into poverty by the loss of the family provider.¹²¹ The shelter responded to the needs of disaster refugees by establishing a disaster victim women's shelter in 1926.¹²² Although the shelter was not a prison, and disobeying the rules could result in expulsion, some residents, especially prostitutes, did try to escape.¹²³ As Gail Hershatter explained, "Sometimes the boredom and hostility of prostitutes confined to the Door of Hope (a

¹¹⁹ Susan Mann, *Local Merchants and the Chinese Bureaucracy, 1750-1950* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1987).

¹²⁰ TMA, J0130-1-000220, October 1921. This record group refers to the collaboration between the Guangrentang and the Red Cross during the massive famine in North China during the early 1920s.

¹²¹ TMA, J0130-1-000187, April 1921.

¹²² TMA, J0130-1-000319, 1926.

¹²³ TMA, J0130-1-000332, February 1923. "Virtuous woman," Liu Zhenshi convinced a young girl to climb over the wall and escape; she was consequently asked to leave,

women's shelter) and other institutions took the form of violating regulations, stealing, petition the court for release, random yelling, arson, and digging escape tunnels."¹²⁴ Some prostitutes might temporarily seek the protection of the shelter to avoid lawsuits from brothel owners, but then choose to flee to previous customers, finding the lifestyle of the shelter too restrictive. Some women, again often prostitutes, were addicted to opium and heroin and they were locked into the shelter as part of the recovery process.¹²⁵ However, the majority of the women in the shelter were destitute, and there was never a lack of applicants hoping to escape poverty by entering the institution in this period.

Where relief institutions like the Guangrentang sprung from a long history of Confucian benevolence and made careful changes to remain relevant but preserve traditional values, government organized charities placed much greater emphasis on harnessing the potential labor of unemployed poor in a way that brought no burden to the local economy.¹²⁶ Ideal Chinese workhouses sprung from private donations or lotteries and produced sufficient goods to support their workers.¹²⁷ The mission statement of the Tianjin Rehabilitation Institute, Jiaoyangyuan (教养院), emphasized that it would provide professional training and place refugees and the homeless with jobs that required physical labor. Of course, in reality, not all homeless people in Tianjin were suitable for physical labor. Many were injured, elderly or too young. Consequently, the reformatory

¹²⁴ Gail Hershatter, *Dangerous Pleasures Prostitution and Modernity in Twentieth-Century Shanghai* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 269.

¹²⁵ Hershatter, *Dangerous Pleasures*, 314.

¹²⁶ Julia C. Strauss, *Strong Institutions in Weak Polities: State Building in Republican China, 1927-1940* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).

¹²⁷ "China's Workhouse," *The North - China Herald and Supreme Court & Consular Gazette (1870-1941)*, (July 19, 1924): 85.

leadership would select new residents each month to send to the city's *dexiyisuo*, or workhouse.¹²⁸ Here the “de” is the Chinese character as found in daode (道德), meaning morality or virtue. This implies that the *xiyisuo*'s (workhouse) original purpose was to train people in not simply how to make a living, but also in how to conform to a communal sense of ethics. When the municipal government organized “modern” programs of poverty relief, traditional concerns did not simply dissolve and it would be incorrect to assume that Chinese workhouses followed exactly the English workhouses upon which they were patterned.

In 1903, the Tianjin Xiyisuo established a branch specifically for training homeless vagrants to work and later a branch for reeducating criminals.¹²⁹ After receiving training, the Jiaoyangyuan worked with the city's projects department (工程处) to provide poor residents with low paying jobs that ensured two or three hearty meals each day that included meat.¹³⁰ The projects department would also provide workers from the Jiaoyangyuan with seasonal clothing.¹³¹ In this way much of the costs for poverty relief could be offset through the labor of residents while the state could convey compassion, *ren*, (仁) by provisioning for the welfare of the poor. Like the Yulitang, the Jiaoyangyuan also provided monthly reports to the city hall regarding its expenditures, donations of food and money received, records of who was currently residing at the

¹²⁸ TMA, J0131-1-000050, April 1915.

¹²⁹ TMA, J0166-1-000001, 1903.

¹³⁰ TMA, J0131-1-000087, 1915. In April 1915, the Jiaoyangyuan requested back payments from the projects department for reimbursement for the cost of meals for residents providing labor for a duration of six months.

¹³¹ TMA, J0131-1-000093 and 94, 1916. In May 1916, the Jiaoyangyuan requested the projects department to provide hats, summer clothes and a back payment of 126 yuan for the residents who worked there.

poorhouse and how many people had been helped.¹³² In 1915, the Tianjin Yulitang became part of the city's House of Refuge and Relief, *Jiaoyang suo*, which consolidated all of its assets.¹³³ Although the Yulitang served medical needs as previously mentioned, the problem of drug addiction was not seen as falling under the responsibilities of the *Jiaoyang suo*, and addicts were often simply sent back to their native villages.¹³⁴

The *Jiaoyangyuan* demonstrated sensitivity to the religious sensibilities of its residents as well. Since many were Hui rather than Han Chinese, food and drink was kept clean to prevent conflict between the two ethnic groups.¹³⁵ Recognizing that refugees came to the *Jiaoyang suo* seeking help in times of disaster, the charity also used its residents to coordinate relief in the provinces, sending refugees back to their hometowns with donations for village relief.¹³⁶ Another evidence of the reformatory's importance to disaster relief are the large number of adoption records present in the year following the 1917 flood and specific educational work related to orphans.¹³⁷ While the *Jiaoyangyuan* provided many helpful services to urban society, their care for individuals with mental illness was virtually non-existent.¹³⁸

¹³² TMA, J0131-1-000061, September 1915.

¹³³ TMA, J0131-1-000053 through 57, 1915. A series of archives folders from August 1915 document this merger.

¹³⁴ TMA, J0131-1-000095, May 1916. The county sent four drug addicts to the *Jiaoyangyuan* which sent them back to their native village.

¹³⁵ TMA, J0131-1-000110, June 1916.

¹³⁶ TMA, J0131-1-000133, June 1917. After the major flood that effected five provinces in North China, Tianjin became a hub for distributing national relief. In this particular document, a man named Li Bingheng picked up his son who was temporarily a resident at the *Jiaoyangyuan* and also took donations back for the poor in his village.

¹³⁷ TMA, J0131-1-000172, 1918. For example, the *Jiaoyangyuan* sent 60 orphans to the Yuyuan spinning mills to learn weaving skills in June of 1918.



NOT CHARITY BUT A CHANCE TO EARN

Figure 1.2: Not Charity but a Chance to Earn.¹³⁹

Where the Jiaoyangyuan was active in providing shelter, training labor, and finding temporary work for residents. Foreign influenced organizations like the Tianjin Branch of the Chinese Red Cross set up their own factories as a form of poverty relief. In 1919, the manager of this factory, Yuan Rutang, worked actively with the Jiaoyangyuan to recruit laborers to work for the Red Cross factory.¹⁴⁰ The work of the Red Cross was also funded by the Tianjin Chamber, again demonstrating the overlapping complex relationship between private charity, government relief institutions, and sources of funding.¹⁴¹ The Tianjin Chamber was unlikely to support the Red Cross if its activities were not seen as directly promoting the city government's view of effective charity work. The Tianjin branch of the Red Cross (TJRC) also reported all of the donations it received

¹³⁸ TMA, J0131-1-000282, 1922. Several reports like this letter to the police department in January 1922 vaguely describe the death of some "crazy person" who died of his sickness with very little detail about what caused his problem or his eventual demise.

¹³⁹ Picture taken by John J. Heeren from the American Red Cross in John J. Heeren, "On the Famine Front in Shantung," *Asia and the Americas* 21, (June): 544.

¹⁴⁰ TMA, J0131-1-000226, September 1919.

¹⁴¹ TMA, J0128-3-002210, 1911.

to the TJCOG showing that the chamber acted in a semi-state capacity regulating private charity.¹⁴²

The overlapping leadership of the Tianjin Chamber and the Tianjin Red Cross is also revealing. During major disasters like the 1917 flood, the TJRC requested personnel from the TJCOG to help with managing relief.¹⁴³ Since the chamber was under pressure from the government to respond to its requests to deal with specific relief problems, it is likely that these personnel guided private charity in a way that responded to municipal government concerns.

However, this kind of influence could flow in both directions. In 1922, the Red Cross worked with the chamber of commerce to come up with new regulations for all Christian charities protecting women and children.¹⁴⁴ Here, a private charity worked with a semi-state organization to develop local municipal charity regulations that would be later published into law.¹⁴⁵ As an organization with a national network of charities, the Red Cross could also fill gaps within local charity needs that the chamber was unable or unwilling to fulfill. For example, in 1926 the Red Cross began supporting and providing treatment to wounded soldiers in North China and working with the chamber, covered the pharmaceutical costs incurred by the clinics actively supporting them.¹⁴⁶ The name of the

¹⁴² TMA, J0128-2-002938-042, January 7, 1918.

¹⁴³ TMA, J0128-2-002939, 1917. This record group from 1917 contains a series of requests from the Tianjin Red Cross for personnel from the TJCOG.

¹⁴⁴ TMA, J0128-3-005429-013, April 29, 1922.

¹⁴⁵ These laws and regulations would then be published in local newspapers like the *Dagongbao* and in internally circulated documents like the *Tianjin Municipal Gazetteer*.

¹⁴⁶ TMA, J0128-2-002161. This record group contains several documents between the Chamber of Commerce and the Tianjin Red Cross regarding providing help for wounded soldiers.

Red Cross branch specifically designated for working with relieving war related refugees was the *Bingzai Jiujiuhui* (兵灾救急会).¹⁴⁷ While the majority of funding came from the local merchants, donations also came from the national network of the China Red Cross, connecting Tianjin philanthropists with philanthropist in cities across China. Again, here we see that the work of philanthropy was also promoting a broader vision of China to aid workers which emphasized a nationwide solidarity. As Reeves explains, the Chinese Red Cross Society cultivated new patterns of elite participation in public affairs and encouraged a transition from local initiatives to a sustained national effort.¹⁴⁸

Much of the funding for the Tianjin branch was provided by donations made by the jockey clubs in the international settlement. Horse racing became a popular pastime in concession cities, and while the Tianjin track never possessed the clout of those in Shanghai or Hong Kong, it became one of the central social events of Tianjin high society in the early twentieth century. While these donations were made by private individuals, by the Nanjing Decade all donations were processed through the city financial bureau.¹⁴⁹ This administrative step provides evidence for two important conclusions. First, Nationalist city administrators understood that control of philanthropic donations was an important evidence of state legitimacy and second that the work of the Red Cross closely aligned with the social welfare values of the city government which constantly struggled to fund its social relief projects.

¹⁴⁷ TMA, J0128-2-002802, 1913.

¹⁴⁸ Caroline Beth Reeves, "The Power of Mercy: The Chinese Red Cross Society, 1900-1937," (Order No. 9832302, Harvard University, 1998).

¹⁴⁹ "Jockey club to Finance Bureau," *SZGB* 16, (December 7, 1929): 34.

Beyond its direct influence through charity work, the Tianjin Red Cross also provided an important setting where Chinese social workers gained experience before serving in city government posts. For instance, when the Tianjin Vagrant Reeducation Shelter and the #1 Poor Workhouse were consolidated into the #1 Poor Relief House, the special government hired Zhao Pinqin (赵聘卿) as an honorary committee member because of his previous experience as the head of the Tianjin Red Cross.¹⁵⁰ Placing members of national relief agencies into significant advisory positions for municipal charities suggests that the influence of national philanthropic movements on regional and urban specific philanthropy was magnified by cross institutional collaboration and must be considered beyond simple membership numbers or state domination of philanthropic giving.

Local institutions of poverty relief also developed their own national connections with sister institutions in other cities. For example, the #1 Orphanage in Tianjin sent copies of its regulations and funding to the #1 Orphanage in Beijing. These kinds of exchanges helped to standardize policies that were not always effectively regulated under the unstable management of the Beiyang government and demonstrate the porous nature of political boundaries during the Warlord Period.¹⁵¹ During the extreme famine of the 1920s, the Shanghai Guangrentang sent donations to the Tianjin GRT and adopted several refugee children.¹⁵² Along with education, sheltering and finding work for refugees and urban poor, charity organizations in the city also worked to identify the

¹⁵⁰ “Special Government Hires Zhao Pinqin,” *SZGB* 16, (December 22, 1929): 20.

¹⁵¹ TMA, J0128-3-002785-037, 1912.

¹⁵² TMA, J0130-1-000169, October 1920.

native place of residents and send them back to their towns and villages. This form of relief often took the form of free transportation, food for the journey, and occasionally military or police escort to ensure security.¹⁵³

So far I have mainly focused on the many institutions that were active in helping to spread poverty relief and how that relief began to change to reflect modern concerns. However, it is also apparent that common people began to approach their government officials with increased boldness, and utilizing terminology that would resonate with their concerns. In one instance, a village representative named Li Yuting approached his county officer for money to prevent displaced immigrants from drifting and begging.¹⁵⁴ Villagers from surrounding districts also approached the Tianjin Chamber directly to ask for disaster relief.¹⁵⁵ Additionally, this type of plea to the benevolence of leaders was demonstrated after a Tianjin fire severely injured several businessmen. These men appealed through the Tianjin Chamber of Commerce to Yuan Shikai for financial relief.¹⁵⁶ The situation was so serious that the Beijing Chamber sent their members to each branch in Tianjin and Zhili to investigate and provide help.¹⁵⁷ Or as one anonymous

¹⁵³ TMA, J0131-1-000296, January 1923, provides a list of organizations sending poor people back to their native place.

¹⁵⁴ TMA, J0128-3-002172-011, 1909. The key term here is liuli (流离) which means to wander about.

¹⁵⁵ TMA, J0128-3-000947, 1908, contains numerous requests for relief after a flood made by individual village representatives directly to the TJCO. This demonstrates that the Tianjin chamber played an important role in relieving the local area after disaster.

¹⁵⁶ TMA, J0128-3-002722, January 30, 1912. This record group contains a series of communications regarding a group of businessmen who were injured and robbed during a fire. These individuals made multiple appeals to the Tianjin Chamber, to the Zhili Provincial Governor Zhang Xiluan and even Yuan Shikai, who by this time was in the process of overseeing the abdication of the last Qing emperor, Puyi.

¹⁵⁷ TMA, J0128-3-008711, 1914. This record group primarily discusses relief for those businessmen affected by the fire.

author asked: “what solutions can the chamber offer to those with a hard life struggling to survive?”¹⁵⁸

Tianjin Police and Confucian Benevolence.

The requests for aid which poured into the offices of the Zhili Relief Bureau demonstrated that disaster victims recognized the authority of the Beiyang government. As their government, it was responsible for meeting their needs. Police also interacted with refugees on a daily personal level, representing another way that the new state was able to exert its influence. The police have often been examined under the historian’s lens as a means for exploring China’s growing nationalism. The history of Republican police methods, in particular, have been scrutinized to discover the roots of China’s modern police state.¹⁵⁹ However, the presence of police agents of modernity sent mixed messages about how the government was going to respond to the emerging expectations concerning the treatment of disaster victims. In fact, these new emissaries of state control were often directly at odds with China’s vulnerable populations.

In the existing literature, within their relationship to the urban poor, Janet Chen, Ruth Rogaski, and David Strand have each argued that the new police eventually came to exert a meddlesome control on nearly every aspect of ordinary life.¹⁶⁰ Before the Qing

¹⁵⁸ TMA, J0128-3-002600-046, December 25, 1913.

¹⁵⁹ For example, see: Guo Xuezi, *China's Security State: Philosophy, Evolution, and Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

¹⁶⁰ Janet Chen discusses how police chief Zhao Bingju was ordered by Yuan Shikai to set up work houses where beggars were forced to provide services to the city, see: Janet Chen, *Guilty of Indigence* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 2012), 25. David Strand argues that police were educated to intrude as part of the cultural context of Confucian governance, see: David Strand, *Rickshaw Beijing: City People and Politics in the 1920s* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989). Rogaski’s analysis of hygiene campaigns demonstrates how police often forcibly exposed the private physical world to public scrutiny and intruded into the homes of poor urban dwellers, see: Ruth Rogaski, *Hygienic Modernity: Meanings of Health and Disease in Treaty-port China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).

established a national police force in a Western style, Chinese law enforcement was handled by *yamen* officials charged with hunting down criminals, *bukuai*, and local militias organized for local defense called *baojia*.¹⁶¹ In addition to local defense from bandits and law enforcement, the *baojia* sometimes functioned to collect taxes and provide government surveillance.¹⁶² They also served the public welfare by organizing fire brigades, regulating grain shops, and operating winter soup kitchens each year.¹⁶³ They were not, however, civilian governed, public, specialized, and professional, and thus were not like the police forces in contemporary liberal democracies. Qing forces were largely unspecialized and often drawn from the ranks of military rejects.¹⁶⁴ Alison Dray-Novoy has noted that even “criminals degraded to slave status could be patrolmen.”¹⁶⁵ By the 19th century, the *baojia* system had become largely ineffective and about as corrupt as the criminals they were supposed to apprehend.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶¹ T. F. Wade, "ART. II. the Army of the Chinese Empire: Its Two Great Divisions, the Bannermen or National Guard, and the Green Standard or Provincial Troops; their Organization, Locations, Pay, Condition, &c." *The Chinese Repository 1832-1851* (July 1, 1851): 363, ProQuest doi: 1426571982.

¹⁶² Prasenjit Duara, *Culture, Power, and the State: Rural North China, 1900-1942* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1988): 122. He Wenping provides an interesting case study of the modernization process of one of these local militia groups, the Changsha Street Corps, and how this organization functioned in tandem with a growing modern police force which began to take over its responsibilities at social management, see: He Wenping, "The Street Corps of Changsha around 1920," *Journal of Modern Chinese History* 8, no. 1(2014): 63-86.

¹⁶³ Alison J. Dray-Novoy, "The Twilight of the Beijing Gendarmerie, 1900-1924," *Modern China* 33, no. 3 (July 2007): 352.

¹⁶⁴ For more regarding how expectations towards police have changed in the modern period, see: David H. Bayley, "The Future of Policing," *Law & Society Review* 30, no. 3 (1996): 585-606.

¹⁶⁵ Alison J. Dray-Novoy, "The Twilight of the Beijing Gendarmerie, 1900-1924," *Modern China* 33, no. 3 (July 2007): Fn. 1.

¹⁶⁶ *Letters from a Chinese Magistrate: Reprinted from the Peking & Tientsin Times March, 1920*, (Tientsin: Tientsin Press, limited, 1920): 115.

It was not until the dramatic failure of the Qing during the First Sino-Japan War (1894-1895) that Qing modernizers really focused on the need to develop a national police force as part of a program of self-colonization. Late Qing modernizers saw bringing China into compliance with international legal standards not as a fetishization of Western models, but as a strategic means to undermine the legitimacy of foreign governments maintaining their own police forces in extraterritorial settlements.¹⁶⁷ From the response in the Western press, it is clear that the international community responded positively to these attempts at modernizing the police.¹⁶⁸

Tianjin is a particularly important context for discussing this early stage of Chinese police history because it was the locus of Yuan Shikai's activities to introduce modernization reforms while he served as viceroy of Zhili Province. Although there had been previous attempts to modernize the police, such as the Hunan Bureau of Protection and Defense, Yuan's efforts in Zhili represented the first provincial-wide effort.¹⁶⁹ He began his work in Zhili by establishing the Baoding Police Bureau, and in 1902 when Chinese control was reestablished over Tianjin, he moved his administration to the city from Baoding and increased the number of new police in Tianjin to around 3000. He also founded several police academies including the Baoding Police School, the Northern

¹⁶⁷ Tong Lam, "Policing the Imperial Nation: Sovereignty, International Law, and the Civilizing Mission in Late Qing China," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 52, no. 4 (2010): 886.

¹⁶⁸ Several articles in the New York and London Times praised Yuan Shikai's police reform efforts, for example, see: "A Reformer in China," *New York Times* 1857-1922, (October 29, 1907), and "China and the Powers," *The Times*, London, England, Issue 36848, (Saturday, August 16, 1902): 3.

¹⁶⁹ For more on the Hunan Protection Bureau which, although short lived, attempted to enforce the "rule of law" see: He Hongtao 何洪涛, *Qingmo jingcha zhidu yanjiu, 1894-1911* 清末警察制度研究, 1894-1911 [Study on the Police System in Late Qing, 1894-1911], (PhD diss., Xinan zhengfa daxue, xianfa yu xingzheng faxue, 2011).

High Police School and implemented a series of police regulations that were utilized as the basis for late Qing national police reform and implementation.

The Tianjin Police Academy was under the guidance of Zhao Bing-jun who was also the chief of police in Tianjin's southern section. The Tianjin Police Academy became the training center for police personnel all over North China. Yuan's success in Zhili Province provided the model for China's national police system under the late Qing. Emphasizing the continued importance of Tianjin as a model for the national police system, Stephen MacKinnon remarks that even after Zhao Bin-jun was

appointed vice-president of the new ministry (National Police)...Zhao continued as head of Tianjin's police. Zhao would decide major issues in Beijing and then make routine inspection tours to Tianjin.... Until the dynasty fell in 1911-1912, Zhao continued to monitor Tianjin's police from Beijing and use it as a national model.¹⁷⁰

Yuan was keen to duplicate Japan's institutional modernization success and although his police were trained Qing banner forces, their education was provided by Japanese advisors.¹⁷¹ At least initially, the "new police" remained largely a semi-military force, headed by retired navy captain Cao Jiaxiang and his assistant He Shouren, also an ex-naval officer.¹⁷²

The new police system faced several challenges, not least of which was the bad reputation of the *baojia yamen* runners. On a basic level, Yuan Shikai's municipal offices established their authority by exerting it. Within the first few months of establishing the

¹⁷⁰ Stephen MacKinnon, *Power and Politics in Late Imperial China: Yuan Shi-kai in Beijing and Tianjin, 1901-1908* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 155.

¹⁷¹ Ruth Rogaski points out that Japanese advisors had been training Tianjin sanitation police as early as the 1890s, see: Rogaski, *Hygienic Modernity*, 14.

¹⁷² "Notes on Native Affairs," *The North - China Herald and Supreme Court & Consular Gazette 1870-1941* (June 25 1902): 1253.

new police presence in Tianjin, numerous criminals were sentenced. The force worked to establish a high reputation. Any complaints made against officers were taken seriously and in the first year alone around 100 corrupt officers were reprimanded.¹⁷³ The effective enforcement of the law did establish legitimacy, and at the same time the new police also participated in civil government and acts of philanthropy that further established their reputation as the benevolence of the Beiyang government. The Tianjin police performed diverse social functions from organizing fire brigades to managing disaster relief and providing other forms of charity. This expanded participation in Tianjin civil society meant that the identity of these police officers was much more complex than their forbearers.

In addition to the officers in the various districts of the city, there were also special police for patrolling the coastal area around the city's ports like the Bohai Guanchashi (观察使).¹⁷⁴ Along with directly operating soup kitchens and distributing old uniforms to the city's poor, the police were an important institution for ensuring that government charities received their financial support. The Beiyang government often struggled to meet its financial obligations. Rather than supporting charity institutions through a general city budget organized by a treasury department, specific special taxes were levied from a variety of sources ranging from transportation taxes to taxes on specific shops or trades. The police were responsible for collecting these taxes, and as a consequence, they helped to

¹⁷³ Recognizing this positive reputation is important as so much of the history written about police during the Republican period focuses on their corruption and exploitation.

¹⁷⁴ TMA, J0131-1-000027, December 1913, Orders from the Bohai Guanchashi on receiving poor into the city.

ensure public institutions received their funding each month.¹⁷⁵ This included direct support for poor shelters like the Jiaoyangyuan and schools for poor children.¹⁷⁶ For the Jiaoyangyuan, besides collecting taxes from various shops, there was also a specific tax on prostitution called the flower donation (花捐) which became a part of the regular operation budget of the reformatory.¹⁷⁷ Taxing prostitution was a common way for both the Beiyang government and later, the Nationalists, to support their modernization and relief campaigns among the urban poor and disposed. In the next chapter, I will discuss in greater depth how this tax supported the creation of Tianjin's modern women's shelter.

An unprecedented concern for gathering accurate scientific statistical data emerged under the Beiyang government and Nationalist held territories with a fervor that would not be replicated in China until the 1980s. Although often ineffective and incomplete, this passion for data was clearly demonstrated by the special branch of the Tianjin police which focused on monitoring flood conditions. This department, aptly named the “water police,” *shuijing* (水警), collected detailed information about the water levels of rivers surrounding Tianjin and reported local attempts at water redirection. During emergencies, these police helped to coordinate villager labor in building dikes with sandbags and constructing dams.¹⁷⁸ They also operated boats that were used to rescue peasants trapped by flood waters.

¹⁷⁵ TMA, J0131-1-000069, December 1915. The Tianjin police headquarters ordered the west branch of the third city district to use half of its monthly tax revenue to support the operation of a school for poor people.

¹⁷⁶ TMA, J0131-1-000190, August 1919.

¹⁷⁷ TMA, J0131-1-000063, September 1915.

¹⁷⁸ “Benbu Shuizai Diaocha zhi Qingxing 本埠水灾调查之情形” [Local Flood Investigation], *YSB* August 6, 1917.

As the key economic capital of China's Northeast, Tianjin drew refugees from far reaching areas. Groups of refugees would often arrive in the city without warning and could quickly number in the tens of thousands. Although discussion among elite philanthropists on how to distribute goods to the most-needy, as opposed to the less needy-poor, was a point of intense debate in late Imperial China, it was not until the twentieth century that serious attempts to rationalize, regulate, and limit food distribution to refugees occurred or was really even possible.¹⁷⁹ Police and affiliated volunteers were required to carefully observe and record aid recipients and protect against those who would exploit the chaos. This included refugees that would travel to different distribution points to receive overlapping aid. As local government strained to meet disaster needs, it also began to demand that private charities provide records of who received relief. Consequently, the police served another function as the primary frontline statisticians of the new Republic.

Closely related to this growing regulation of charity was the emergence and solidification of territorial jurisdiction. While the concept of jurisdiction may seem obvious in the twenty-first century, in China as elsewhere, it developed not only within modern legal institutions, but also a trajectory that was distinctly associated with Chinese tradition. Modernization stimulated a transition from authority that followed relationships of status based on official titles and the individual towards a legal system rationalized on cartography and districting. The trajectory of territorial jurisdiction's development in China was inevitably influenced by two classical interpretations of the inner/outer binary. The first,

¹⁷⁹ For more on this debate, see: Smith, "Chapter 6: Mobilizing Food Relief," *The Art of Doing Good*.

Han Chinese Culturalism, emerged strongly after the fall of the Yuan Dynasty emphasized the concepts of the inner, *nei*, and the outer, *wai*, to distinguish separations between Chinese and their non-Chinese neighbors under the authority of the ethnocentric Ming Dynasty.¹⁸⁰ For example, the word for foreigner, (外国人), translates directly as outside nation people.

In the second, these terms were used to delimit an equally rigid distinction between the realm of men and women, between the central and the peripheral.¹⁸¹ Although, as Rosenlee points out, in reality these worlds were much more porous, the myth of separation is distinctively present as a cultural institution. As first responders to the displaced peasants that appeared in Tianjin seeking food and work when famine struck the countryside, the police were tasked to identify non-urban residents as, “outside refugees.” This often had a direct impact on how the refugees were treated. For example, when over a hundred peasants arrived suddenly in early July 1917 in the wake of a flood that would eventually come to devastate the city, police director Yang ordered that resources from a Sichuan Relief Fund would be used to help them. In addition, police officers would escort the displaced peasants outside the city to settle on unoccupied land. By settling non-urban residents outside the city rather than in city shelters, it becomes clear that this *nei/wai* distinction was also increasingly important in separating the city

¹⁸⁰ Benjamin A. Elman, *A Cultural History of Civil Examinations in Late Imperial China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 55.

¹⁸¹ Li-Hsiang Lisa Rosenlee, “Chapter 4: Nei-Wai, Gender Distinctions, and Ritual Propriety,” in *Confucianism and Women a Philosophical Interpretation* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006), 69-94.

from the country.¹⁸² Furthermore, the police were demonstrating that they possessed the authority for distant regional charity causes by responding to urgent local needs.¹⁸³

The police task of sending refugees home could be a costly one for both the refugees and the local civilian bureaucracy. During the same flood, the Tianjin police distributed over 18,000 silver dollars, *dayang*, to refugees returning to their homes to cover both the expenses of traveling and provide refugees with meager access to food. In this instance, the Tianjin Police Department worked closely with local gentry and merchants to raise the necessary funds and arrange low cost transportation.¹⁸⁴ However, as an article in the *Yishibao* reports, rural refugees were not always willing to return home where famine and death often awaited them. This sometimes led to physical confrontations between refugees and police.¹⁸⁵ Yao Yangjing (严景耀), a University of Chicago sociologist and a Chinese Republican, argued that much of the crime in China was the result of rural migrants failing to adapt to the rapidly changing urban

¹⁸² Some Chinese scholars have argued that such rigid recognition of a distinctly urban versus rural identity is a product of a post-Marxist neo-capitalist economy, however clearly these divisions already possessed great significance by the Republican period if not earlier. Bao Lufang 包路芳, “Chengshi shiyong yu liudong renkou fazui – Beijing fazui wenti de 80 nian duibi yanjiu 城市适应与流动人口犯罪-北京犯罪问题的 80 年对比研究 [Urban Adaptation and Rural Migrants Crime - A Comparative Study of Mr. Yan Jingyao’s Beijing Crime],” *Zhongguo Nongye Daxue Xuebao, Shehuikexue Xueban* 24, no. 4 (December 2007).

¹⁸³ “Jingting Fagei Nanmin Chuanzi 警厅发给难民川资 [The Police Bureau Gave Refugees Sichuan Money],” *YSB*, July 2, 1917.

¹⁸⁴ *Zhili Tianjin jingchating shuizai jizhen chu zheng xin lu, chengbao zhe gao* 直隶天津警察厅水灾急赈处征信录 呈报摺稿 [Zhili Tianjin Police Department Emergency Flood Relief Record, Draft Report] no publisher, (1917): 412, (Material provided by Dr. Ren Yunlan at the Tianjin Social Science Research Institute).

¹⁸⁵ Ren Yunlan 任云兰, “Minguo zaihuang yu zhanluan qijian Tianjin chengshi de shehui jiu zhu, 1912-1936 民国灾荒与战乱期间天津城市的社会救助 [Tianjin Urban Relief of Famine and War during the Republican Period, 1912-1936],” *Zhongguo shehui jingjishi yanjiu* Tianjin shehui kexueyuan, lishi yanjiusuo 2, (2005).

environment. Consequently, they resorted to crime primarily as a means to achieving subsistence survival. At the same time, bandits arose in areas of famine which further turned suspicion against the rural migrants. Yao argued that although the surplus rural labor in cities clearly had positive effects on urban development, it also facilitated the social marginalization of large urban groups who became dispossessed of traditional systems of mutual help and support. These included a breakdown in the family system as rural migrants organized in much smaller units within the city and became disassociated from traditional guild networks which struggled increasingly to compete with modernized industry. Rural migrants were even detached from their source of traditional ethics as ancestral halls and the preservation of ritual practices were left in the villages.¹⁸⁶

As a result of these hardships, police duties not only consisted of helping to provide for the financial needs of city charities, the police also provided crime control and security. It is in the context of this capacity that China's new police have often drawn the most ire from Western scholars.¹⁸⁷ Certainly, Tianjin police were guilty of using a heavy hand to round up or disperse street undesirables. For example, in the wake of the 1917 flood, baton-wielding police sent refugees scattering in an attempt to prevent the spread of plague.¹⁸⁸ However, displays of police authority to discipline were sometimes welcome by residents of the city's shelters. Although the staff at the Jiaoyangyuan sometimes invited the police to convince unruly or lazy residents to

¹⁸⁶ Yao Yanjing (Yen Ching-Yueh), "Crime in Relation to Social Change in China," *American Journal of Sociology* 40, no. 3 (University of Chicago Press: 1934): 298–308.

¹⁸⁷ Janet Chen, for instance, argues that such police activities represented if not contributed to the criminalization of poverty in China, see: Chen, "Chapter 2: Parasites Upon Society," in *Guilty of Indigence*. Also see: Frederic Wakeman, "Chapter 6: Crime and Social Control," *Policing Shanghai 1927-1937* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

¹⁸⁸ "The Deluge in Tientsin," *Peking Daily News (1914-1917)*, English ed. 5 (October 2, 1917).

conform, they also provided a secure and stabilizing force against theft and even murder that sometimes occurred in the reformatory.¹⁸⁹ The police also helped the Confucian Women's Shelter, the Guangrentang, when cases of abuse were reported.¹⁹⁰

And yet, another dimension must be considered when interpreting the relationship between local police and refugees; Confucian paternalism. Frederic Wakeman describes this succinctly: "the policeman was ideally supposed to be a teacher (daoshi) and nurturer (baomu) to the people at large."¹⁹¹

This relationship was vividly expressed by the response of Tianjin Police Chief, Yang Yitai, whose district police fed and housed over 43,000 refugees in the city, often right on police premises.¹⁹² In the first months of the flood, police personnel distributed over 50,000 yuan of relief goods. In a much more isolated but equally powerful example of this, one article reports that the Tianjin Water Police, after finding a box in which two dead and one nearly dead child was discovered, nursed the living child back to health. The police also assigned labor jobs to refugees and arranged for their longer term employment needs. These jobs were often specifically related to flood recovery activities. Additionally, the article lampoons "rich refugees" who refused to accept charity and employment.

¹⁸⁹ TMA, J0131-1-000264, 1920. For example, in November, the Jiaoyangyuan requested help from the police to subdue Zhou Qinyuan who killed several other residents.

¹⁹⁰ TMA, J0130-1-000128, December 1913. For example, when a resident from the Guangrentang, Duan Shun, returned to the shelter after her husband Zhai Enhua beat her, the institution contacted the police to punish her husband.

¹⁹¹ Wakeman, *Policing Shanghai*, 90.

¹⁹² "The Deluge in Tientsin," *Peking Daily News (1914-1917)*, English ed. 5 (October 2, 1917). Also see: "Flood Conditions in the Native City of Tientsin," *Millard's Review of the Far East (1917-1919)*: 186.

Prominent Tianjin news outlets praised the work of the police. In particular, reporting on the rapid response as flood waters rose in Tianjin's Xigu District cast officers as heroic figures who not only rescued residents from flooded areas, but also distributed bread and other life sustaining foods. Officers in muddied uniforms worked alongside villagers to reinforce embankments to prevent breaching and patrolled evacuated areas for looters on horseback.¹⁹³ Even the Tianjin Civilian Coastguard, who often appeared as incompetent for their failure to accurately predict and prevent the severity of the flood, were championed as protectors of the people who transported much needed supplies to refugees. Almost all of the soup kitchens operated within refugee camps were at least partially staffed by police personnel.¹⁹⁴ Police leadership also extended to post-disaster relief, as they supervised the raising of funds to lend to farmers to resume agricultural production and worked to stabilize food prices.¹⁹⁵ Nevertheless, tensions did arise between the police and some villagers who attempted to damage dikes which favored some homes over others.¹⁹⁶

Not only did the Tianjin police take the most active role in relieving victims of the 1917 flood, they also sought to lead and coordinate the relief work of private charity organizations. This was mirrored in Beijing during meetings of the Flood Relief Union Association. A combination of foreign charities, prominent Chinese philanthropists, and

¹⁹³ "Jingchating chipai maxundui fang di 警察厅飭派马巡队防堤 [The National Police Order Cavalry to Guard the Dike]," *YSB*, September 25, 1917.

¹⁹⁴ "Jingshi jingchating yun wu lai jin 京师警察厅运物来津 [The Beijing police relocate to Tianjin]," *YSB*, October 1, 1917.

¹⁹⁵ "Jizhenhui dongshi kaihuiji 赈会董事开会记. 益世报 [The minutes of the Urgent Relief Commission director's meeting]," *YSB* August 8, 1918.

¹⁹⁶ "Tanya xiangmin ba di fengchao 弹压乡民扒堤风潮 [Campaign to suppress villagers from digging up the embankment]," *YSB*, October 2, 1917.

the Beijing chief of police met to discuss Beijing's response.¹⁹⁷ While the foreign response to Chinese police leadership was on the whole positive, occasionally there was some misunderstanding, if not outright antagonism, between native and foreign relief. This was captured in an article submitted by the Red Cross which charged Tianjin Police Chief Yang Yitai with unnecessary suspicion which impeded their work. Apparently, Yang had sent officers to Red Cross meetings to interrogate them on their activities.¹⁹⁸ Behind this suspicion lay concerns that were fundamentally tied to the turbulent politics of the Beiyang government after Sun Zhongshan instigated the Constitution Protection Movement (which declared war on the Beiyang factions) and established his headquarters in Shanghai. That the national leadership of the Red Cross was closely tied to both the Guomindang and the Shanghai business community could not have escaped the notice of the Tianjin chief of police and inevitably prominent members of the Zhili clique.

Competing Voices: Reporting on 1917 Flood and 1920 Famine.

Because of endless war, the refugee can find no rest. All he can do is to weep for his family lost forever. With the sound of gunfire, he flees with nothing in his pockets. His body shakes in the cold winter air; he searches for help, but there is no one to hear his cry upon the desolate empty road. To take flight with nothing is wretched, but when war comes what other choice is there? The world is vast, but there is no place to rest his weary head. With pale sweating face he will beg every stranger for some left over crumb. His heels are cracked and bleeding from walking all day long. With empty belly he lies down in the empty gateways of abandoned temples yet rises quickly at the step of the soldier's boot. He hides himself and waits for the soldiers to pass. The ground is his bed; he

¹⁹⁷ "Flood Relief Union Association: Meeting of Peking Philanthropists," *Peking Gazette (1915-1917)*, October 18, 1917, 6. ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Chinese Newspapers Collection, <http://ezproxy.msu.edu.proxy1.cl.msu.edu/login?url=http://search.proquest.com.proxy1.cl.msu.edu/docview/1416676255?accountid=12598>.

¹⁹⁸ "The Red Cross Society: Unnecessary Suspicion of the Tientsin Police Chief," *Peking Gazette (1915-1917)*, November 2, 1917, 7. ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Chinese Newspapers, <http://ezproxy.msu.edu.proxy1.cl.msu.edu/login?url=http://search.proquest.com.proxy1.cl.msu.edu/docview/1416678171?accountid=12598>.

wanders aimlessly through the streets, his family is dead and broken he has no way to survive.

He gazes towards his home town longing, but fears returning to only learn his home has already become a grave yard. It is as though his heart has been deep fried in oil. He curses god and his misfortune. Holding a stick and a big spoon, he begs for food. The blood that flows from the wounds that cover his body are like water. The disaster relief never seems to find him. His breath is heavy and tired whenever he stops to rest. He eats the wind along the road. So far from home, he lingers to survive. Hunger and cold have stolen his happiness. He would rather die soon to escape the suffering of this wandering existence. His only prayer is for a quick end to this painful life.¹⁹⁹

The history of print journalism in Tianjin is a vibrant one; by 1919 the city offered more than ninety Chinese and foreign language publications. Some papers focused on business and trade while underground communist newspapers circulated fomenting anti-Japanese sentiment. Racy tabloid newspapers became popular and focused on fashion, Western theater and rumor. However, when it came to professional journalism, two newspapers in Tianjin stood out, the *Dagongbao* (大公报) and the *Yishibao* (益世报).²⁰⁰ Besides a brief period of intense censorship during Yuan Shikai's short reign as emperor, both enjoyed substantial freedom.²⁰¹

The founder of the *Yishibao* was a Belgium Catholic missionary named Frederic Lebbe, *Lei Mingyuan* who was assigned to the Wanghailou Church in 1906. Along with his priestly duties, Lebbe tried to combine public education and charity work. After he first arrived, he established the Chenzhen Primary School and the Shenshu Female

¹⁹⁹ This kind of poem repeatedly appears in the *YSB* and patterns Qing poetic devices. Zhang Dincheng 张鼎丞, "Ai nanmin ci 哀难民辞" [The Refugee's Mournful Speech], (March 19, 1916): 16.

²⁰⁰ Although the *Dagongbao* (大公报) was also highly respected, I will focus on the *Yishibao* here primarily for its focus on social welfare.

²⁰¹ Ma Yi 马艺, *Tianjin xinwen chuanbo shi gangyao* 天津新闻传播史纲要 [An Outline History of the Spread of Tianjin News Media], (Yi Beijing: Xinhua chubanshe, 2005), 82.

School, widely recruiting students from both inside and outside the Catholic Church. After the Xinghai Revolution, Lebbe became increasingly interested in Chinese governance and began lecturing on global politics, economic socialism, and modern law at Tianjin University. These courses became very popular among the elite and in 1912, he and Ying Lianzhi began the first weekly Catholic newspaper, the *Wangyilu*, later *Yishizhu Ribao*. Three years later he established the *Yishibao* (*YSB*), the title of which can be translated as *The Social Welfare*.²⁰²

Unlike most Chinese language newspapers which were established within the foreign concessions, Lebbe decided to set up the headquarters for the newspaper in the Chinese area of the city. Part of the reason Lebbe gained such respect among Chinese readers was his radical position that church leaders should give up the protection offered by their foreign status and become Chinese citizens. He created controversy in 1916 when he denounced the French consul for collaborating with the church to annex a portion of land surrounding the church for the French concession (the Laoxikai Incident). In response to the Laoxikai Incident, Chinese working in the French concession and in French owned factories launched a strike which Lebbe portrayed positively in his paper. This drew the ire of French missionaries, and Lebbe was ordered back to Europe in 1918. Fortunately for the future of the paper, the staff at the *YSB* were almost entirely Chinese and the paper continued to thrive until its end in 1949.²⁰³ Lebbe eventually became a Chinese citizen in 1928 and committed the remainder of his life to philanthropic causes in China.

²⁰² Jean-Paul Wiest, "Fredric-Vincent Lebbe 1877-1940," *Biographical Dictionary of Chinese Christianity*, (2005-2012), <http://www.bdcconline.net/en/stories/1/lebbe-fredericvincent.php>.

²⁰³ With the exception of when it moved to Chongqing during the Sino-Japanese War.

The 1917 flood represented a major challenge to stability in Northern China. The *YSB* was an important forum for the public discussion and response to the flood. Daily reports of river water levels were published from both government and private sources. This allowed for a public debate on how to best respond to and alleviate the flooded areas around and within the city. Articles often centered on how villagers came together to fight back rising river levels to temporarily save their homes. These kinds of articles emphasized a sense of self-reliance and local responsibility for managing flood waters. Villagers are described in heroic terms as they work ceaselessly constructing dikes and dams.²⁰⁴

Details of flood conditions ranged from the scientific to the trivial, yet even in trivial details, a certain sense of optimism was captured. A report by the water police mentioned flooded homes but added that goods had been rescued and moved to a higher place.²⁰⁵ When sandbags were not available, villagers piled up soil around temples and other valuable sites to protect them. Flooding also affected foreign concessions, stopping industry. At the end of many articles reporting on flood conditions, reporters also published recommendations for further action from members of the community, journalists themselves, or government officials. These reports also published sometimes clearly embarrassing disagreements between government officials and local residents.

One of the controversies that arose was disputes over labor and territory. Articles sometimes presented encouraging portrayals of the loyalty among villagers of the same community, like the 200 residents from Dingzigu (丁字沽) Village that had worked to

²⁰⁴ “Benbu shuizai diaocha zhi qingxing” 本埠水灾调查之情形 [Local Flood Investigation],” *YSB* August 6, 1917.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

build a dam from tree branches and sandbags which they covered with soil to block the flood waters. However, conflicts between villages were less inspiring; for example, the dam built to stop flood waters from the Xiayi River (下西河) was constructed with no help from nearby Xigu or Yuzhuang (于庄) Villages since their farmlands were not threatened.²⁰⁶

Floods in the villages surrounding Tianjin were commonplace, so residents suffered during times of flooding, but many lived in grass huts, *chaicao chang* (柴草厂) that could be easily rebuilt after the flood waters receded. A greater sense of urgency came from the threat to urban Tianjin, which might be completely flooded if the water level continued to increase. A journalist, who did not use his name openly, criticized what he saw as the result of government failure, “In our country, we have a history that we do not fix the water course. Although we have the river bureau, it’s pretty much useless, they just get their salaries but never do anything. If the government does not punish them, we won’t have a future. And the current flood situation will not be solved.”²⁰⁷ As flooding became more frequent, entire villages of refugees began to make their way to the city center, setting up temporary encampments near the city gates. By allowing editorials that lambasted ineffective government policies, print media could agitate governmental reform. However, more generally, journalism played the important role of keeping the plight of disaster victims in the public consciousness. Rather than merely report the facts of the water levels, it appealed to a sense of empathy with the

²⁰⁶ “Xigu yidai shuishi zhi diaocha 西沽一带水势之调查 [The flood investigation of Xigu area],” *YSB*, August 6, 1917.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

reader at the same time as it taught readers how they should feel. Sensitizing the urban public to the terrible situation faced by disaster victims would prove ever more important as rural and suburban refugees began to require increased taxes and support from city dwellers.²⁰⁸

Charity as Nationalism.

To manage flood relief, the Beiyang government appointed Xiong Xiling, who previously served from 1913-1914 as premier of the Republic of China. After his brief rise to political authority, Xiong spent the remainder of his life working on social causes in China. His strategy for encouraging contributions during the 1917 disaster included issuing special awards to individuals who made major donations to the relief.²⁰⁹ Not only were these awards a symbol of generosity that could be displayed to other social elite, they often came with tax incentives for those donating. The TJCO held lotteries to raise funds for disaster assistance. They asked each of their branch and business shops to purchase lottery tickets which promised the possibility of return on donations while sharing some of the government's burden for disaster relief.²¹⁰

As discussed earlier in this chapter, there were diverse methods for Tianjin charities and the city government to raise funding for various relief organizations and emergency disaster events. One of the most important avenues for raising funds was to advertise in the city's newspapers. Since this provided a quick method for spreading awareness and garnering support, advertisements for charities often informed or required

²⁰⁸ "Nanmin Kelian 难民可怜 [Pitiful Refugees]," *YSB*, August 6, 1917.

²⁰⁹ TMA, J0128-2-002939-052, December 9, 1917.

²¹⁰ "Xiwen cong butong diqu jiuzai 新闻从不同地区救灾 [News about disaster relief from different area]," *YSB*, October 28, 1920.

the approval of the Tianjin Chamber of Commerce.²¹¹ Negative reporting on charity (可怜) organizations could severely impact their reputations and influence the donations they received. Slander could even spark legal battles.²¹² To illustrate the volatility that could surround charity funding, I will explicate the brief life of the Save the Nation Association, *Jiùguó* (救国).

The Save the Nation Association was started in Shanghai in 1915 in response to Japanese Imperialism and the issuing of the Twenty-One Demands. By May of that year, the tension came to a head as the Japanese continued to force a diplomatic compromise under threat of invasion. In response, the Chinese began a spontaneous nationwide boycott of Japanese goods that drastically reduced exports to China. The suggestion to create a patriotic fund first appeared in Shanghai in the *Shenbao* newspaper, in early April. By the 7th, the first donations to the fund had already been given. The association aimed to protect the country by collecting 50 million yuan to buy modern weapons, build up industries to compete with Japanese goods, and establish schools to train unskilled labor. Although Yuan Shikai praised the fund, he nevertheless succumbed to the Japanese pressure and signed a treaty approving most of the demands.

In Tianjin, the support for the fund was quite high and the chamber of commerce was the very first organization nationwide to respond to the invitation for donations issued from Shanghai on April 8th. Consequently, the Save the Nation Association immediately established a local branch in the city. From May to June, the Zhili Save the

²¹¹ TMA, J0128-2-002813-003, August 6, 1913. In this telegraph, the Red Cross requests the Tianjin Chamber to inform all the newspapers around the city to immediately begin collecting donations.

²¹² TMA, J0130-1-000217, 1922. For example, in July, the Guangrentang charged the Huaxing Printing Bureau with publishing an article in the news which damaged their reputation.

Nation Patriotic Fund had three massive support drives in different areas of Tianjin. In total, they collected over \$600,000 silver. Everyone was involved, including beggars and prostitutes. There were many charity performances to collect the money and by September of 1915, nationwide, they had collected more than \$8 million in silver.

The growing popularity of the movement began to also draw some negative attention. The Zhili Provincial Government kept a watchful eye on the fund raising activities, fearing that it might affect international policy. Unsurprisingly, the Japanese were also quite concerned, and began a campaign to derail the initiative. The *Tianjin Daily*, a Japanese newspaper, circulated a story connecting the fund with Yuan Shikai's plans to declare himself emperor by suggesting that the Chouanhui organization had borrowed \$2 million silver from this fund. This organization was known to support Yuan's ambitions to declare himself emperor and the news created an immediate stir. Even though the report proved to be untrue, many demanded their money back and consequently the patriotic fund began to collapse. The Shanghai headquarters for the fund faced many doubts and by November 5, 1915, decided to return the funds in Shanghai. When this news arrived in Tianjin, the branch was very disappointed and faced internal disagreement on how to respond. This disagreement among major donors who attended the meeting proved too divisive and on July 18, 1916, the Tianjin branch also decided to return the money they had collected. Although this movement failed, it raised a significant amount of money during its brief existence and similar Save the Nation funds would continue to gain popularity and remain active in Tianjin. In addition, during the massive drought and famine of the early 1920s, the Tianjin Chamber conferred with the

Red Cross to utilize some of these funds for the disaster.²¹³ Using nationalism to stimulate giving was an important motivator for many forms of relief work.²¹⁴

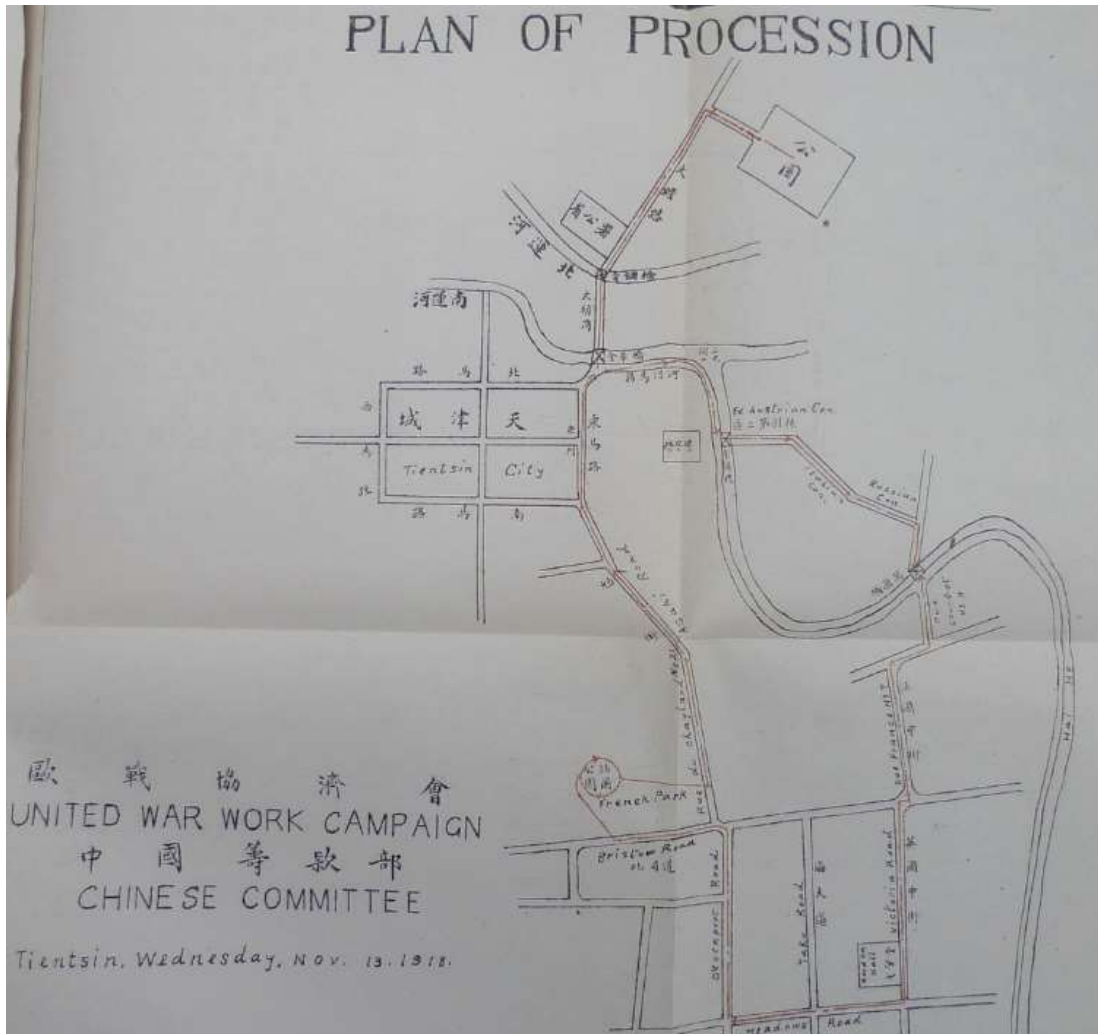


Figure 1.3: Map Showing United War Work Campaign Parade.²¹⁵

China’s involvement in World War I included approximately 140,000 laborers who were sent to build French and British lines during the war to help with the

²¹³ TMA, J0128-3-003913, 1916, records 0036 through 0285 regard this fund.

²¹⁴ TMA, J0128-2-003052, 1921. For several additional documents regarding saving the nation, disaster relief, and anti-Japanese nationalism.

²¹⁵ “Tientsin Chinese Committee, United War Work Campaign,” November 11 - 18, 1918, Box 94, War Relief: YMCA International Work in China: An Inventory of its Records, Kautz Family YMCA Archives, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

reconstruction of Europe after the war's conclusion in November 1918. After the war ended, the YMCA helped to organize the United War Work Campaign in China and raise funds to help with this reconstruction. One of the most spectacular events associated with this charitable relief for Europe was a fundraising parade organized in Tianjin. The above map shows the route of the parade, which traveled through all the major foreign concessions and skirted the edge of the old Chinese city center.²¹⁶ Sixty-three schools and organizations took part in the parade which included a total of 17,031 individuals. Many of the participants were from orphan schools or schools for the poor.

Nankai Middle School sent the most students with 1000 children represented and the Tianjin Police Half Day School who sent 3000 staff and students. The police, who were responsible for collecting donations, collected a total of \$30,367.60 silver during the parade activities. Less than one third of this amount came from the international concessions. The majority of the money was raised by Chinese residents. Collections were also made in all 118 districts, *hsien*, of Zhili Province totaling \$121,813.53. Why would Tianjin residents be interested in rebuilding Europe? As Xu Guoqi suggests, part of the reason lay in a desire to help relieve those Chinese laborers working for the foreign powers. But it also reveals a growing awareness among Tianjin residents of their place within a Chinese national identity that tied local city residents to the fate of unknown Chinese working abroad. Tianjin urban elite understood that critical to China's internationalization was its image as a promoter of peace through philanthropic

²¹⁶ "United War Work Campaign, November 11-18, 1918," Report of the Tientsin Chinese Committee, Tientsin, January 20, 1919. Box 94, War Relief: YMCA International Work in China: An Inventory of its Records, Kautz Family YMCA Archives, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis. For a comprehensive discussion on China's involvement in the Great War, see: Xu Guoqi, *Strangers on the Western Front: Chinese Workers in the Great War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011).

leadership. Furthermore, it is not surprising that Tianjin residents would lead in donations to help Chinese working abroad as Tianjiners themselves came from all over the country.

In the Sympathetic Eye: International Relief in the North China Famine.

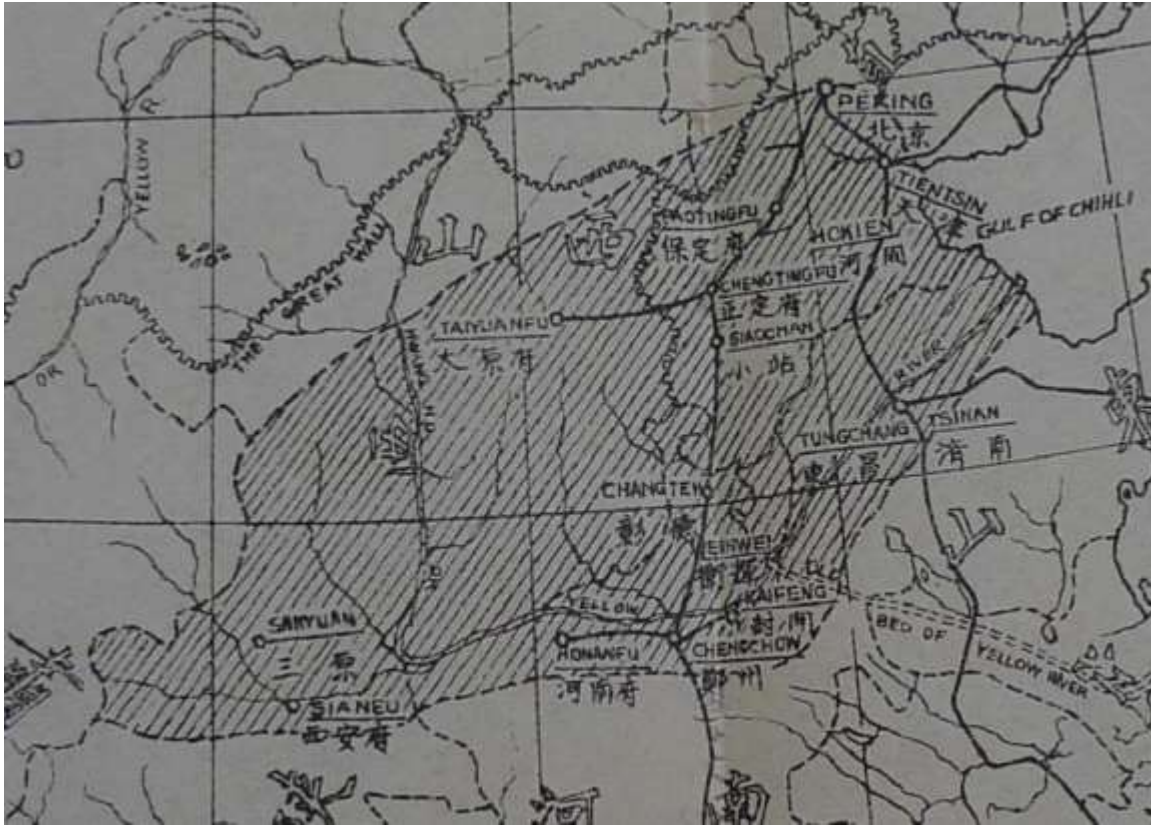


Figure 1.4: Map Showing Affected Area with Centers of Distribution. ²¹⁷

While the North China Famine of 1920 was by no means the most destructive natural disaster in the first half of China's twentieth century, it drew unprecedented foreign relief aid that was championed by two U.S. presidents and mobilized overseas Chinese communities. This particular famine, brought on by drought, affected 30.3 million residents and caused roughly five hundred thousand deaths.²¹⁸ In Tianjin, foreigners and urban elite established the North China International Society of Famine

²¹⁷ "Map Showing Affected Area with Centers of Distribution under our Scheme of Relief, total destitute population 20,000,000," Chinese-Foreign Famine Relief Committee, 22 The Bund, Shanghai, Box 94, Famine Relief: Famine reports, 1921, YMCA International Work in China: An Inventory of its Records, Kautz Family YMCA Archives, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

²¹⁸ Lillian M Li, *Fighting Famine in North China: State, Market, and Environmental Decline, 1690s-1990s* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007), 284.

Relief. This organization helped to provide emergency relief for some five hundred thousand refugees.²¹⁹ This tragedy of human suffering brought China even more into the international community and the efficient and far reaching advocacy of international organizations like the YMCA brought China into greater public focus in the West.

At the same time, these international networks helped to stimulate and solidify national networks as well.²²⁰ In response to the drought in North China, Dr. Tong Shaoyi met with William E. Souter and several friends to form the Chinese-Foreign Famine Relief Committee in Shanghai. Generosity from Shanghai would be reciprocated when the Japanese invaded the port during the Shanghai War of 1932 and Tianjin sent funds to help with postwar reconstruction. The mission of this Shanghai-based charity was to provide immediate food assistance and clothing to the famine stricken areas of North China. They planned to raise 1 million dollars in the course of a short time that they would then send to local famine relief committees in Zhili, Honan, Shantung, Shansi, and Shensi as well as Chekiang. A YMCA report on this organization explains that:

In forming of plans for distribution, our policy is to distribute relief in the famine areas through Committees of the Protestant and Roman Catholic Missionaries in conjunction with the local gentry, and we further stipulate that relief should be given irrespective of religious or guild connections.²²¹

²¹⁹ YMCA China Box, Famine Relief Folder, dated March 19, 1921. Box 94, Famine Relief: Famine reports, 1921, YMCA International Work in China: An Inventory of its Records, Kautz Family YMCA Archives, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

²²⁰ "Chinese Foreign Famine Relief Committee Shanghai Co-operating with the North China International Society for Famine Relief Tientsin," Box 94, Famine Relief: Famine reports, 1921, YMCA International Work in China: An Inventory of its Records, Kautz Family YMCA Archives, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

²²¹ Ibid.

While urban charities might be more discerning about identifying who was worthy of charity, in the face of such widespread disaster, relief was distributed regardless of affiliation or creed.

The generosity of Shanghai residents enabled the committee to quickly raise the required amount. They received most of their contributions in cash donations, this included 863,491.79 yuan and 182,908.68 Tls. (taels). Donators also gave bonds, shares, scrolls, books and other valuables, so the committee not only had to raise money but also find ways to liquidate these assets. While most of the work involved with this charity raising activity was voluntary, the committee did incur some expenses including \$2755.77 paid for advertising in native newspapers. They also paid to send telegrams to overseas Chinese communities, from which the Shanghai committee received a significant portion of their money, \$134,266.28 and Tls. 159,229.35. They also gathered direct contributions of food and clothing valued at \$20,226.00.²²²

By December 31st of 1920, the Shanghai committee had raised a total of \$1,013,126 and working with the Tianjin relief office had distributed almost all of it, with only \$74,243.04 and Tls. 28,908.86 remaining in their accounts for January. This published report itself was used to argue the committee's effectiveness and continued operation during the harsh winter months when it hoped to continue to raise funding in the United States, especially to aid those starving and dying of exposure. According to this famine committee, it required \$5.00 to keep one person from death over the three-month winter period.

²²² Ibid., 4.

The report of the joint Foreign-Chinese Distribution Committee painted a dire picture.

All information in our hands points to about twenty million people, who, if not actually famine-stricken, are in dire need of help, and close to 15 million who, without assistance in food and clothing will not survive this winter. Thousands of the famine sufferers are now reduced to food made from the bark and leaves of trees, roots and grass together with the crushed remnants of any grain stalks, procurable, and all mixed up with mud and water; this is all that can be had in a few favored districts while in a great many other parts of the famine field no food of any kind can be obtained, and but for our supplies of grain and clothing the record of suffering and death would have been greater. We estimate that the contributions to the funds of our Shanghai Famine Relief committee has been the means of saving over one hundred thousand lives.²²³

The \$562,880.00 that was distributed in Tianjin, Baoding, Zhengding, Cangzhou, Hejian, Xiaochang, Hezheng, etc. was primarily through the International Society of Famine Relief, Tianjin.²²⁴

Province	No. of Hsiens	Famine Sufferers
Chihli	86 Hsiens of which 78 have sent reports	7,140,000
Honan	77 Hsiens of which 45 have sent reports	5,860,000
Shantung	32 Hsiens	3,800,000
Shensi	92 Hsiens of which 57 are reported as affected by drought, etc.	2,800,000
Shansi	68 Hsiens of which 36 have sent reports	450,000
Chekiang	22 Hsiens	1,070,000
	Total	21,120,000

Table 1.1: International Society of Famine Relief, Tianjin.²²⁵

²²³ “Chinese Foreign Famine Relief Committee Shanghai Co-operating with the North China International Society for Famine Relief Tientsin,” 4, Box 94, Famine Relief, Famine Reports 1921, YMCA International Work in China: An Inventory of Its Records, Kautz Family Archives, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

²²⁴ William E. Souter, Chairman Distribution Committee, “Chinese Foreign Famine Relief Committee Shanghai Co-operating with the North China International Society for Famine Relief Tientsin,” 4, Box 94, Famine Relief, Famine Reports 1921, YMCA International Work in China: An Inventory of Its Records, Kautz Family Archives, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

²²⁵ Report of the Intelligence Subcommittee “Chinese Foreign Famine Relief Committee Shanghai Co-operating with the North China International Society for Famine Relief Tientsin,” 6, Box 94, Famine

Along with the North China International Society of Famine Relief, Tianjin utilized \$460,266 for the purchase of grain. Distribution to Xiaochang also went through the Northern Urgent Relief Committee, Tianjin, organized by the London Mission, and the Procure de Lazariste for Zhengding. Individuals donated cash and whatever valuables they possessed including clothing, silk, cotton, articles of jewelry, drawings, scrolls, deposit receipts, shares, foodstuff, etc.²²⁶

Chambers of commerce organized by Chinese living abroad were crucial in raising international awareness of Chinese disasters. For example, the Chinese-Indonesian Chamber sent money to the Tianjin Chamber to help with poverty relief.²²⁷ During the 1917 flood disaster, the Chinese Chamber of Commerce located in Osaka Japan sent donations to the Tianjin branch of the Chinese Red Cross.²²⁸ And student associations at colleges like Columbia University helped organize cultural fairs and dramatic presentations to raise awareness during times of trouble. Students also organized through native place associations in the U.S.; one such group of students from Nangong County donated money for Tianjin famine relief during the early 1920s.²²⁹

In the early twentieth century, the U.S. became increasingly active in supporting charity work in China. Since Tianjin was a treaty port and the economic center of

Relief, Famine Reports 1921, YMCA International Work in China: An Inventory of Its Records, Kautz Family Archives, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

²²⁶ Ibid., 7.

²²⁷ TMA, J0128-3-002624-027, January 11, 1913. The Qing government, faced with bankruptcy, had placed significant emphasis on the building up of these associations in the years nearing its demise. Although it did not prevent the end of the Qing, the laws intended to protect overseas businessmen and encourage them to come back to the mainland and invest did prove to be somewhat fruitful.

²²⁸ TMA, J0128-2-002938-023, November 5, 1917.

²²⁹ TMA, J0128-3-008741-016, July 17, 1921. Letter to Zhang Yinqian, a Nangong County businessman, about student association in U.S. sending money for Tianjin relief from the Tianjin Chamber of Commerce.

Northern China at this time, many aid and relief agencies were active in the city. The U.S.-China Disaster Relief Association (中美联合义赈会) working with the Tianjin Chamber of Commerce, began to relieve refugees in the fall of 1916. This collaborative primarily focused on building schools and hospitals.²³⁰ Japanese international and locally organized philanthropic organizations, like the Red Cross, were active responders to Chinese disasters. After the 1917 flood, the China-Japan Friendship Association contacted the chamber to discuss relief efforts.²³¹ The international attention stimulated by these efforts to relieve flood and drought victims in North China caught the attention of John R Freeman, a famous American civil engineer. Freeman was appointed a consultant for the Chinese government to improve the Grand Canal and prevent future flood disasters of the Yellow and Huai Rivers, at least partly through his connection with A. G. Robinson, one of the founding members of the Tianjin YMCA.²³²

²³⁰ TMA, J0128-3-004382-024, June 9, 1916.

²³¹ TMA, J0128-2-002938-012, October 12, 1917.

²³² “The Grand Canal of China: addresses at a dinner given in honor of Mr. John R. Freeman by J. Ripley, and at a dinner given Mr. Freeman by their Excellencies, Chin Yun-P'eng and Hsiung Hsi-Ling . . . at the Navy Club,” *Tientsin North China Star* (English and Chinese: Peking, October 25, 1919): 67.

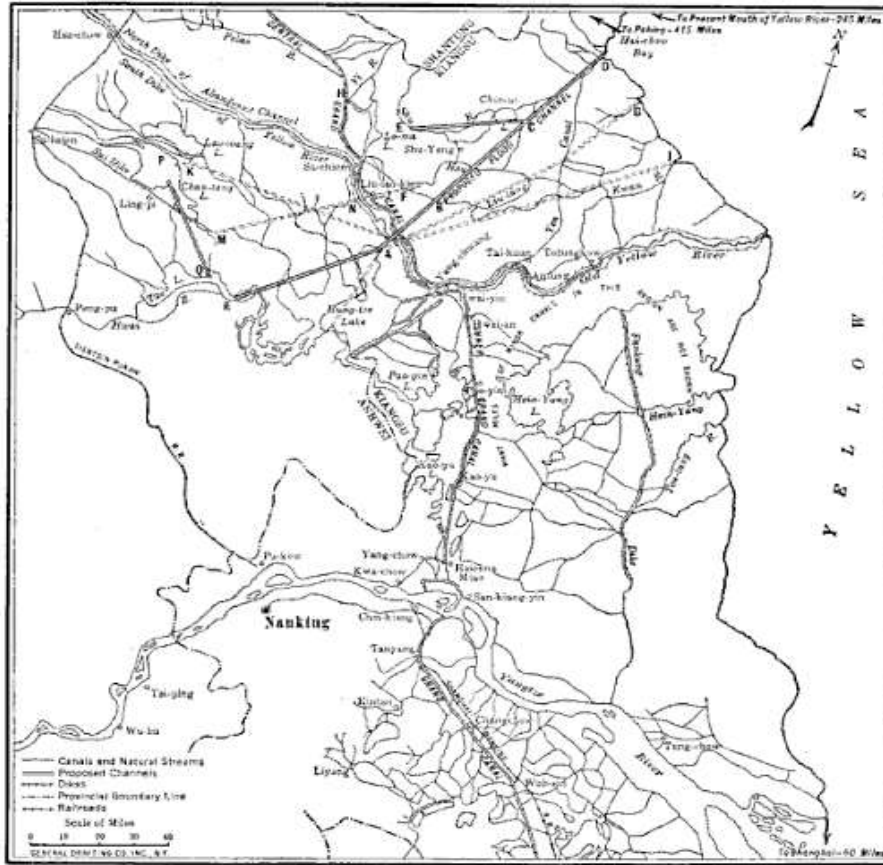


Figure 1.5: Freeman Plan for Preventing Flood and Famine.²³³

Freeman worked with a Chinese industrial and philanthropic leader, Chang Chien. Although execution of this China-U.S. engineering project at flood prevention was eventually scrapped because of lack of funds, it demonstrates that international attention in raising support for China's refugees helped to encourage other types of transnational collaboration towards solving China's problems. Networks developed for refugee assistance created valuable ties to foreign specialists. Scholarship regarding this period of Chinese history often emphasizes the importance of networks directly cultivated by the Nationalist government to implement its plans for modernization. But such informal

²³³ Charles K. Edmunds, "Taming the Yellow River," *Asia: The American Magazine on the Orient* 21, (January-December, January, 1921): 79.

connections were equally transformative and often incorporated collaboration with local officials and specialists.

Responding to the North China Famine also influenced the foreign countries that provided assistance. During a period of isolationism in the United States, with the Chinese Exclusion Act still in effect since the 1880s and the Immigration Act of 1924 on the horizon that put even greater restrictions on Asian immigration, it is somewhat surprising the qualities of friendship expressed in a letter of proclamation from President Wilson:

A famine, alarming in its proportions, to-day holds in its grip several important provinces in China. The crop failure is complete, and the present distress, which is great, is likely before winter has run its course, to become appalling. In fact, our diplomatic and consular agencies in China inform me that the loss resulting from death in distressing form may run into millions of souls. It is certain that the local government and established agencies of relief are unable to cope with the magnitude of the disaster which faces them.

Under the circumstances, relief to be effective should be granted quickly. Once more an opportunity is offered to the American people to show that prompt and generous response with which they have invariably met the call of their brother nations in distress.

The case of China I regard as especially worthy of the earnest attention of our citizens. To an unusual degree the Chinese people look to us for counsel and for effective friendship. Our churches, through their religious and medical missionaries, their schools and colleges, and our philanthropic foundations have rendered China an incalculable benefit, which her people recognize with gratitude and devotion to the United States. Therefore, not only in the name of humanity but in that of the friendliness which we feel for a great people in distress, I venture to ask that our citizens shall, even though the task of giving is not to-day a light one, respond as they can to this distant but appealing cry for help.

In order to be assured of the orderly collection of such donations, large or small, as may be offered, I have invited a nation-wide committee, whose names are attached hereto, to lend their aid to this matter. I have designated Thomas W. Lamont, of New York City, to act as Treasurer.

I realize that this call, added to those for the underfed children of Eastern Europe and the afflicted peoples of the Near East, and to the needs of our own country, makes heavy the demand upon the bounty of the nation. I am confident, however, that all these pleas will be answered in generous spirit.²³⁴

The information regarding the famine area was primarily provided by missionaries and some foreign traders.²³⁵ In a January 5th cable, Crane suggested that 40 million people were affected between rural and urban areas, with the worse situation in the countryside. Although the committee organized public meetings, its primary means of raising support was through American churches and their denomination associations.²³⁶

Famine assistance in China had to compete with the Hoover campaign for relief for the distressed children of Europe. In order to ensure that relief was effectively distributed, an American China Committee was established with nearly half of the members representing various Christian missionary groups. Included in this committee was Robert R. Gailey, from the Tianjin YMCA. The YMCA was further active in directing the National Campaign through Frederick B. Shipp who was then director of the Pittsburgh YMCA. On March 12th 1921, President Harding repeated Wilson's earlier call for support for the China famine:

The picture of China's distress is so tragic that I am moved, therefore, to renew the appeals heretofore made and to express the hope that the American people will continue to contribute to this humanitarian cause as generously as they possibly can. The cry for succor comes to us from a people far distant, but linked to us by manifold ties of friendly association, confidence and good will. The American nation has never failed to demonstrate its friendship for the people of China, and that friendship has always been reciprocated in a manner which I feel justifies

²³⁴ "Report of the American Committee for China Famine Relief" (Trenton, NJ: MacCrellish & Quigley Co., Printers, *YMCA*, 1921), 1-2.

²³⁵ "American minister, Hon. C. R. Crane Report of the American Committee for China Famine Relief," (Trenton, NJ: MacCrellish & Quigley Co., Printers, *YMCA*, 1921).

²³⁶ "Report of the American Committee," 1921, 7.

the hope that in this hour of China’s great distress our people will do everything in their power for its amelioration.²³⁷

By the time the campaign concluded, \$1,250,000.00 was set aside for future flood prevention research. An article also mentions that the campaign came to an end in response to the generous donations raised by local fundraising. Overseas, Chinese students played an important role in American fundraising activities as seen in the summary below.²³⁸

Receipts by the American Committee up to August 15 th , 1921 aggregated,	\$46,668,420.33
To this should be added amount sent by the co-operating Chinese organizations in America (approximately),	250.000.00
Amount provided through the Red Cross,	1,112,000.00
Sent direct by Churches (approximately),	<u>1,700,000.00</u>
Approximate Grand Total	\$7,750,420.00

Table 1.2: American Fundraising Activities.²³⁹

The China Famine Fund published a year-long series of advertisements to raise relief in important magazines on international politics and relations like *Asia: The American Magazine on the Orient*. Appeals were directed towards American generosity and aimed specifically at the vulnerability of Chinese children. These images emphasized the vulnerability of refugees by portraying them as poor women and children as

²³⁷Charles A. Murdock, “Editorial,” *The Pacific Unitarian* 30, no. 4 (April 1921).

²³⁸ Dick Wong a friend of R. S. Hall’s (Tientsin) Brother was willing to help cater fundraising events with specialty dishes, see: “A. G. Robinson’s notes on New England Trip for China Famine Fund,” Box 94, Famine Relief, A. G. Robinson’s notes on New England Trip, ca. 1921, YMCA International Work in China: An Inventory of Its Records, Kautz Family Archives, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

²³⁹ “Report of the American Committee for China Famine Relief” (Trenton, NJ: MacCrellish & Quigley Co., Printers, 1921), 8.

demonstrated by the first ad below. In the second image, peasants strip the leaves from trees and eat bark:



N. O. Williams

Won't You Help Bring Back the Smile to China's Babies?

Figure 1.6: China Famine Fund Poster.²⁴⁰

²⁴⁰ China Famine Fund "Famine in China! The Spirit of Help in America," *Asia: The American Magazine on the Orient* 21, (January-December, April, 1921): 299.



Figure 1.7: Poster Issued by the Shantung Chinese Famine Relief Society.²⁴¹

²⁴¹ *Asia: The American Magazine on the Orient* 21, (January-December 1921): 542.

CHAPTER 2: CONSOLIDATION AND THE NANJING DECADE, 1928-1937.



Figure 2.1: Food Distribution at Tianjin Refugee Shelter.¹

By the Nanjing Decade, 1927-1937, many of the modernizing transformations reshaping poverty relief and refugee management began to accelerate. Tianjin itself became an important model for how the policies of the central government were put into practice in Northern China. As a hub of international and trans-regional trade, the city became a useful showcase of Chinese modernization to the foreign world for the Jiang Jieshi regime when, in 1928, Tianjin was established as a municipality under the control of the Shanxi warlord Yan Xishan.² This event marked the beginning of the Nanjing

¹ *Tianjin jidujiao jiuji hui baogao shu* 天津基督教会报告书 [Report of the Tianjin Christian relief team], June 1933.

² Yan Xishan was a minor but influential warlord active from the Xinhua Revolution until 1949, when he began working as a world peace advocate. He often played an important role in regional warlord alliances and focused on developing modern technology and land reform in his area of influence. For more on his reform policies and role in the capture of Tianjin, see: Donald G. Gillin, *Warlord: Yen Hsi-shan in Shansi*

Decade in the city.³ As addressed in the previous chapter, many of the modernization plans Yuan Shikai implemented in the 1910s and 20s had a significant influence on how relief work was conducted in the city. By establishing a large military presence in the Beiyang Army and expanding the city's police force to over 2,000 active officers, Yuan created a substantial infrastructure active in promoting and organizing urban and regional relief work. The Nanjing government attempted to consolidate and expand poverty and refugee relief, and bring local policies into compliance with national standards and regulations.

However, considering the corruption, fiscal irresponsibility, and ineffectiveness of many of the Nationalist policies, it is unsurprising that historians have often dismissed its

Province, 1911-1949 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1967). Also see a compilation of his early memoirs: Yan Xishan 阎锡山, *Yan Xishan zao nian hui yi lu* 阎锡山早年回忆录 [The early memoirs of Yan Xishan], (Taibei: Zhuanji wenxue chubanshe, 1968). For his later role advocating global harmony see: Yan Xishan, *How to Prevent Warfare and Establish a Foundation of World Unity - A Proposal to the M.R.A. World Assembly* (Taipei: Fu Hsing Press, 1952); Yan Xishan, *A Draft Declaration of the International of Universal Harmony* (Taipei: Fu Hsing Press, 1954); and Yan Xishan, *Comments on the White Paper. A Speech Delivered to the Standing Committee of the Chinese Anti-Aggression League on August 10th, 1949* (Place of publication not identified: Chinese Anti-Aggression League, 1949).

³ The Nanjing Decade (Nanjing shinian 南京十年) refers to the period between 1927 and 1937, when the Guomindang, under the leadership of Jiang Jieshi, seized the southern capital in 1927 and the Beiyang government capitulated in 1928, ushering in a brief period of greater stability. The Nanjing Decade is important for its significant attempts at modernizing Chinese culture and society. In cities, this took the form of the New Life Movement, which sought to revitalize the “national spirit” (Minzu jingsheng 民族精神) by emphasizing Confucian morality alongside principles of Social Darwinism and Christianity. Soong May-ling, Jiang Jieshi's wife, wrote extensively on the New Life Movement, see: Chiang Mayling Soong (Mme. Chiang Kai-shek), *China Shall Rise Again* (New York and London: Harper's, 1941). Although a work of propaganda, the work remains an important summary of the idealized aims and objectives of the movement. Fredric Wakeman's work, representative of much of the historiography on this period, presents a more critical perspective on the movement. He suggests it, especially the Blue Shirt Society, resembled German Fascism, see: Frederic Wakeman, “A Revisionist View of the Nanjing Decade: Confucian Fascism,” *The China Quarterly* 150, (1997): 395-432. Also see: Wiliam C. Kirby, *Germany and Republican China* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1984). In the countryside, the New Life Movement was paralleled by the Rural Reconstruction Movement. Although organized independently from Guomindang authority in the 1920s, it was supported by the GMD and effectively represents its rural policy throughout the 1930s and 40s as a means of strengthening China against Japanese invasion. Charles W. Hayford describes this movement as an attractive liberal alternative to the radical land reform policies and collectivization of the Great Leap Forward, see: Charles Wishart Hayford, *To the People: James Yen and Village China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990).

attempts at social reform as either stilted or outright detrimental.⁴ Yet it was the very ineffectiveness of the central state apparatus that stimulated the growth of local government and civil society. In this chapter, I will argue that civil society in the Nanjing Decade relied on a plurality of actors to address societal problems that could not be solved by working alone. While the Nationalist government may have established a stronghold in southern cities, its embryonic bureaucracy in more recently acquired cities like Tianjin required local state institutions to not only rely on other actors like independent charities, but also to incorporate their leadership into its own. What continued to inspire local gentry to support government relief programs and refugees to come to the city looking for aid? How did municipal leaders understand their responsibility to the city's poor and refugee population? By offering preliminary analysis of the localization of Nationalist social policies, this chapter aims to argue that Nanjing

⁴ The majority of Chinese histories represent the Nanjing Decade as a period of increased state intervention and welfare decline, and rightly so. For example, Chen's excellent study on Chinese urban poverty suggests poverty was criminalized under Nanjing social policy which focused on eradicating the dependence of the poor on government aid through labor programs. Zvia Lipkin illuminates the role of Social Darwinism on Guomindang policy-making to clear the streets of undesirable poor; and Di Xudan, like many Chinese historians, largely frames Nanjing Decade social welfare policies as foreign and backward, comparing it to the 1795 British Poor Laws, see: Chen, *Guilty of Indigence*; Lipkin, *Useless to the State*. Di Xudan 翟旭丹, *Jindai Shanghai shehui fuli zhidu yanjiu, 1927-1937* 近代上海社会福利制度研究 [A Study on the Modern Shanghai Social Welfare System (1927-1937)] (PhD diss., Huadong zhengfa daxue, falushi, 2013). While GMD programs of consolidation and fiscal appropriation were often antagonistic to members of the underclass and China under GMD leadership was no model republic, the decade also represents a period of unprecedented governance plurality, growth of civil society, an expansion of the 'Fourth Estate,' a new set of legal protections that contributed to an environment which stimulated greater creativity in addressing the needs of the poor and displaced. Frank Dikötter discusses the Nanjing Decade positively as a period of openness in his work: Frank Dikötter, *The Age of Openness: China before Mao*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008). Bi Mu's recent work also examines the positive aspects of GMD civil governance to the question of social change and Chinese philanthropy, see: Bi Mu 毕牧, "*Minguo shiqi Shandong chengshi xiaceg shehui bianqian yanjiu* 民国时期山东城市下层社会变迁研究 [The Study of Urban Underclass Change of Shandong in the Period of the Republic of China]" (PhD diss., Shandong daxue, Zhongguo Jinxiandaishi, 2012). In this chapter, I provide an alternative to the story of state repression and criminalization of poverty by examining how the open nature of the Nanjing Decade fostered diverse responses to problems of urban poverty and displacement.

Decade welfare policy deserves greater attention as a significant development of civil society in China.

The division of the chapter is organized to balance municipal government sources with several major newspapers and popular magazines to analyze the effect of national prerogatives on motivating local social responsibility and national unity. The chapter relies on a careful analysis of the *Tianjin Municipal Gazette* (1927-1937), a little utilized source housed in the archives of the Nankai Library Special Collections that was internally published throughout the Nanjing Decade.⁵ The chapter also uses articles from the elitist pictorial, the *Beiyang Huabao*, as well as from popular newspapers like the *Dagongbao* (大公报) and *Yishibao* (益世报) to explore how urban elite connected a sense of social responsibility to noblesse culture and entertainment.

Nanjing Perspectives on Welfare in Government Memoranda.

Under the leadership of administrators from the Nanjing government, Nationalist ideology effectively inspired local municipal and civic creativity in Tianjin. After taking control of Nanjing in 1927, the Nationalist Party began to strongly emphasize a program of modernization through cultural citizenship that since the 1920s emphasized military discipline and exercise.⁶ Martial discipline extended to the ordinary lives of students who were required to perform in military ceremony and expressions of patriotic fever. The government officials appointed by the central government in Nanjing transmitted these values into the institutions to which they were appointed. Consolidation and efficiency

⁵ *The Tianjin Municipal Gazette* 市政公报 (here after SZGB) was circulated among local leaders and published the activities of the municipal government including laws and regulations, tax policies, etc.

⁶ Fabio Lanza discusses the growing emphasis on nationalism through physical and mental self-discipline and how Beijing students resisted this emphasis in his work: Fabio Lanza, *Behind the Gate: Inventing Students in Beijing* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 57-61.

found much greater emphasis than the institutional autonomy that largely characterized the 1910s and 20s.⁷ For example, through the leadership of the Bureau of Social Affairs (also Social Bureau or BSA) and the General Labor Union (established August 1928), the Tianjin Municipal Government promoted worker safety, wage stability, and job security while undermining class struggle.⁸ Hershatter has rightfully argued that the economic pressures of the 1930s meant these reforms met with marginal success until all unions were disbanded in 1938 by the Japanese occupation force.⁹ However, Nationalist cultural reforms deserve greater analysis especially within the context of the social welfare activities of the Social Bureau, which was very active in consolidating charity activity in Tianjin during this period and more successful than some of the broader social reforms pushed by the Nanjing government.

With Yan Xishan acting as the president of the transitional government, and Nan Guixin serving as the city's mayor, they quickly inaugurated the new Tianjin Municipal Government on June 25, 1928.¹⁰ One of the first priorities of new city government was to reorganize how poverty relief functioned in the city. For example, consolidation of the Tianjin homeless shelters began in 1929 with stricter regulations passed in August of the same year. These regulations required all new charities to register with the local city government and obtain prior approval before establishing operations in the city.¹¹ On the

⁷ For more on the nationalist program for training government officials, see: Robert Joseph Culp, *Articulating Citizenship: Civic Education and Student Politics in Southeastern China, 1912-1940* (Cambridge, MA: Published by the Harvard University Asia Center, 2007).

⁸ Hershatter, *Workers of Tianjin*, 221-227.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 227-229.

¹⁰ *SZGB* 1, (August, 1928): Front Matter.

¹¹ *SZGB* 13, Section 3 (August 1929): 47-49.

positive side, the BSA implemented these measures in an attempt to reduce corruption and to ensure that donations were distributed in a way that reflected shifting ethics of labor, poverty, and criminality. At the same time, it was clearly an attempt by the new government to seize responsibility for an important social service that could help to legitimize its new tenure to the citizens of northern cities while providing an important platform for state ideology.¹² By requiring registration, the municipal government sought to track active relief organizations and to control how those organizations obtained funding.¹³ One of my main arguments in this chapter is that municipal government officials were keenly aware of the political legitimacy that could be won through effective management of disaster and poverty relief, but that this legitimacy was continuously contested by other civil forces which also desired that legitimacy.¹⁴

¹² As effectively argued by Alfred H. Y. Lin, China's modern governments could not ignore the needs of society because attempts to meet the philanthropic needs of its citizens provided vital credibility to the regime. Care and control were two critical components of governance during this period, see: Alfred H. Y. Lin, "Warlord, Social Welfare and Philanthropy: The Case of Guangzhou under Chen Jitang, 1929-1936," *Modern China* 30, no. 2 (April 2004): 151-198.

¹³ Wang Hongge's work demonstrates the importance placed on social welfare in establishing legitimacy and resisting the Japanese, see: Wang Hongge 王红格, "Kangzhan shiqi guomin zhengfu liangshi guanzhi zhengce yanjiu 抗战时期国民政府粮食管制政策研究 [The Study on Grain Control Policy of the National Government in the Anti-Japanese War]" (MA thesis, Huazhong shifan daxue, Zhongguo jin xiandai shi, 2013).

¹⁴ A command made by the Republican Qingdao Municipal Government directly connects providing for the relief of unemployed workers with establishing governmental legitimacy, see: "Ling shehuiju: Wei zhun shi zhi wei hui han wei shiye gongyou shenghuo kunnan zhu she lao dong zhiye jieshao suo yang ji zhuyi jiuji you 令社會局：爲准市指委會函爲失業工友生活困難囑設勞働職業介紹所仰即注意救濟由 [Social Affairs Bureau Order: A letter to all city leaders to urge...]," *Qingdao tebieshi zhengfu shizheng gongbao* 青島特別市政府市政公報 [The Qingdao Special Municipal Gazetteer] 4, (1929): 127-128.



Figure 2.2: General Yan Xishan (Left) and Tianjin Mayor Nan (Right).¹⁵

To many Christian missionaries, these attempts at consolidation were particularly alarming.¹⁶ The expatriate community genuinely feared that the Nationalist government would simply expropriate control over their investments and find a way to ignore extraterritorial privileges. Frank Rawlinson, editor of the *Chinese Recorder*, put this “devolution in missionary education,” in stark statistical perspective. Although there were 8250 Protestant missionaries in China at the beginning of 1927, by June only about 3000 remained.¹⁷ The threat was also compelling for locally maintained charities that had no international connections to leverage. From the records of the BSA, there does seem to be a greater focus on increasing efficiency, expanding the reach of urban philanthropic

¹⁵ SZGB 1, (August, 1928): Front Matter.

¹⁶ Education was another area which the nationalist government attempted to force its ideology, however some American missionary schools refused to comply with policies claiming protection under American extraterritoriality, see: Nelson Trusler Johnson, “Attitudes of the United States toward Enforcement of Chinese School Regulations Against American Missionary Schools,” *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States 1928 II*, U.S. Government Printing Office, (1928): 570-573.

¹⁷ A. Henrietta Gregg, *China and Educational Autonomy: The Changing Role of the Protestant Educational Missionary in China, 1807-1937* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1946), 156.

activities, and at least in the language of the correspondences between the various organs of the municipal government (BSA, Office of the Mayor, Office of the Chief of Police, etc.), a genuine concern for Tianjin's urban poor and refugee populations.¹⁸

The new laws regulating charities sought to test the effectiveness of the various private and government owned charities in the city and publish rankings to encourage donations to the most productive programs. By requiring both government and privately owned charities to publish their monthly budgets to the finance and social bureaus, the urban leadership encouraged institutional efficiency and acquired a better comprehension of the actual extent of regional poverty.

Examination of Tianjin municipal management of the city's charities from 1928 to 1937 reveals a four-fold pattern for increased control.¹⁹ First, the BSA would force all charities actively soliciting donations to report their income and expenses to the government and publish their findings in local newspapers to encourage greater transparency. As demonstrated by the rapid success and failure of the Save the Nation Association (救国) discussed in the previous chapter, newspapers were an important

¹⁸ Although there is a clear overlap between imprisonment and poverty relief in Tianjin as in other Chinese cities during this period, the focus of the many correspondences concerning philanthropy coming from the Tianjin Social Bureau (天津市社会局), primarily regard meeting basic emergency needs as an overwhelming priority. Again, the scale of need helped to mitigate some of the more invasive social planning programs that came out of the New Life Movement and were more rigorously enforced in places like Nanjing and Changsha, see: Arthur L. Rosenbaum, "Gentry Power and the Changsha Rice Riot of 1910," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 34, no. 3 (1975): 689–715.

¹⁹ Some of the earliest edicts regarding charity consolidation appears in the *Yishibao* from February to March, 1929 as published orders from the Tianjin Municipal Government to the Social Bureau and all charities operating within the city. Each city district was commanded to establish or designate an official female shelter, training shelter, orphanage, and burial charity. Independent charities were now to be under the directorship of the jiujiyuan administration and collectively managed. This was a response to a directive from the Nanjing Central Committee on Social Welfare. While this directive and ones that followed may have caused confusion and concern among private charities, it was never effectively enforced, and private charities continued to take the lion's share of responsibility for providing for the needs of the poor and displaced. The weakness of the Guomindang Party meant that charity work remained an important context for public participation and civic creativity, even if it didn't quite match the party line.

means of swaying public opinion among the Tianjin population regardless of class affiliation. Newspapers also offered some measure of protection against strong-arming politicians who sought to appropriate funds for their own projects. Disgruntled public servants sometimes openly criticized the state of the city's social welfare system in the various Tianjin news outlets. Detailed continuous reports on the amount of donations received and the expenses of major charities was easily accessible to any prospective donors.²⁰ Transparency is commonly recognized as a fundamental ethical principle regarding policymaking in social work. It encourages policymakers to craft decisions openly, honestly, and in good faith.²¹ As Tianjin Municipal Government charities and private charities published their data alongside each other, it encouraged a spirit of mutual accountability and strategic cooperation even if the needs of the city's poor could never be adequately met.

Secondly, the Tianjin Municipal Government required charities to obtain approval before soliciting donations. A common means for these charities to raise financial support came through circulating advertisements in newspapers for charity social events such as dances or art exhibitions.²² However, by the Nanjing Decade, a weariness among Tianjin's elite towards philanthropic giving had made it increasingly difficult to fund many of the city's charity services. Local businesses would sometimes promise donations to receive tax benefits, but then continuously put off fulfilling their promises. This meant

²⁰ Reports to the city finance bureau and social bureau, included copies of receipts for all donations and explanations of how money was used. Donations were also published in newspapers. Charities that refused or delayed publishing their finances were chastised by journalists and audited by government accountants.

²¹ Allan Edward Barsky, *Ethics and Values in Social Work: An Integrated Approach for a Comprehensive Curriculum* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

²² The *Beiyang Huabao* 北洋画报 (here after BYHB) carries many excellent examples of this.

that competition for charitable resources was even greater than during the period before. Although I found only a few examples of private charities being censored among the files of the BSA and Tianjin police, this regulation also functioned as an important tracking mechanism for the local government. Certain charity galas were prioritized to meet the needs perceived as most critical to the state while others were displaced. Moreover, during periods of disaster, the municipal government was well aware of which charities had cash on hand that could be expediently appropriated to meet urgent needs.

Third, carefully regulating the fund raising activities of Tianjin charities encouraged public displays of giving and helped to legitimize the conspicuous consumption of the Tianjin elite within the context of philanthropic relief. As discussed in the previous chapter, by the end of the Qing Dynasty, philanthropy was almost always a public activity, and thus one that could be more heavily regulated and encouraged through public recognition. Since the late Ming, Chinese elite had gradually moved away from the idea of “hidden merit,” *yinde*, in order to offset their obvious wealth inequality and compete for moral authority.²³ The municipal government could not only control what organizations could advertise their work, but because of their hunger for public recognition, pressure elites to fund particular charities.

This regulatory system ensured that competition for the generosity of Tianjin’s cosmopolitans took place exclusively between government-approved contenders.²⁴ For all its financial corruption and general ineffectiveness, the Nanjing government was remarkably successful at implementing a plan of welfare regulation that both encouraged

²³ Smith, *The Art of Doing Good*, 5, 276.

²⁴ SZGB 13, Sections 6 - 8 (August 1929): 47-49.

continued public support while consolidating ideology and shaping values. The Nanjing government clearly prioritized welfare and disaster relief as essential components of city governance and control. While Nationalist government welfare programs ultimately failed, their thinking could be often remarkably forward and remain a valuable source of inspiration for meeting the demands of social welfare in China today.²⁵

Declaring the Rights of Men, Women, and Children.

If labor and industrial productivity were becoming the established hallmarks of a new ethics of poverty relief management and a means to identifying the deserving poor, it is helpful to place these values within the context of simultaneously emerging standards for the fair treatment of labor. As I will demonstrate later in this chapter, the correspondences of government agents are far less condescending to impoverished unemployed workers than one might expect.²⁶ Examining the protections provided to urban factory workers both displays a developing legal system designed to guard against exploitation, and reveals the nature of human rights values taking root in the city. These emerging attitudes shaped the demands and expectations popular society would place on institutions organized to relieve poverty.²⁷ For example, it was no longer enough for

²⁵ For his master's thesis, Ge Baosen explores this argument through a case study of the Tianjin Relief Institute (天津救济院), see: Ge Baosen 葛宝森, "Tianjin jiujiyuan yanjiu, 1929-1937 天津救济院研究 [Research of Tianjin Relief Institute 1929-1937]" (MA thesis, Hebei daxue, Zhongguo jin xiandai shi, 2008).

²⁶ Janet Chen has argued, "As for those abhorring labor and dwelling willfully in a state of dependency, the emerging discourse of 'social parasites' further justified their exclusion from society, by dehumanizing them as vermin," and this was certainly the case for petty criminals sent to Tianjin reform factories. However, outside the specifically criminal poor (a term whose definition was expanding), appeals to help refugees and disaster victims remained sympathetic, see: Chen, *Guilty of Indigence*, 84-85.

²⁷ What I am trying to argue here is important because it suggests that new forms of labor and production not only create new forms of exploitation, but also new assertions regarding the value of individual life.

widows to be fed and cloistered away from the temptations of unmarried life in Buddhist nunneries.²⁸

Instead, the value of women's productivity increased as their labor potential was realized.²⁹ Beyond industrial productivity, a woman's identity as mother acquired further merit as the producers of future labor.³⁰ The very identity of motherhood encouraged certain rights and expectations that may have never have been legally defined otherwise.³¹ The Nanjing Central Government sought to improve labor laws to comply with, and at times exceed, global standards for worker's rights. In the following chapter, I will discuss how many of these regulations were inspired by the small but influential model villages organized by the China YMCA. The BSA began more closely monitoring factories employing a medium to large work force collecting information regarding working conditions with careful record keeping of worker injuries, illnesses, their treatment and outcome. This close monitoring clearly connected with the desire to

²⁸ Ma Buying 马步英, "Tianjin Guangrentang Gaikuan 天津广仁堂概况 [Overview of the Tianjin Guangrentang]," *Nankai Shuangzhou* 南开双周 [Nankai Biweekly] 4, no. 5 (1929): 21-23, G639.282.1 (MGQK).

²⁹ Although there was a clear gap between the new labor regulations protecting women who were pregnant or had just given birth and how female workers were actually treated by employers, regulations referring to these issues pepper many of the documents listing worker rights and protections from this period. For example, see: "Central Government Labor Law Section," *SZGB* 17, (December 1929): 1.

³⁰ Dorothy Johnson Orchard, "Man-Power in China I," *Political Science Quarterly* 50, no. 4 (December 1935): 570.

³¹ By the early 1920s, Ta Chen, writing for the U.S. Department of Labor's *Monthly Labor Review* and the *Far Eastern Fortnightly*, argued the potential of women's presence in the Chinese industrial workforce to stimulate labor reform: "the emancipation of women has on the one hand intensified labor competition and on the other hand stimulated public agitation of the worker's health and safety." Ta Chen, "Labor Unrest in China," and "Industrial Relations and Labor Conditions," *Monthly Labor Review* 13, no. 2 (August 1921): 22. While protection of female labor throughout the Nanjing Decade remained deplorable, news articles decrying these conditions remained equally consistent and demonstrate an awaking of public consciousness of the need to protect women's rights as a part of general labor reform. For examples see articles from the *Shenbao*, *North China Herald*, *Xin Qingnian*, etc. as well as the many women's magazines emerging during this period.

prevent the spread of sickness and epidemics as Ruth Rogaski has demonstrated in her study of health and hygiene, *weisheng*.

As a consequence, sanitary and safe working conditions became basic expectations in all labor contexts, even if these expectations were poorly met. The Tianjin Social Bureau began to record factory accidents, require detailed explanations of how these disasters were relieved, and what changes would be implemented to prevent further problems.³² The BSA also published a list of fines that companies would be liable to pay if they were found to have violations. By publishing these fines in public media sources like the *Dagongbao*, the municipal government encouraged educated workers to know their rights and report on abuses. In one occurrence, a fire that injured several workers in a Tianjin factory, inspired numerous articles reflecting on worker safety and newspapers also organized a fund drive to support the families of the injured workers.³³ Along with this move towards greater accountability to protect the lives and health of workers, the central government issued new laws restricting the employment of children.

Since the introduction of the factory system, child labor was utilized as a means of undercutting adult male labor. In light industries working as “apprentices,” children sometimes worked 18 hour shifts or longer for only room and board. In fact, these apprenticeships did little to improve the child’s prospects for securing permanent employment and really amounted to a form of slave labor. The Tianjin Municipal

³²“Central Government Labor Law Section 1.3,4,” *SZGB* 17 (December 1929): 1.

³³ “Guonei laogong xiaoxi (shi yuefen): Shisan, gongye zaihai: (yi) Hebei sheng: (1) Tianjin xiangji bingtang gongchang huozai (shi yue ershiyi ri yishibao) 国内劳工消息(十月份): 十三、工业灾害:(乙)河北省: (1)天津祥记冰糖工厂火灾(十月二十一日益世报) [Domestic Labor News (October): 13, Industrial Disasters: (First) Hebei Province: (1) Tianjin Xiangji Sugar Factory Fire (October 21 *YSB*)],” *Guoji laogong tongxun* 国际劳工通讯 [International Labor Bulletin] 1935, 14:68, K261.3 (MGQK).

Government responded to this problem by publicizing laws against child labor authored by the Nanjing Department of Labor. All children under the age of 14 were forbidden to work in factories and children between 14 to 16 years were to be assigned only light duty work.³⁴ Laws were also specifically designed to protect women and girls from potentially dangerous work, forbidding them to deal with explosives or poisonous materials.

Work around chemical dust and heavy machinery, jobs related to high voltage electricity, disposing of chemical wastes or any other potentially dangerous or harmful jobs were also limited to adult men.³⁵ The central government also passed laws restricting working hours, especially for women and children.³⁶ The regulations set the normal work day to last 8 hours or up to a maximum of 10 hours. Even in times of disaster, all workers were limited to no more than 12 hours per day and no more than 36 extra hours per month. The central government placed special restrictions regarding the working hours of children and women: children between the ages of 14 to 16 should not work more than 8 hours per week, should not work between 7 p.m. to 6 a.m. and women should not work after 10 p.m. or before 6 a.m. The central government also published regulations for rest to ensure all workers had one day rest in seven, and a half hour rest for every five hours of work. Paid vacations were also required by the Nanjing government as well as paid leave during government holidays. Why does it matter that

³⁴ “Central Government Labor Law Section 2.5,6,” *SZGB* 17, (December 1929): 1.

³⁵ “Central Government Labor Law Section 2.7,” *SZGB* 17, (December 1929): 1.

³⁶ While the intent of passing labor laws such as these was to improve class relations in cities, the results were not always the case. Besides the expected resistance of business owners to comply with regulations, working families often relied on the supplemental income of children. In fact, one of the major issues which encouraged worker participation in the May Thirtieth Movement in 1925 was a series of proposed child labor laws.

such regulations were implemented by the central government and then by city administrators?

The answer lies, at least partly, in how labor laws reflect a shifting landscape of values. A fundamental principle of the modern period was that popular expectations for government protection were both expanding and becoming increasingly complex. By enacting a clear structure of factory regulation, the Nanjing government was also declaring its superior moral position to define the limits of propriety and its role as the supreme arbiter of economic inequality.³⁷ Within this context, the effectiveness of state directed institutions for poverty relief represent a profoundly important source for the legitimacy to rule. Although clearly established by the beginning of the Xinhai Revolution, the transition from patriarchal punisher to popular protector represented a critical ideological shift in how the relationship between the governing and governed took shape in China's early post-dynastic world. Ideally, the Nanjing government sought to meet needs which reflected demands beyond ensuring subsistence.

For example, minimum wage regulations were particularly progressive: “the lowest salary should match two persons’ living expenses in the local area where the factory is located.”³⁸ Reflecting the instability of Chinese currency at the time, the

³⁷ I use the term propriety here in the sense that the Nationalist government was essentially legitimizing female labor and consequently supplanting Buddhist notions of the cloistered widow. Maintaining “nei” and the “wai” was replaced by the drive towards increased efficiency and production. While the traditionally superior place of men in Chinese society continued to affect the kinds of labor available to women, the drive towards material self-sufficiency meant that certain values were incompatible with a modernizing China.

³⁸ Although these regulations were not actually followed and only represented a small percentage of the total industry in Tianjin, they are important for three reasons. First, publicizing these regulations, heightened awareness and increased public sympathy for poor working conditions. Second, it allowed educated workers to adopt a legal language when protesting against exploitation and poor working conditions. Third, it provides a useful basis for understanding what influences were shaping public policies during the Nanjing Decade. “Central Government Labor Law Section 5.20,” *SZGB* 17, December 1929, 1.

regulations argued payments to workers must be made in the local currency and that employers could not deduct fees from workers' wages. Even provisions regarding equal pay for men and women made their way into the labor regulations: "If a man and women are doing the same kind of job and have the same work efficiency they should be paid the same."³⁹

Women were also guaranteed eight weeks of paid leave for pregnancy. This is quite remarkable considering the Equal Pay Act wasn't passed in the United States until 1963. The list of central government labor laws also emphasized paternalistic values like encouraging workers to open savings accounts, making time for recreation, and ensuring safety and proper hygiene. The regulations also laid down instructions for a factory congress which was democratically organized to resolve labor conflicts, increase efficiency, and improve safety. Although it could be rightly argued that such regulations were poorly enforced and largely on paper only, they do reveal an attempt on the part of some government administrators to provide better living conditions for all citizens. Rather than make an argument about the government's success and ability, these sorts of public policies help to reveal the ideals and rights language that was becoming increasingly what Chinese society expected from its government. As will be discussed later within this chapter, even groups of beggars learned to utilize this kind of rights language to express dissatisfaction over labor conditions in city's workhouses.

Raising Funds and the Benefits of Giving.

If the city government was motivated to provide for social welfare as a response to changing expectations regarding the relationship between state and society, what

³⁹ "Central Government Labor Law Section 5.24," *SZGB* 17, (December 1929): 2.

motivated individual response? Did charitable work expand social currency in a way that can be correlated to motivation? I am using social currency here in relation to Pierre Bourdieu's concept of social capital. Specifically, I want to understand how individual philanthropy improved one's standing within various social circles. By examining this, I hope to be better equipped to answer three questions: How did giving shape personal identity. How did the activities of giving create or expand certain social networks and form community? What was the value of the public recognition giving afforded to social status? As discussed in the previous chapter, public recognition of charitable giving did not always translate into social currency or even legitimate public virtue. However, the collapse of the Qing Dynasty and the unprecedented intensity and persistence of ensuing natural and man-made disasters meant that traditional networks of mutual extended family support were completely insufficient to meet the rapid increase in refugees brought on by famine and war. Appealing to the generosity of the elite, both private and public run charities sought to stimulate giving by creating competition among potential givers.

In 1929, the Tianjin city government asked the interior ministry to create a template for a tiered system of awards given to major contributors. The rules for these awards were meticulously discussed and substantial efforts were made to guarantee that regulations were universally applied throughout Nationalist controlled areas. Such careful attention and tiered levels of competition demonstrate that public identifiers of generosity clearly translated into feelings of self-worth and social standing. In addition, public competition for giving was not restricted to elite philanthropists. Several records disclose that charity organizers recognized the effectiveness of offering public

recognition to contributors and pushed to create lower level awards to permit wider participation.⁴⁰ Similarly, award systems were used to identify philanthropic organizations that were particularly effective or embodied the principles of Nationalist relief policies.⁴¹ In a climate of growing unrest over the extremes of wealth inequality, charity work was seen as an important form of social responsibility that provided legitimacy for wealth.

Journalists and letters to the editor began bringing acute attention to the growing economic divide among urban citizens. A typical criticism of a charity drama performance begins, “In Beijing and Tianjin areas, disasters are everywhere. Children are waiting to be fed. Yet those officers and social elites eat meat and dress in expensive clothes and still live like kings like they did before. This is extremely unfair!”⁴² The concept of the wealth poverty gap being unfair, *bu gongpin*, was a relatively new concept, and clearly not everyone was convinced that the lavish charity balls of the Tianjin elite were really sufficient for achieving the level of social responsibility required.⁴³

Within the public discourse, a significant association between the suffering of the poor and the suffering of doing charity work becomes apparent. It was not enough for the

⁴⁰ Although it would be somewhat presumptuous to argue that elite conceptions of how philanthropic giving translated into social currency was imitated by middle class values, it does suggest some kind of significant link existed.

⁴¹ “The city government requests the ministry of the interior to create a template for awards to give to philanthropic organizations,” *SZGB* 12, (July, 1929): 202. July 31, 1929.

⁴² “Wei cishan xisheng sexiang 为慈善牺牲色相 [to sacrifice their beauty for charity],” *BYHB*, March 26, 1929,

⁴³ Here the term for “unfair” used is *bu gongpin* (不公平), a phrase that was not really in popular use to describe the wealth poverty gap until around the 1930s. Although my research on this term is only preliminary, a search using the *Minguo shi qi qi kan quan wen shu ju ku, 1911-1949* and the digitized *Shenbao* seems to support this conclusion.

rich to give; they also had to suffer. The article goes on to positively describe a charity benefit organized by the chief editor of the *Dagongbao*. What made his effort and the event legitimate was the great personal sacrifice of time and energy expended to arrange the activity. This seemed to even take precedence over the amount of money raised or its general effectiveness. The journalist also describes the primary actress for this charity performance, Mrs. Tang Baochao (唐宝潮), as “sacrificing her beauty for charity.”⁴⁴ He describes her pitiful state, spotting more than ten bottles of Chinese medicine in her handbag. It is as though the journalist were saying: Yes, there are evil greedy elite who care nothing for the needs of the poor, but look at this rich philanthropist, see how hard she works, to the point of sacrificing her health and life for the poor. Although it may seem ludicrous to compare the suffering of starving peasant flood refugees with the temporary exertions of an elite actress, this manner of paralleled narratives of suffering revealed that expressions of suffering themselves were an important way that elite Chinese communicated with each other, and that identifying with the downtrodden could provide social currency and legitimacy.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Although this was also a term commonly applied to prostitutes.

⁴⁵ Since the 1990s, corporations have devoted increasing resources to “corporate strategic philanthropy,” philanthropy where contributions are targeted to meet both business objects and recipient needs. The value of this kind of marketing oriented philanthropy is well recognized in the business world today, see: Jerry D. Marx, “Corporate Strategic Philanthropy: Implications for Social Work” *Social Work* 43, no. 1 (January 1998): 34-41. In a similar way, elites participated in fundraising activities that made them specifically identifiable as philanthropists in a way that strengthened social networks and improved relations with the media and general public. Placing individual philanthropic giving within the context of strategic philanthropy is useful because it also helps to demythologize the act of individual giving. As Bruce Sievers has put it, “Unlike businesses, . . . philanthropic and nonprofit organizations operate in two worlds. One of these is defined by instrumental objectives such as financial stability [or] number of people served. The other world, however, is defined by different end goals of human action: education, artistic expression, freedom of thought and action, concern for future generations, and preservation of cultural and environmental legacies These ends are the goals and aspirations of the human experience and are not reducible to the same kinds of categories that define profit margins and make for the most efficient production of widgets. It is this mission-driven dimension that separates the world of the nonprofit from the world of the for-profit in a fundamental way. “Mission” is even too limited a word to capture all that is



Figure 2.3: Charity Performance Sponsored by the *Dagongbao*.⁴⁶

Famous artists also participated in charity events in a way that drew particular attention to their sacrifice. Calligraphers and painters often worked with benefactors to produce works specifically to raise money for social relief.

For example, in the summer of 1929, Yang Lingfu came to Tianjin and worked for fifty-two days on a series of paintings and Buddhist texts which were sold at the *Pantongzi* (潘同泽) Club in Tianjin raising over 1000 yuan for flood victims in the

entailed in the nature of the nonprofit enterprise; it suggests a single-mindedness of goal that belies the multi-dimensional character of any activity aimed at ameliorating the human condition. "Purpose" or "aspiration" might better describe the goals of organizations that operate in the social sphere. Within their broad purposes, organizations certainly adopt specific tasks, but the point of the overall effort lies beyond these instrumental vehicles.... [I]t is poetry rather than metrics that often best captures this dimension of human experience." Cited in Paul Brest, "In Defense of Strategic Philanthropy," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 149, no. 2 (June 2005): 134. But if we think of private philanthropy within the context of social networking and building a personal brand, the realms of philanthropy and business become somewhat less mutually exclusive.

⁴⁶ *BYHB*, March 26, 1929.

Northwest.⁴⁷ Along with specific charitable performances, the charity funfair was immensely popular in Tianjin during the Nanjing Decade. Funfairs combined various forms of entertainment and celebrity shows that included both traditional art forms and Western venues. “The tickets were sold out very quickly, people were enthusiastic about it. I heard that the most expensive ticket was printed on purple leather with golden words on it and sold for 100 daiyang,” commented one reporter regarding a celebrity-packed funfair hosted by the Qunyi Club.⁴⁸



Figure 2.4: “Mrs. Chang Hsueh-Liang, now the Chairwoman of the West Mukden Floods Relief Association.”⁴⁹

⁴⁷ “Yang Lingfu youhua zhenzai <miao guan> 杨令福粥画赈灾<妙观> [Yang Lingfu sells her paintings for disaster relief],” *BYHB*, July 25, 1929. Yang Lingfu studied at the Peking Museum and was commissioned by the imperial court. In the 1930s she lived in Germany where she gave art lessons to Adolf Hitler. She came to California in 1938 where she designed stage settings for *The Good Earth* and taught painting at Stanford University; she died September 4, 1978.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*



Figure 2.5: (Left) “Actress Meng Hsiao-Tung appearing in a local theater for the Liaoning Flood Relief.” (Right) “Mrs. Liang Pao-chang, the first best-dressed lady in the Liaoning Flood Relief Fashion Ball.”⁵⁰

Charity clearly could lend moral credence to displays of opulent extravagance.⁵¹ Leading government figures also sought to capitalize on the legitimacy that charity work could offer. The famous warlord, Zhang Xueliang’s wife, Yu Fengzhi (于凤至), played

⁴⁹ *BYHB*, September 20, 1930.

⁵⁰ Actress Meng Hsiao-Tung appearing in a local theater for the Liaoning Flood Relief,” *BYHB*, November 15, 1930; “Mrs. Liang Pao-chang, the first best-dressed lady in the Liaoning Flood Relief Fashion Ball,” *BYHB*, December 9, 1930.

⁵¹ “Jin wan qun yi she zhenzai youyihui 今晚群一社賑灾游艺 [Tonight’s Qunyi club’s disaster relief funfair],” *BYHB*, August 20, 1929.

an active role in organizing public charity venues and relief efforts.⁵² After a major flood in western Liaoning Province that inundated ten counties, Mrs. Yu “felt deeply saddened by it.”⁵³ Besides donating her own money for the disaster relief, she established her own disaster relief organization, which organized a calligraphy and painting exhibition, funfair, and volunteer drama. Zhang Xueliang was himself an avid collector of ancient calligraphy and painting from the Song and Yuan dynasties and many of the pieces were from their family’s personal collection. By participating in this way, Mr. Zhang and his wife reflected Confucian values of paternal benevolence within a more modern trend of first lady service. The activities of high profile benefactors often sparked greater awareness and led to further charitable work and donations. After the work by Mrs. Yu, several charity operas were held raising more than three thousand yuan. As Joshua Goldstein has pointed out, by the 1930s, Beijing Opera was being remolded into a commodity that placed growing value on a few star actors. This left many struggling actors and their families behind, and at least some of the charity performances were specifically directed at alleviating their plight. In Tianjin, actors formed the National Drama Union in 1937 to support poor actors. The proceeds from performances were evenly distributed among members and the troop regularly performed charity events to help impoverished comrades.⁵⁴ Dr. Mei Lanfang (梅兰芳), the most famous male actor

⁵² Although there are many articles about Yu Fengzhi in Chinese, few focus her philanthropic work. Most are concerned with her divorce and her experiences as the wife of Zhang Xueliang. For a recent biography see: Wei Liansheng 魏连生, *Yu Fengzhi: Zhang Xueliang jiang jun fu ren* 于凤至: 张学良将军夫人 [Yu Fengzhi: The wife of Zhang Xueliang] (Beijing: Hua wen chu ban she, 2005).

⁵³ “Zhang Xueliang furen chou zhen liaoxi shuizai <bi gong zi pan ji> 张学良夫人筹赈辽西水灾 <笔公自潘寄> [Zhang Xueliang’s wife collect donations to help out the flood victims in western Liaoning province],” *BYHB*, September 20, 1930.

⁵⁴ Joshua Goldstein, *Drama Kings: Players and Publics in the Re-creation of Peking Opera, 1870-1937* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 206.

playing female roles at the time, provided a charity performance a few weeks after Mrs. Yu's initial charity work.⁵⁵



Figure 2.6: Mei Lanfang Prepares for a Charity Performance.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ “Lai Jin biaoyan Liao zai yiju shi bi fan ping zhi Mei Lanfang boshi 来津表演辽灾义剧事毕返平之梅兰芳博士 [Dr. Mei Lanfang came to Tianjin volunteer to perform Yi opera for the disaster relief in Liaoning],” *BYHB*, November 8, 1930; “Dong zhenji lian zai yiwu xi liang ye ji <bi gong> 冬赈暨连灾义务戏两夜纪 <笔公> [A two night volunteer opera show for winter relief and flood relief in Liaoning Province],” *BYHB*, November 15, 1930; “Liao zhai shi zhuang wuhui shiling 辽灾时装舞会拾零 [What I see and hear at the Liaoning disaster relief fashion ball],” *BYHB*, December 9, 1930.

As a national celebrity, Mei Lanfang was under significant pressure to preform acts of charity especially through benefit performances (*yiwu xi*). As Joshua Goldstein has pointed out, the pressure to hold charity events to support philanthropic institutions was so great that at times local education bureaus had to establish “punitive regulations limiting such performances and demanding that itemized accounts be submitted to the appropriate municipal offices,” see: Goldstein, *Drama Kings*, 204. For a useful collection of documents on Mei Lanfang, see: *Tian Min, China's Greatest Operatic Male Actor of Female Roles: Documenting the Life and Art of Mei Lanfang, 1894-1961*, (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2010).

⁵⁶ “Li Shifang zhi sishenghuo: Wan mu kuikui zhi xiao Mei Lanfang: Wei cishan shiye boyin shi sheng [zhaopian] 李世芳之私生活:万目睽睽之小梅兰芳:为慈善事业播音时摄影:[照片] [Li Photo Mei Lanfang prepares for a charity performance in Tianjin].” *Li shifang zhuanji*. April, 1942. Microfilm number: J-3426 Frame: 0584.

A Decade of Bureaucratization.

The Nanjing Decade also brought with it new sources of income for government relief agencies. Besides the continued direct contributions of individual gentry and special taxes on luxuries and entertainment, public transportation became another important, taxable source of income during this period as demonstrated by the Beining Railroad Operations Bureau which provided donations to support relief for refugees.⁵⁷ As the bureaucracy expanded, it too became a potential source of emergency revenues. Additionally, in March 1929, the central government instructed that all civil servants including military and police officials “donate” from their pay to raise charity funds for winter relief.⁵⁸

The Tianjin Municipal Government also utilized the provision of public utilities to foreign concessions in intricate schemes of funding social welfare projects. After the initial success of a free clinic established in the third district of Tianjin city, the local government needed a way to raise funds to expand its medical services and insure its continued funding and operation. To do this, they opened a public bid to contract a private company to provide sewage disposal services to the international concession. However, the successful bidder was not the company that offered the city the lowest price for its services, but rather the company that could guarantee the highest rate of return for the contract. The burden of negotiating with the foreign concessions was placed on these sewage management companies. The Department of Health in Tianjin’s third district

⁵⁷ TMA, J0001-3-000257-001, August 1937.

⁵⁸ *YSB*, March 19, 1929, donate is a term loosely used here since the donations were automatically deducted from the monthly pay of workers.

devised this strategy because its location in the busy overcrowded port district, threatened to increase the spread of contagious disease.⁵⁹

Although attempts to force private charities to integrate into the government managed *Jiujiyuan* system met with resistance and only marginal success, other precedents established during this period stimulated the growth of transparency and public accountability, increasing the effectiveness and value of print media. For example, reviewing a recently established homeless shelter, a journalist at the *YSB* charged the *Benfu* shelter with hiding its assets. In compliance with Nanjing policies of publishing the regulations and finances of charities publicly, the shelter had contacted the newspaper and provided its mission statement when it was first opened in November 1928. Following up, the newspaper reported that the charity had failed to provide information about its financing and that the operating budget was kept in a private account of one of the board members, surname Zhang, in a Shanxi bank. The article reveals that the expectations for transparency were in fact quite high. The reporter not only demanded that the shelter disclose its accounts, but also detail how much interest had been earned on the principle of the operating budget of 30 or 40 thousand yuan.⁶⁰

The Language of Suffering.

The printed language used to describe the suffering of China's poor and displaced most likely does not capture the realities and diversity of lived experience. Yet what is more interesting is what that language says about the values defining human dignity among the literate during the early twentieth century. As public discourse expanded

⁵⁹ *YSB*, March 28, 1929.

⁶⁰ *YSB*, February 20, 1929.

exponentially through print journalism and radio broadcasts in big cities by the 1930s, the language describing the suffering of China's people became a critical vocabulary in the creation and expansion of national identity. As Rana Mitter has argued, although China had existed as a country for millennia, it was the particular challenges of the twentieth century that galvanized it into becoming a nation-state.⁶¹ Whereas Mitter places his emphasis on the cataclysm of the Japanese occupation of Manchuria, I suggest that the continual relief of poverty, within the context of a growing public discourse, provides a parallel narrative of national awakening of equal importance. Although, nationalism inspired by resisting Japanese occupation led to the growth of authoritarian control, this parallel narrative often proved a much more fertile territory for cultivating civic participation, public discussion, and collective responsibility. Throughout the Nanjing Decade, Tianjin was the focal point of transnational response to Chinese poverty. Common descriptions of suffering for both poor residents of Tianjin and migrant refugees from throughout North China encouraged a myth of national identity that emanated from a collective social responsibility.

By tracing descriptions of the suffering caused by poverty, it becomes possible to conceptualize some of the values defining human dignity and social progress and how those values changed. Disregarding these values by merely focusing on the institutional effectiveness of various aid programs may obscure the forces shaping public morality.⁶²

⁶¹ Mitter argues that for preponderance of Chinese, before this earth shattering event, "China was more of a geographical expression than a country," that the myth of Japanese terror tactics and Chinese collective resistance became the catalyst for creating a truly universal public notion of Chinese national identity that could be influenced and contested by the Communist and Nationalist parties, see: Rana Mitter, *Forgotten Ally: China's World War II, 1937-1945*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2013): 41.

⁶² I have noticed in several works that focus on philanthropy in twentieth century China, some historians seem to take a "bottom line" approach which centers on the effectiveness (or abuses) of Nationalist relief programs rather than the motivations which defined them to the public. While this approach can help to

Like in previous periods, city government communications continued to call attention to the physical vulnerability of refugees and the unemployed poor. Descriptions repeatedly portrayed needy individuals as scantily clad, starving, with faces covered in tears. This type of appeal clearly sought to stimulate emotional resonance.⁶³ Protection of the poor went beyond merely a disconnected responsibility of the new government seeking public legitimacy; city administrators saw the purpose of relief projects as “to show love for the poor,” evidencing the continued importance of Confucian paternalism to understanding charity during this period.⁶⁴ Within this context, the language of controlling movement to promote stability represented a not-so-radical shift from pre-Xinhai responsibilities.

The emphasis on social control negotiated within an existing language of paternalism translated into Tianjin local government policy. Police and social bureau administrators decried the “aimless wandering of refugees with no place to call their home,” not only for its waste of valuable labor production, but simultaneously by appealing to a recognizable value for a settled population.⁶⁵ Charities were tasked with providing for the physical needs of the city’s poor, while also helping to regulate and settle wandering disconnected individuals. The Tianjin Municipal Government, particularly the social bureau, saw labor management and increased production as the

reveal important weaknesses in Nanjing governance, favoring actual outcomes rather than desired outcomes can fail to recognize subtle changes or continuities within the public morality of the Nanjing Decade. I am less concerned about why Nationalist programs failed than what they can reveal about the social values of the time.

⁶³ “Tianjin police station orders city political party committee to earnestly provide housing for refugees,” *SZGB* 5, (December 1928): 108.

⁶⁴ “The women’s shelter asks the police station to send policemen to the shelter for permanent protection.” *SZGB* 12, (July, 1929): 111. July 12, 1929.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

primary keys to improving the welfare of the poor and society in general. Labor held the promise of both stimulating and supporting the rapid modernization necessary for resisting imperialism and improving social stability. Industrial labor specifically demanded individuals to be settled and self-disciplined. Within the context of state-run industries such as workhouses, labor provided social bureau officials with an important terrain on which to imagine and map new levels of daily life control and regulation. In relation to women's relief, the change was much more significant. Aid workers appealed to national policies, specifically the concept of *nüquan*, a woman's equality and rights, which represented a radical break from Confucian values. By providing safe haven for women fleeing from vindictive mothers-in-law, abusive husbands, and various forms of enslavement, gender specific poverty relief helped to reshape the identity of women as independent from their role within the family structure.⁶⁶

Although the city government attempted many ways to stimulate private charity, at times independent acts of philanthropy could be perceived as problematic, unreliable, and potentially creating habits of dependency. For example, when the appointed street head, Yang Maosheng (杨茂生), personally paid the utilities for the poor residents on his street, city administrators praised his kindness but also arranged an emergency planning meeting to address how to carefully establish long-term strategies to prevent reliance on him in the future.⁶⁷ The structure of appeals for generosity, regardless of how poverty relief was actually implemented, reveal significant aspects of the framework of social responsibility in the early twentieth century. Competition among benefactors to meet the

⁶⁶ "Request to set up a poor house and use ten percent donated income from *yuehu*," *SZGB* 7, (February 1929): 49.

⁶⁷ "#2 district #3 department #15 street head Yang Maosheng report," *SZGB* 14, (September 1929): 197.

demands of Tianjin's poverty relief institutions clearly demonstrated that giving translated into a valuable form of social currency. After examining the perceived utility to both government legitimacy and individual status, I will turn to several of the specific institutions for poverty relief active in Tianjin during this period, keeping in mind that actual effectiveness of these institutions may be less relevant to understanding the values of social responsibility (as expressed by the Nanjing government) than examining stated intentions and purposes.

The Department of Public Health.

In her ground-breaking work on public health, Ruth Rogaski rightly points out that while Nanjing reformers were able to put in place the organizational infrastructure for Tianjin's public health "given their meager resources, it was sometimes more possible to talk about weisheng than to provide it."⁶⁸ However, fear that refugees entering the city might carry diseases with them meant that at least some funding found its way to the public health department which offered inoculations, isolation of contagious diseases, and basic healthcare.⁶⁹ Clinics opened by the public health department typically followed a similar mission statement which was to provide free medical care to the poor who have no other means of treatment. Certain fees, including registration, were optional and contingent on the means of the patient. A clinic, *zhensuo*, in the second district offered both treatment from Western doctors and Chinese traditional medicine. Besides general health, these free clinics also offered OB/GYN, internal and external medicine, and eyes,

⁶⁸ Ruth Rogaski, *Hygienic Modernity*, 234.

⁶⁹ TMA, J0001-3-000181-017, August 1937.

ear, nose & throat specialists. The offer of free medical treatment was also used as a means of enticing people to come in for their vaccinations.⁷⁰

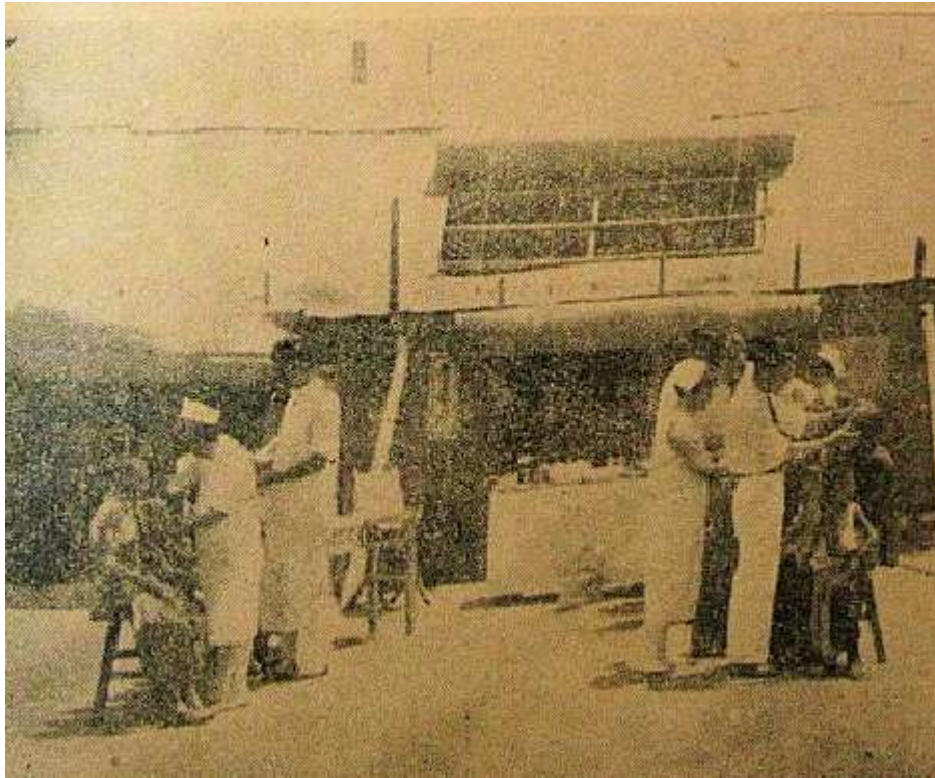


Figure 2.7: “Clinic at the Refugee Camp.”⁷¹

Tianjin Public Health received support from foreign organizations like the Red Cross and from the profits collected from providing services to the foreign concessions.⁷² In August 1937, the Red Cross helped to staff and financially support the opening of a health clinic inside the Tianjin Vagrant Shelter.⁷³ Temporary shelters set up for housing refugees during harsh winters or during periods of political upheaval provided captive

⁷⁰ *YSB*, May 22, 1929.

⁷¹ *Tianjin jidujiao jiuji hui baogao shu* 天津基督教会报告书 [Report of the Tianjin Christian relief team], June 1933.

⁷² *YSB*, May 23, 1929.

⁷³ TMA, J0001-3-000277-005, August 1937.

populations with the ability to enforce vaccinations and implement new social practices of cleanliness.⁷⁴ Health department workers and affiliated volunteers would enter the private living spaces of refugees to ensure that they were sanitary. If anything was found to be unsatisfactory, teams of workers would clean up shelter areas. The public health department paid particular attention to maintaining toilet facilities in refugee camps, mandating daily cleaning and the spreading of powdered disinfectants. They also encouraged refugees to eliminate flies and mosquitos by paying a small reward to the biggest collectors of the insects with used clothing and shoe donations. Using this method of rewarding refugees for killing pests, the temporary shelters maintained by the Tianjin Christian Relief Association collected an average of half a million insects per month.

Winter Relief.

As a northern city, one of the biggest challenges faced by the collective charity institutions in Tianjin each year was caring for the numerous refugees that came to beg during the winter months. Along with the city's native poor, winter relief required significant planning and funds along with broad institutional coordination and collaboration. The minutes of meetings to organize winter relief were often published in the *Yishibao*. These meetings demonstrate that while state institutions like the police and department of education participated, members of religious charities and leaders from the business community were equally important to the operation of this form of charity relief and that this was all openly discussed in the public eye.

For example, the city's primary institution which responded to winter relief was the #1 Poorhouse, which set up a winter temporary relief branch each year from

⁷⁴ *Tianjin jidujiao jiuji hui baogao shu* 天津基督教会报告书 [Report of the Tianjin Christian relief team], June 1933: 6.

November to March that could house up to 600 residents. This was meager compared to the overall need and size of religious operations like the China Red Cross which provided food and shelter for thousands of refugees. One of the trends that became increasingly evident in charity work after 1928 was the attempt to regulate and separate refugees. People with mental illnesses were restricted from entering winter relief stations to maintain order within the refugee shelter. Along with providing housing, the shelter provisioned food, drinks, clothing, and bedding. Although temporary, residents were given daily educational lectures and expected to complete simple jobs.⁷⁵

During an especially cold winter in 1929, increasing numbers of beggars were found frozen to death on the street. The Tianjin City Hall charged the security bureau with the responsibility of rounding up all beggars on the street and sending them to the homeless shelter within five days of capture, regardless of their age or gender, and published this order in the *YSB*.⁷⁶ In the order, there is no distinction of deserving or undeserving poor, or making useless eaters productive as we may expect in Nationalist rhetoric, the emphasis is on rescuing everyone. This article also represents another purpose served by Tianjin's major print media. Government departments would sometimes publically criticize one another and pass responsibility back and forth in the press. I will discuss this in more detail later in this chapter as we examine how refugees could at times organize their own relief associations and demand government assistance by marching on public offices.

⁷⁵ “Dongji linshi pinmin jiuji fensuo 冬季临时贫民救济分所 [The interim solutions for the Tianjin special government city's #1 poor house's winter temporary relief branch],” *SZGB* 17, (December, 1929): 42 December 26, 1929.

⁷⁶ *YSB*, February 7, 1929.

The provincial government in Hebei also organized temporary winter relief in Tianjin by organizing soup kitchens through its branch offices in the city. Although this help was welcomed, it was not received without critique. The journalist suggests that this relief work is inefficient to the detriment of the poor who must wait unnecessarily long.⁷⁷

Tianjin City Vagrant Shelter.



Figure 2.8: “Outside the Tianjin Shourongsuo.”⁷⁸

The Tianjin Vagrant Shelter was originally organized to provide occupational training to the homeless and refugees and opened at least one branch shelter. In 1928, the shelter had a combined residency of about 500 individuals, which exceeded its capacity. However, by 1928, this branch facility was being used by the police as a dumping ground for petty offenders. As the Nationalist appointed city government sought to establish its

⁷⁷ *YSB*, February 4, 1929.

⁷⁸ *BYHB*, September 31, 1931.

own authority over poverty relief institutions, one of the first actions taken by the new leadership was to discredit the former system, and in this case, the discredit was well warranted. By 1928, the shelter was in a state of near financial ruin and it was necessary to lay off many of the clerks who worked there in the process of reorganization as well as closing one of its branches. Appointed by the social bureau, Wang Huishen conducted an investigation into the previous shelter head, Liu Bingchun, who was suspected of issuing faulty expense reports during his term.⁷⁹ Not only did the process of discrediting previous operators help to legitimate the efforts of institutional consolidation, it also shifted the blame for current problems to the past. Director Wang began instituting several changes to the charity during his tenure. First, he gave notice to the police that they would have to remove criminal residents and stop using the shelter as a temporary jail. He also moved the main office to the branch office location. Another problem facing the shelter was the issue of ownership. Before 1928, the shelter belonged to a single individual, now it was incorporated and its property leases were placed under the name of the charity.

The educational programs at the city vagrant shelter emphasized the development of vocational skills necessary for simple factory work. Typical of many shelters of the time, the vagrant shelter operated its own small, light industrial plant. More surprising were the diverse government institutions that worked together in defining educational goals and providing flexible and varied opportunities for poor children and adults seeking free or low cost training. Efforts to provide these educational benefits for the city's disadvantaged connected the police, social bureau, finance bureau, education bureau, and local government representatives together in ways that few other issues could. One such

⁷⁹ "Wang Huishen's report on Liu Bingchun," *SZGB* 11, (June 1929): 83.

example is the establishment of vocational schools, *zhiye buxi xuexiao*, at shelters by the Tianjin Education Bureau which helped these institutions to work towards self-sufficiency by selling basic products. As I've mentioned previously, self-sufficiency was universally recognized as a critical necessity in charity work because of chronic lack of adequate funding. This desire for self-sufficiency reoccurs throughout documents on poor relief, making it a hallmark of charitable work during the Nanjing Decade.⁸⁰



Figure 2.9: “Little Friends of the inner city Beiping Yuyingtang.”⁸¹

Poor People’s Shelter and Workhouse.

While shelters offered training and basic subsistence, rural refugees and unemployed urban workers could find relief from the instability of the day labor markets by seeking assistance at charity workhouses set up by the Tianjin special city

⁸⁰ “The education bureau to set up vocational schools at vagrant shelters,” *SZGB* 11, (June, 1929): 124. June 7, 1929.

⁸¹ *BYHB*, April 2, 1931.

government. These institutions sought to provide administration of relief for the entire urban district of Tianjin, which after 1927 had been broken into five districts and three special zones. Many of the organizational and administrative leaders received little or no compensation for their work in helping to organize their respective factories, suggesting that such volunteer work produced its own social currency.⁸²

In this early part of the Nanjing Decade, documents outlining plans for establishing workhouses emphasized the positive benefits of labor for educating and stabilizing the poor more so than as a punitive measure. More often expressed was the value of poorhouse labor in sustaining the limited budgets of urban relief institutions.⁸³ Nevertheless, the expressed purpose of these institutions represented a departure from pre-Xinhai public values. The workhouse set up on March 14, 1929, was established “to teach beggars how to work.”⁸⁴ As Lu Hanchao has argued, this type of rationalization marked a clear departure with the past by delegitimizing begging as a recognized profession. While those who worked at the poor workhouse could expect very minimal monetary compensation, the factory provided for the basic needs of its workers distributing clothes, shoes, and socks.⁸⁵

In July 1929, a proposal to combine the #1 Poor People’s Workhouse with the vagrant shelter was put forward to the Tianjin Social Bureau. This drive towards

⁸² “Constitution of the Pinmin zhiye gongchang 贫民职业工厂 preparatory office,” *SZGB* 5, (December, 1928: item 8, 37.

⁸³ See the constitution of the poorhouse listed above.

⁸⁴ “Preparatory office of poor workhouse submitted a document to declare the location of a new plant,” *SZGB* 8, (March, 1929): 128. March 14, 1929.

⁸⁵ “The poor workhouse #1 plant submit a request to the finance bureau to purchase clothes, shoes, and socks for the poor people,” *SZGB* 11, (June, 1929): 116. June 1, 1929.

bureaucratic consolidation continued to be marked by the clear desire to create more efficient policies of philanthropic relief and was motivated by both a desire to cut administrative costs and raise more revenue for the government shelters. The language of the consolidation meeting was careful to emphasize the purpose was not merely to save money, but to protect the livelihood of the unemployed workers and pay close attention to the welfare of the city's poor. It is worth noting that the language of city administrators is both attentive and courteous, an important distinction with the sort of abusive language contained in memoranda from the central government. At the time of the considered consolidation, the Tianjin Workhouse had a monthly budget of 2500 yuan with a planned expansion that would increase their monthly expenditures to 4010 yuan. The vagrant shelter had a comparable budget and planned expansion meaning that combined, the two institutions required around 8,000 yuan per month to operate.

Rather than rely on voluntary donations, the consolidation meeting which included the director of the social bureau, financial bureau, and several shelters decided to establish a 1% supplementary property tax which would raise a minimum of 100,000 yuan per year. This fundraising plan was very successful and the required funds were raised in less than a month.⁸⁶ Although the factory represented a very popular mode of poverty relief, it rarely was able to meet financial expectations as the products it produced, such as textiles and fabrics, struggled on the open market. Thus, the factory head was not only charged with training and organizing unskilled laborers, they also

⁸⁶ "Government letter to the police station in special zone 3 and the poor work factory reporting that enough tax revenue was generated and starting August 1st the special 1% charity donation would be canceled," *SZGB* 13, (August, 1929): 93. August 3, 1929.

needed to market the factory's goods as well.⁸⁷ This move to consolidate institutions reflected a broader drive towards creating multipurpose charity institutions.

In September of 1929, the Nationalist city government moved to further consolidate its relief work by combining the vagrant shelter with the #1 Poor People's Workhouse under the leadership of Chen Baoquan (陈宝泉) which accounted for around 60-80 unemployed workers. The city poorhouse also took over operations of the #1 Vocational School (职业补习学校) by the end of 1929.⁸⁸ Although this consolidation was intended to save money and cut costs, it would be wrong to assume that this kind of measure was specifically intended to limit poverty relief. Instead, consolidations often also marked expansions in capacity. For example, the plan to reorganize #1 Poor Relief House was accompanied by a 10,000 yuan grant by the Tianjin Financial Bureau to increase productivity.⁸⁹

In a letter from the Tianjin City Hall to Chen Baoquan, the language surrounding this consolidation does emphasize the wastefulness of allowing potentially productive members of the urban society to consume rather than produce, but it also describes the poor not as lazy, but simply in need of work and better nutrition. The letter goes on to explain the work of reeducation, industrial training, and labor as positive forms of social relief rather than negative forms of welfare dependence. Of course, the ambitions of social planners often far exceeded the constraints of reality. To fund the newly organized

⁸⁷ "Letter from the Financial Bureau to the Social Bureau: The poor people's #1 factory should receive the operation budget for three months in advance," *SZGB* 11, September 14, 1929, 116.

⁸⁸ "The #1 poorhouse to take over #1 city vocational school," *SZGB* 16, (November, 1929): 131. November 7, 1929.

⁸⁹ "Government document to Chen Baoquan," *SZGB* 14, (September, 1929): 131. September 21, 1929.

factory and training center, the #1 Poor Relief House proposed an estimated required budget of approximately 300,000 yuan which they hoped to collect from the Beggars Fund (乞丐捐). In fact, they were only able to raise 9,300 yuan in four months. With such a big gap, organizers sought to do the best with what they had. Not only was the factory unable to purchase enough machinery for all the potential workers, the few looms that were purchased could hardly fit in the available facility space. In frustration, social bureau director Lu explained:

If we can make everybody work, the productivity will definitely increase significantly. Just because we cannot expand our budget, we have people who have enough strength but cannot work. It's kind of pitiful; what a waste. So I think we should combine this factory with the poor people's shelter and the reeducation place because they are similar organizations and they were all established by the government so combining them seems to be possible. After we combine them, we can avoid a lot of waste and save money and also consolidate our management. Not to mention the money we save can be used to increase our funding so it's like hitting two birds with one stone. In the capital city, and Hangzhou poor factories, each received a city grant of more than 10,000. I completely understand that we have a very tight budget in our city. But I still believe that after we combine these two places, the funding for the new organization should not be less than 10k. Later we can purchase more materials, more equipment, to make our productivity meet the market's need. Otherwise, the person who manages the organization will have a hard time, just like a very capable housewife can't make a good dinner because she doesn't have enough rice.⁹⁰

The emphasis here is not on the inadequate qualities of poor labor, but on the chronic lack of funding. The case is further argued that such an institution would quickly become self-sufficient. Self-sufficiency was less an abstract modern ethic than a practical necessity. Mr. Lu expresses strong conviction that if jobs were available, the poor in the city would be more than willing to accept training and work. He draws greater attention

⁹⁰ "Government document to Chen Baoquan," SZGB 14, (September, 1929): 131. September 21, 1929.

to the project of consolidation than appealing for funding from the city government in order to sell his plan to city administrators, but it is clear that he sees labor as offering great promise towards social relief, “I sincerely ask the government to think about these suggestions... that we can really give the jobless work and change consumption to production in order to benefit several hundred thousand people in our city in the future.”⁹¹ That this request was approved by the Tianjin Financial Bureau the same day it was requested, demonstrates the appeal of such an argument.⁹²

The consolidated poorhouse fell under the management of the city government with the president of the organization appointed directly by the city mayor. The president then appointed one director and one vice-director. Along with a central planning department, the poorhouse also had a department for recruitment, *pinmin shourongbu*, and a department of education and work, *buxi jiaoyu bu*. Two inventory clerks managed purchasing and distribution, and factory operations. The city poorhouse sought staff with extensive experience in industry and enthusiastic about philanthropy. The leadership of the factory also established an honorary committee that focused on providing suggestions to improve the overall successful operation of the charity.⁹³ A report from the Tianjin City Hall conveyed the expressed purpose of the new poorhouse which was to reeducate the lazy wandering behaviors of vagrants and help them to form good habits, become self-reliant, and develop their individual morality.

⁹¹ “Government document to Chen Baoquan,” *SZGB* 14, (September, 1929): 131. September 21, 1929.

⁹² “Social bureau approves merger,” *SZGB* 14, (September, 1929): 188. September 21, 1929.

⁹³ “Tianjin special government #1 poor house memorandum,” *SZGB* 17, (December, 1929): point 5, 30. December 23, 1929.

As mentioned above, the consolidation of the poorhouse actually represented a significant expansion. Whereas previously the #1 Poor Factory focused on teaching how to knit towels, weave, and make socks, the new factory began teaching a wider range of manufacturing skills. Since the number of able-bodied laborers almost always outnumbered the available jobs at the poorhouse factory, they also worked with the city labor department to find suitable temporary work for the residents. Working hours for the factory complied with national labor laws ensuring an eight-hour work day and rest on Sundays. In addition, Nanjing Decade relief institutions included detailed regulations regarding worker's personal habits related to hygiene.

Workers at the poorhouse factory were required to take a shower once per week, cut their hair every two weeks, air out bedding in the sun four times per week, open windows daily in their dormitory, fold their clothes and quilts, clean their dormitory, wash their face and brush their teeth.⁹⁴ In this way, poorhouse administrators sought to reduce the spread of disease and also create a clean and disciplined work environment. Even the disabled and elderly were assigned simple jobs to prevent them from wandering or begging.⁹⁵ Worker recreational time was also regulated with smoking, drinking, gambling, and handling dangerous materials (firearms or anything that might cause a fire) all forbidden. The poorhouse factory followed a system of rewards and punishments to increase labor efficiency and productivity based on production quotas and quality standards.⁹⁶

⁹⁴ "The regulations for managing workers at the Tianjin city's #1 poor house's workshop," *SZGB* 19, (February, 1930): point 12, 62. February 11, 1930.

⁹⁵ "Tianjin special government #1 poorhouse memorandum." *SZGB* 17, (December, 1929): point 7, 30. December 23, 1929.

The vocational school came under the management of the city's department of education. What is important here is that the new vocational school focused on working with younger children who could not work full time according to the labor laws published by the central government that same year.⁹⁷ The educational department also ensured that vocational training complied with national standards of elementary education. Children spent half of their day attending school and the other half working.

After graduating from the half-day school, the poorhouse would attempt to place the students in positions of permanent employment and support graduates with letters of recommendation. Especially good students were chosen for job openings at the shelter. Along with vocational education, the staff at the poorhouse were required to provide daily lectures on topics intended to improve the behavior of the vagrants sheltered there.⁹⁸ The poorhouse also helped to arrange for the transportation of refugees and organized temporary relief programs during the winter. The health clinic at the poorhouse worked closely with the city hygiene bureau reporting any illnesses infecting the residents.

Funding for the poorhouse was primarily provided by the city government. However, to meet unexpected or temporary relief needs, the shelter continued to rely on private donations. The use of these discretionary funds required the prior approval of the city government which encouraged using other ways to provide relief especially during the colder months. For example, in November of 1929 the Tianjin Special Government

⁹⁶ "General regulations of reward and punishment for the workers at the Tianjin special city #1 poor house," *SZGB* 21, (April, 1930): 25. April 14, 1930. Contains a very detailed breakdown on this rewards and punishment system.

⁹⁷ "Tianjin special government #1 poorhouse memorandum," *SZGB* 17, (December, 1929): point 6, 30. December 23, 1929.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, point 9.

donated seventy sets of government stock old army uniforms and leather jackets rather than money.⁹⁹ The newly organized poorhouse also interacted with other government agencies to find opportunities to utilize the labor power of the homeless. Each day, the bureau of social work (工务局) brought forty laborers from the poorhouse to work on their projects such as rebuilding roads. This relationship with the social bureau helped to alleviate some expenses needed to care for the homeless sheltered at the city poorhouse by providing laborers with one meal per day and five cents salary.

The arrangement had been organized originally by the head of the social bureau, Xue Malie (薛马烈), and the vagrant shelter. Although the city poorhouse was occupied by significantly more than the forty workers required, Mr. Xue found many of the potential workers, “kind of slow and lazy.”¹⁰⁰ However, later it became clear that he was not necessarily blaming the poor suggesting that this is “probably because they barely get enough to eat.”¹⁰¹

In the months following the July 7th 1937 Marco Polo Bridge Incident, war refugees began streaming into Tianjin, which itself was occupied by the Japanese in all areas except the foreign concessions by July 31st. Although in a stage of immense government transition, the Jiujiyuan provided continuous coordination of both public and private charity organizations. In August, working with all charity organizations

⁹⁹ “Tianjin special government donates to the poorhouse,” *SZGB* 16, (November, 1929): 94. November 15, 1929.

¹⁰⁰ “Document from the Finance Bureau and city poor house regarding the report from the social work bureau,” *SZGB* 16, (November, 1929): 87. November 13, 1929.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

functioning in the city, the Jiujiyuan led the construction of temporary shelters to house refugees.¹⁰²

Provincial Level Disaster Relief Work.

During the Nanjing Decade, Tianjin's status as a provincial city and a national city was not always quite clear. Even when the city was officially subject to the Hebei Provincial Government, it took leadership in helping to organize and provide relief throughout the Northeast China region.¹⁰³ Its central role was defined in part by its attractiveness to refugees throughout the region. In response, several organizations like the Huabei Flood Relief Organization were established to provide a liaison between the Tianjin police who often first encountered refugees, and other agencies which could provide them with aid. For example, during a flood in Jinghai (静海) in late September, 1929, the police department coordinated with this organization to provide refugees with transportation to the east of the city.¹⁰⁴

Many of the individual charity entertainment events active in Tianjin sought to benefit causes across Northwest China. As a largely immigrant city, Tianjin residents possessed far reaching ties to diverse native places. That the city served a leading role in many regional disaster relief operations could at times place the objectives of the city government at odds with local concerns. The Huabei Provincial Government could force Tianjin to redirect charity funds away from city programs to respond to emergency relief.

¹⁰² TMA, J0001-3-000277-008, August 1937.

¹⁰³ "Social bureau reports outline of disaster relief organizations including Huabei flood relief organizations," *SZGB* 14, (September, 1929): 195. September 24, 1929.

¹⁰⁴ "The police station reports on refugees from Jinghai," *SZGB* 14, (September, 1929): 210. September 29, 1929.

This added to the instability of government charity institutions which often found themselves without funding. For example, after the Tianjin City Poorhouse took over operation of the vagrant reeducation shelter; taxes which were previously used to fund the vagrant shelter were diverted to fund the Hebei Disaster Relief Committee.¹⁰⁵ These taxes were gathered exclusively from Tianjin businesses, not providence wide. Since the operational budget for the consolidated Tianjin Poorhouse had been covered by the city financial bureau, the funding previously allocated to the vagrant shelter had been diverted to winter temporary relief for each of Tianjin's townships. Because this money was used to relieve Northwest refugees, in the winter months even more refugees would flock to the city from the surrounding countryside.

However, city government officials were not without means to frustrate and delay provincial objectives. Instructed by Hebei to provide relief for villages struck by famine, the city government formed a committee of all relevant departments to explain to the provincial government that they had no money to conduct the ordered relief. The correspondence from Tianjin concluded with a request for instructions on how to deal with this lack of funding. In response, Hebei sent a vaguely worded reply with instructions on how much money to give each family according to their level of poverty and instruct that village heads be excluded from distributing these funds to avoid corruption. It is probably safe to speculate that the city government chose to publish this correspondence to absolve its responsibility and reveal the unreasonable request made by the provincial government.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵ "The Tianjin poor house approve a letter from the disaster relief committee to the Hebei province government which requests the taxes originally allocated for the Tianjin vagrant reeducation shelter to be directed to the disaster relief committee," *SZGB* 19, (February, 1930): 55. February 15, 1930.

Unlikely Benefactors: Gendered Charity and the Modern Woman Tianjin Jiliangsuo.

The Tianjin merchants established the city's prostitute rescue institution, *jiliangsuo*, in the late Qing Dynasty without state sponsorship. However, after the Xinhai Revolution, the institution received funding from the board of trustees appointed by the Tianjin county government. This funding covered the bare essentials and amounted to about 300 yuan each month. Unlike the women's shelter that would be organized under the Nationalist government, the *jiliangsuo* also received a bride price that was paid by a husband's family when a resident was married off. Local gentry were appointed to monitor the operation of the women's shelter, but there was still a potential for significant corruption.

By 1929, the Tianjin *Jiliangsuo* had largely fallen into disrepair and offered exploited women very little protection. The police, under the direction of a retired precinct chief, listed under the surname Zang, placed pressure on the families of prostitutes to take them back and pay any fines associated with their behavior. The 30 or so women housed there were all long-time residents. The Guomindang government appointed a new director to the *jiliangsuo* who quickly set about outlining the improvements he hoped to bring to the institution and published the list he sent to the Tianjin county commissioner in the *YSB*.¹⁰⁷ His report focused on bringing educational reforms to give the residents a basic elementary education and practice sewing. Over half the women were being prepared to become future brides. This meant that the women's

¹⁰⁶ *YSB*, February 24, 1929.

¹⁰⁷ *YSB*, February 15, 1929.

education was more focused on practical home-making skills rather than trade skills that would equip the women to make an independent living.

As the previous chapter discussed, Tianjin was home to several significant women's shelters including the Confucian Benevolence Hall, *Guangrentang*. By the Nanjing Decade, China's urban centers began to see significant growth in secular institutions for assisting women and their young children. In Tianjin, funding for the women's shelter was secured through 10% of taxes collected on *yuehu*. Yuehu referred to a wide range of women's entertainment work such as prostitution, street performers, and actresses. The shelter was established behind Li's Warehouse, *ligongsi* (李公祠) in an old style, one floor, square compound. It previously belonged to bureaucrat Zhang Tiaochen (张调辰) who donated it to the women's association.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁸ "Tianjinshi funü jiujiyuan zhuanye 天津市妇女救济院专业 [Tianjin Women's shelter vocations]," *BYHB*, September 26, 1929. Special page for the women refugee institution of Tientsin.



Figure 2.10: “Miss L. Y. Liu, a member of the committee of the Tientsin Women’s Association; and J. J. Chang (Zhang Renrui), Head of the Institution; taken with two inmates (Right).” ¹⁰⁹

The Tianjin Women’s Shelter was established after Mrs. Zhang Renrui (张人瑞), the head of the Tianjin Women’s Association, *funü xuehui*, found that many women were not being helped under the current system. Mrs. Zhang was originally from Hubei Province and was described in an article from the *Beiyang Huabao* as both kind and competent. She herself had suffered family-related violence and could relate her own suffering to the women in her care.¹¹⁰ When writing her appeal to the Tianjin Financial Bureau to secure funding to establish this shelter, she described these women as desperate and displaced, again emphasizing their dangerous situation of being unsettled. “We have

¹⁰⁹ *BYHB*, September 9, 1929.

¹¹⁰ “Tianjinshi funü jiujiyuan zhuanke 天津市妇女救济院专业 [Tianjin Women’s shelter vocations],” *BYHB*, September 26, 1929. Special page for the women refugee institution of Tientsin.

to have complete facilities, because usually when women just escape, late at night, they have very thin poor quality clothing, just enough to cover their bodies, and they have nothing with them.”¹¹¹ This description further emphasized their physical danger, while clearly emphasizing their sexual vulnerability as half-clad women in Tianjin’s dark city streets. Mrs. Zhang also made a higher appeal to Nationalist modern values of gender equality, arguing that, “Based on the party internal policy #12, which states in law, economy, education, and society, women and men are equal and to promote the development of women’s rights, nüquan, the shelter must be created.”¹¹² How did the creation of a women’s shelter help to promote equal rights for men and women and what did this actually look like in practice? The primary objective of the new women’s shelter was not merely to provide for the safety of vulnerable and displaced women in guarding their chastity as they awaited new marriage proposals as previous women’s shelters had done.

The emphasis of this new institution was to reeducate women to be independent by equipping them with basic industrial skills which would permit them to leave the shelter and make a living on their own, once again stressing the core value of self-sufficiency. For example, two famous barbers from Majiakou volunteered to teach women how to cut hair several times a week in the mornings.¹¹³

¹¹¹ Zhang Renrui, “Request to set up a poor house and use ten percent donated income from *yuehu*,” *SZGB* 7, (February, 1929): 49.

¹¹² *Ibid.*

¹¹³ “Tianjinshi funü jiujiyuan zhuanYe 天津市妇女救济院专业 [Tianjin Women’s shelter vocations],” *BYHB*, September 26, 1929. Special page for the women refugee institution of Tientsin.

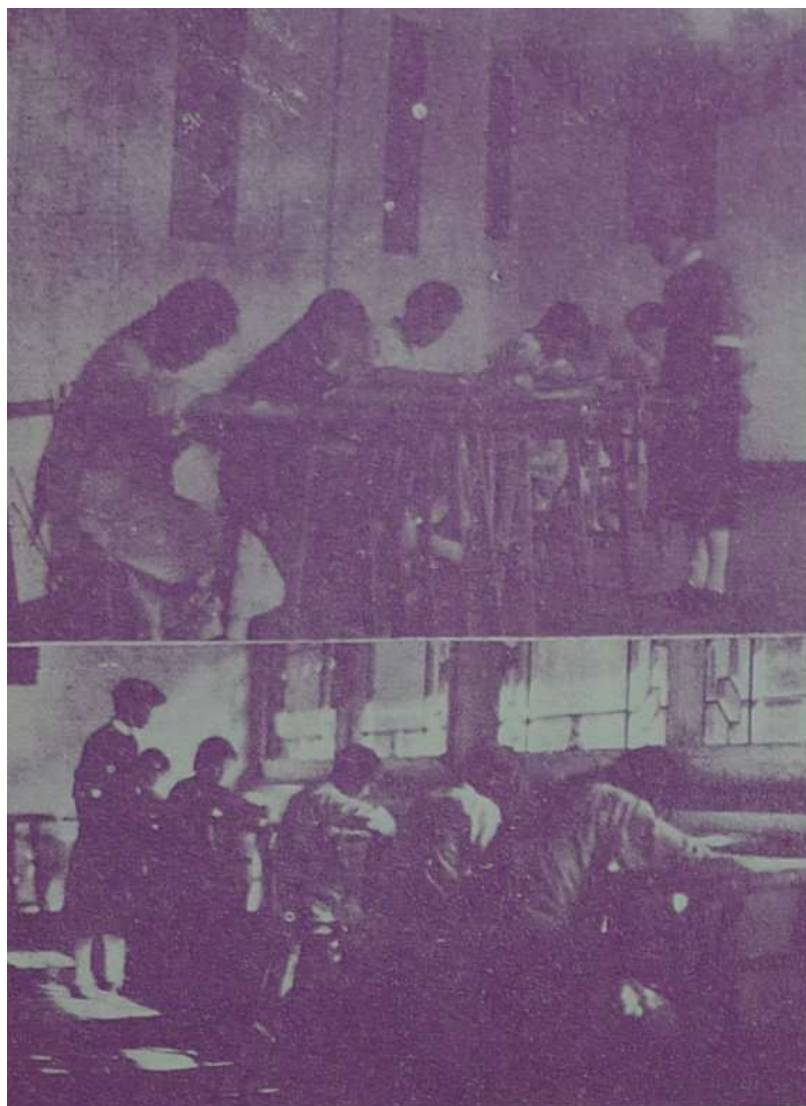


Figure 2.11: “The Embroidery Class.”¹¹⁴

In her initial request, Mrs. Zhang did not mention the role of arranging weddings, so fundamental to many contemporary institutions, for relieving poor women (although the institution would later take on this role). Her requests were approved and the financial bureau initially committed 1000 yuan as a starting budget with a 400 yuan monthly operating budget.¹¹⁵ The women’s shelter was organized in the western wing of

¹¹⁴ *BYHB*, September 9, 1929.

the Tianjin Women's Association with a workshop and classrooms for career education. To improve the health of residents, the shelter also had its own clinic and outdoor exercise area. Women were provided daily food, clothing, and bedding. Although not emphasized, the Tianjin Women Shelter's constitution included some punitive measures. A secure "meditation room" for introspection, *fanxing*, kept women who "refused to change from their old life" from leaving. The "old life" often referred to prostitution or opium smoking.

However, it is important to note that the founding regulations of the shelter very clearly argue against forcibly interning women. Each woman who chose to come to the shelter needed to record why they came and demonstrate their willingness to enter.¹¹⁶ Another way the women's shelter functioned to protect women was to provide them a safe place as they sought divorce. These women were not necessarily poor but could be famous actresses or high-level prostitutes. The women's shelter quickly caught the attention of the media after it was established.¹¹⁷ Seen as one of the most successful examples of social work in Tianjin under Nationalist administration, an article in the *Beiyang Huabao* emphasized its work, "helping poor women to redress injustice and provide reeducation."¹¹⁸ However, unlike the very positive language produced in the

¹¹⁵ "Approved budget for the Women's Shelter," *SZGB* 8, (March, 1929): 190. Beginning of March, 1929. This approved budget was significantly less than Zhang's initial request of 1500 yuan starting budget and 800 yuan monthly operating expense.

¹¹⁶ "Tianjin special government women's shelter regulations for exit and admittance," *SZGB* 17, (December, 1929): 35. December 23, 1929.

¹¹⁷ In depth articles on the shelter appear in all of the major Tianjin newspapers.

¹¹⁸ "Tianjinshi funü jiujiyuan zhuanke 天津市妇女救济院专业 [Tianjin Women's shelter vocations]," *BYHB*, September 26, 1929. Special page for the women refugee institution of Tientsin.

government documents discussing the shelter, the popular news also describes their work as “washing away society’s old filth,” (涤社会之旧污).¹¹⁹



Figure 2.12: “Hsien Mu-Tan, Formerly an actress, gained popularity through a lawsuit, now an inmate of the institution.”¹²⁰

Where articles in the *Beiyang Huabao* provided positive descriptions of this women’s charity and generally encouraged financial support, the Tianjin Women’s Association turned to the *Yishibao* and *Dagongbao* when it felt that city hall was being unresponsive to its needs. In a letter to the *Yishibao* in February 1929, a member of the women’s association complained that while the city had provided an initial budget, they failed to provide them with a suitable location. “So far we have been temporarily using

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ *Beiyang Huabao*, September 9, 1929.

the women's training school but the school building is very limited and with so many women coming in we don't have enough room. Not to mention school will be starting again soon and then we will have no room at all. So please approve our location request!"¹²¹ In this way, the women's association was able to effectively leverage public pressure through the newspaper to encourage the city government to respond in a timely manner. That the shelter was quickly settled at a new location may point to the effectiveness of this kind of strategy.

Although a secular institution, its aims were contextualized in a Buddhist framework, "the organization itself was where Buddha's light shined into the women's sea of bitterness."¹²² What made the Tianjin Women's Shelter so successful in the eyes of observers? One major emphasis was on the level of order and individual self-motivation the institution seemed to effectively cultivate in its residents: "Although there was no teacher to keep an eye on them at that time, but everything was well organized. Everyone could focus on their own study. From that we can tell that they were taught very well."¹²³ The shelter also cultivated extremely high-levels of cleanliness (often compared with martial excellence), focus, and inner peace. The article describes the women who volunteered at the shelter as "deserving of respect." To contemporary observers, the women's shelter was a significant step forward from the *jiliangsuo* (济良所) in the past, which provided asylum for women and marriage prospects but no training for self-support.

¹²¹ *YSB*, February 3, 1929.

¹²² "Tianjinshi funü jiujiyuan zhuanke 天津市妇女救济院专业 [Tianjin Women's shelter vocations]," *BYHB*, September 26, 1929. Special page for the women refugee institution of Tientsin.

¹²³ *Ibid.*

When Mrs. Zhang was appointed supervisor of the new shelter, she targeted aid to abandoned women, abused female servants, child brides, *tongyangxi*, and women who no longer desired to be prostitutes. Although the primary aim of the shelter was to train and equip women for study and successfully integrate them into the city's labor force, the shelter would also help to arrange marriages. When the new facilities were completed at Tianwei Road in the Xiyaowa District, it had two large courtyards. The girls' dormitories were located on the east side and reception desk, offices, and reception rooms located on the west. The new complex was better secured and equipped with an isolated courtyard for women still struggling to escape their old life and family abuse. Although this area clearly served some level of punitive measure, its primary purpose was to protect women from abusive husbands and families or the potential violent connections of ex-prostitutes.

That the area was secured less to keep intransigent women from leaving than to keep dangerous individuals out, is a subtle but important distinction.¹²⁴ The problem faced by many prostitutes who came to the shelter was an addiction to opium that was used by brothel owners to keep women from leaving or accumulating their own savings. Sadly, this kind of exploitation extended to the legal system as well. Brothel owners often filed lawsuits against women who could be held accountable for debts incurred while working for the brothel. Since these legal cases were ongoing, the security bureau effectively imprisoned these women in the shelter.¹²⁵ Outside the specific case of prostitutes, for the most part, forcibly interning women in the shelter was not necessary with so many other women wanting to gain access, "troublemakers" were simply kicked

¹²⁴ In 1935, from January 15 to January 20, the Tianjin *Yishibao* ran a five-day article chronicling the lives of women at the poorhouse, describing their daily work and study.

¹²⁵ *YSB*, March 25, 1929.

out.¹²⁶ However, significant leeway was encouraged regarding prostitutes, courtesans, and maids who were recognized as having to undergo the most intensive reeducation. The initial success of the women's shelter led the city government to approve Mrs. Zhang's request to further expand the women's shelter in July.

Her recommendation came after taking a trip south along the Grand Canal, examining poverty relief institutions along the way. She found that the Nanjing city government restructured and expanded the city orphanage, *yuyingtang*, and combined them with two types of women's shelters the *jiliangsuo* and *qingjietang*. It is worth pausing here and mentioning the particularities of these two types of women's shelter. The *jiliangsuo* was a shelter set up to specifically help out ex-prostitutes. It was originally established by an American missionary in 1901 in Shanghai and was then duplicated all over the country and operated by the local police starting in 1906.¹²⁷

These shelters, along with providing a safe haven for women, provided match making services. The *qingjietang* helped both young widows who could not live by themselves and abandoned elderly women. It also provided a place for these women and their children to live. However, it kept women isolated, allowing them to leave the compound only during the Tomb Sweeping Festival to clean their husband's graves. This type of shelter highlights the stark contrast between late Qing and Republican poorhouses. The restructured Nanjing Women's Shelter and Orphanage was called the *funǐyuan*. They added a reformatory, *ganhuasuo*, a place to gather all of the young

¹²⁶ "Tianjin special government women's shelter exit and admittance regulations," *SZGB* 17, (December, 1929): point 9, 35. December 23, 1929.

¹²⁷ It's important to note here how active the Chinese police were in operating institutions for the public welfare. The extent and responsibilities of urban police expanded drastically under the guidance of Yuan Shikai in the North and set an enduring pattern for police public relations in the first half of the twentieth century.

thieves and vagrants to be trained and reeducated. This important development, reveals how the process of consolidation began to lump non-criminal poor with more hardened social delinquents. Mrs. Zhang also traveled to Hangzhou where the city poorhouse, *jiujiyuan*, was also going through the process of restructuring consolidation by bringing together many disconnected charities. Surprisingly, the Hangzhou compound was much bigger than those in Tianjin or Nanjing. It included six organizations; a birthing center, an old age home, a shelter for the disabled, *canfeisuo*, a free hospital, an orphanage, and a women's shelter.

The yearly operating budget for the Hangzhou Poorhouse, 160,000 yuan, far exceeded the combined Tianjin operating budget of 100,000 especially when considering how much larger Tianjin actually was at the time. After visiting Nanjing and Hangzhou, Mrs. Zhang recommended that the new consolidated Tianjin Poorhouse should accept anyone facing a difficult life and try to help as many people as possible regardless of age or situation. This suggests that rather than searching for ways to identify and squeeze the “undeserving poor” out of state institutions, philanthropists during the Nanjing Decade sought to expand those definitions. Returning to Tianjin, Mrs. Zhang lamented the problems faced by the Tianjin Women's Shelter. The shelter housed approximately 30 women and had to turn many away because of a lack of space and a limited budget. This lack of funds also made it difficult to give the women individualized educations, as did their diversity in age and experience. Women in the shelter ranged from age five to age forty.

Their backgrounds were also diverse. Some came from “good families” while others came from brothels. Some of them were never married, while others were

widows. Mrs. Zhang described many of the women in her care as unique individuals and concluded her request quite personally:

So I couldn't sleep at night because of all those difficulties, that's why I submit this request. I submit this request so that we can use the examples of Hangzhou and Nanjing to restructure the women's charities in our city and help more women in our city and give them individualized education.¹²⁸

In November, the finance bureau approved additional funding to expand the shelter to a doubled capacity of 60 residents with still more women waiting to gain residence at the facilities located at *Hebei Xiyaowa* (河北西窑洼).¹²⁹ The expansion showed both the popularity of this institution and the continued strain on the city budget to meet the needs of the urban poor. An amendment to the general shelter constitution organized seven categories for permitting women to become residents.

They include: (1) a prostitute who is oppressed and chose to leave her brothel, (2) women who were abandoned and have nowhere to go, (3) a maid, mistress, child bride, or concubine who is oppressed and wants to escape, (4) women who were tricked and sold, (5) vagrant women who are poor with no place to go, (6) those who were abused by family members or husbands, and (7) those who were trapped by the leader of circus or street performers.¹³⁰ While many of these women were brought to the shelter by the police, some made their way directly to seek aid and were accepted. Along with

¹²⁸ "Request from the women's shelter and the social and public security bureaus to close all of the women's charities, in order to expand. Zhang Renrui, the head of the women's shelter submits a request to restructure all the city's female charity organizations in order to expand the women's shelter and help relieve those women living a difficult life," *SZGB* 12, (July, 1929): 88. July 4, 1929.

¹²⁹ "Tianjin special government women's shelter organizational constitution," *SZGB* 17, (December, 1929): point 3, 33. December 23, 1929.

¹³⁰ "Tianjin special government women's shelter exit and admittance regulations," *SZGB* 17, (December, 1929): point 3, 35. December 23, 1929.

weaving, knitting, and sock making, the education department also set up cooking classes for women.¹³¹ One of the reasons the women's shelter did so well was that its income was more reliable and residency was limited.¹³²

Revenue generated from the women's labor was split between a 40% bonus paid to the women and 60% to buy new raw materials. The women who entered or left the shelter were carefully documented and each woman had her food, drink, clothes, quilted shoes, socks, books and other living essentials provided by the shelter.¹³³ The shelter also had its own health clinic for treating illness. Although the shelter remained rather small throughout its existence, its social benefits also extended into the community. Poor families from the surrounding area sent their young daughters to primary school and vocational classes operated by the shelter. This represents a significant departure from the closed, isolated nature of the Confucian shelters of the past. It also demonstrates that the women who resided in the shelter were not terribly stigmatized as dangerous or diseased.¹³⁴

¹³¹Ibid., point 7.

¹³²Ibid., point 9.

¹³³Ibid., point 3.

¹³⁴ "Tianjinshi funü jiujiyuan zhuanke 天津市妇女救济院专业 [Tianjin Women's shelter vocations]," *BYHB*, September 26, 1929. Special page for the women refugee institution of Tientsin.

Daily Schedule for the Tianjin Women's Shelter		
	<i>Summer/Autumn</i>	<i>Spring/Winter</i>
Wake Up	5:00 AM	7:00 AM
Breakfast	6:00 AM	8:00 AM
Morning Work Hours	7:00-11:00 AM	9:00-12:00PM
Lunch	12:00 PM	12:30 PM
Afternoon Work Hours	2:00-5:30 PM	1:00-4:30 PM
Dinner	6:00 PM	5:00 PM
Self-Study Time	8:00-9:00 PM	8:00-9:00 PM
Go to Bed	9:00 PM	10:00 PM

Table 2.1: Tianjin Women’s Shelter.¹³⁵

From the chart above, it is clear that women at the shelter had little time to be idle. There were also several regulations that were designed to encourage women to be more productive. During sleeping hours speaking was strictly forbidden and each resident was monitored for their work attendance and productivity, cleanliness, and personality.¹³⁶



Figure 2.13: “The Dormitory.”¹³⁷

¹³⁵ SZGB 17, (December, 1929): point 8, 35. December 23, 1929.

¹³⁶ “Tianjin special government women’s shelter special benefits for resident women,” SZGB 17, (December, 1929): point 8, 35. December 23, 1929.

¹³⁷ BYHB, September 9, 1929.

In January 1935 the *Yishibao* ran a five-day article describing several changes in the life of women at this shelter. After a woman seeking shelter registered, she would receive new clothes, bedding, and food. In the summer, they were provided with two sets of white pants and shirts. They were also given two sets of winter clothes each year, which included a purple sweater and a long blue coat. After settling in, women would be assigned to one of three class levels. Resembling the first established institution, each class focused on developing vocational skills; they also sought to help women achieve a broader basic primary education that was equivalent with a normal education. Since many of the women had little or no primary school instruction, they were further separated by age. Literacy provided the most important gauge of educational assessment. The textbooks used by the residents were similar to those used in public schools. As benevolent benefactor, the city-run shelter sought to provide all of the basic elements needed for women to become good productive citizens in Nationalist China.

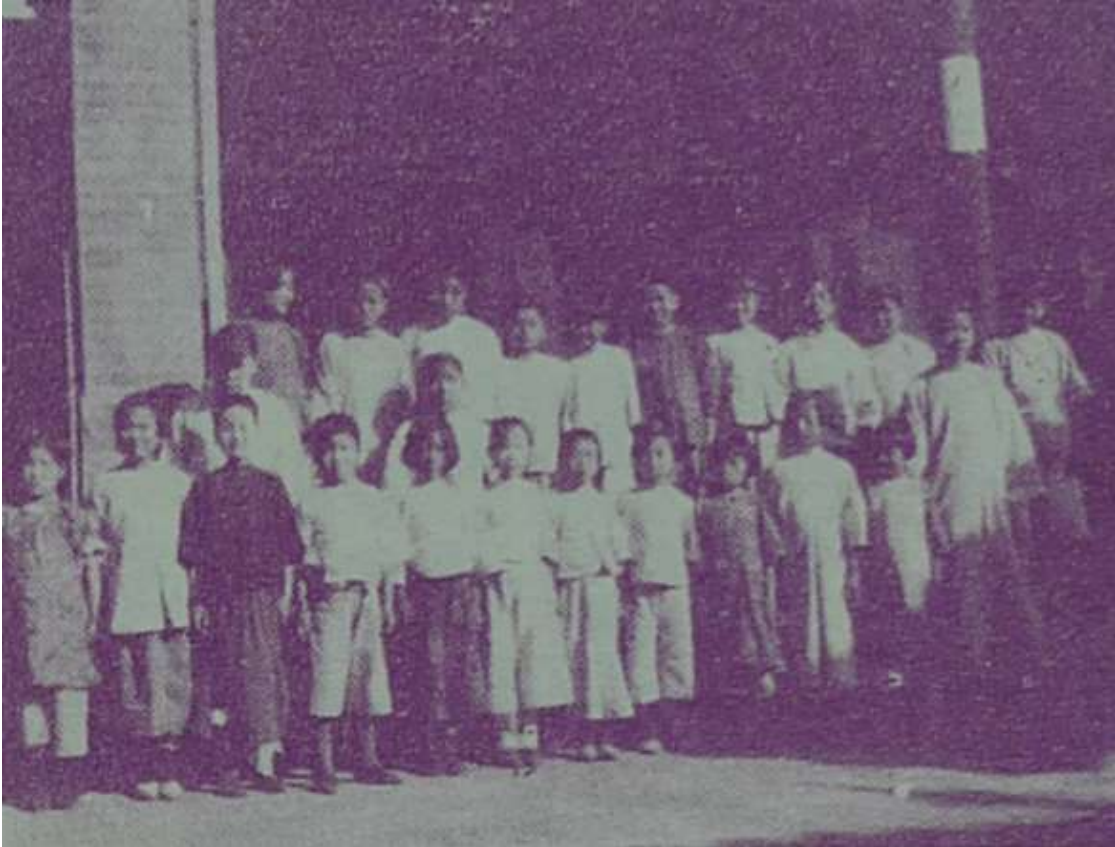


Figure 2.14: “A group of young girls studying in the Institution.” ¹³⁸

The women’s shelter workshop continued to teach women skills in sewing and embroidery; however, hair cutting had been replaced with the making of matchboxes. Most of the older students could already do both sewing and embroidery. Making paper matchboxes was created especially for the younger girls. Each woman was also responsible for washing their own clothes and quilts and the older students helped to take care of the younger. The reporter was impressed by two very young students, one six the other eight, at the shelter and described them as lovely, common kids. When the author asked if they missed their mother, he explained, “they just giggled; a picture of simple innocence.”

¹³⁸ *BYHB*, September 9, 1929.

However, when the teacher pulled the six-year-old child over and lifted up her clothes, her small body was covered with scars. This young girl had escaped to the women's shelter from her abusive step-mother and was now thriving under the state's care. In this example of state charity, effectiveness was measured not only in productive self-sufficiency, but in the protection of innocence and well-being of normal, relatable children. While this picture of benevolence could be easily dismissed as superficial propaganda, in fact, it presents something much more complex. As I've previously demonstrated, the *Yishibao* was able to operate under the Guomindang with relative freedom as a foreign-backed newspaper with Chinese staff that did not hesitate to reveal government iniquity. What's more, as a publication largely consumed by an educated readership who often participated in acts of charitable giving, this extensive serial article was certainly designed to play up the sympathies of subscribers. Since resources for charitable giving were so limited, showcasing this particular charity in a newspaper specifically dedicated to promoting social welfare so positively, we can begin to have a sense of the range of ethical values that motivated charitable giving during the Nanjing Decade and not merely how the state hoped to represent itself.

In the main room of the compound, many girls worked at making matchboxes. The oldest girls were 12 or 13 years old. The reporter described everyone as very lively; completely unaware that they should be suffering from loneliness, abandoned and without their parents. During a period when China faced endless accounts of suffering and tragedy, the smiling faces of young, orphaned children was a powerful image of state-run institutional legitimacy. The girls were very skilled and made the boxes quickly, counts ranging from 200 to 400. The job was provided by the Danhua Match Company

and the girls made a piece rate of 90 cents for every ten thousand matchboxes. Although they could only make a tiny amount of money from their labor, it was enough to encourage them to be excited about working. Even when the teacher was elsewhere, factory work proceeded very orderly and everyone possessed great self-discipline.

The article also highlights elements of self-organized labor representation. From their own ranks, they nominated two monitors who acted as their leaders. Rather than emphasize the penal aspects of confinement or the criminality of the women sheltered, this article describes the residents as innocent, industrious, and obedient youths who, although pitiable and abandoned, have found meaning through labor and community. As discussed earlier, women who were accepted into the shelter were not allowed to enter and leave freely; they needed permission from the dean to leave. Even near the end of the Nanjing Decade, these restrictions on movement were framed in a way that emphasized the protective role of the shelter rather than to incarcerate dangerous women to keep them from damaging society. The potentially violent or criminal connections of some women led the shelter to request a permanent police presence to ensure the safety of the occupants. Although this request was denied, the police maintained a close relationship with the shelter with special instructions to respond to any disturbances quickly.¹³⁹ Family members were permitted to visit twice a week, after prior approval, on Wednesdays and Sundays from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. If the visit was related to marriage, it followed a strict procedure. It began with the man first submitting an

¹³⁹ “The Women’s shelter requests police station to send officers to permanently protect it,” *SZGB* 12, (July, 1929): 111. July 12, 1929. This presents another important connection between the urban police force and institutions of philanthropy.

application to the shelter, after which the staff would begin an investigation about his family and background.

Background checks guaranteed that potential husbands had no other wives or mistresses and that they were financially stable. If the man was approved, he would be permitted to exchange information with available women at the shelter. If the woman agreed and the shelter's leaders were confident that the man was reliable, they would determine a day to let the potential suitor and resident to sit down and talk and only then could they discuss engagement and marriage. If the face-to-face meeting didn't go well, it would just stop there. After both parties and all requirements were satisfied, both families were required to sign a written contract. By acting in the role of matchmaker, the women's shelter preserved the position of the local government as a paternal benefactor. While finding a husband was an important and accepted way for a shelter resident to leave, it was not the only way.

Any woman who found a job capable of providing a living wage was also permitted to leave.¹⁴⁰ While these women might be viewed as weak and exploited by today's standards, their position within the women's shelter can also be interpreted as empowering; giving them a voice in selecting a marriage partner, the skills to reach a basic level of self-sufficiency, and providing a safe haven from potential exploiters. Although the space at the Tianjin Women's Shelter remained limited throughout its existence, their budget was always guaranteed. In 1936, the shelter lost its status as an independent charity and became part of the Tianjin City Shelter, *Tianjinshi Jiujiyuan*.

¹⁴⁰ "Tianjin special government women's shelter special benefits for resident women," *SZGB* 17, (December, 1929): point 8, 35. December 23, 1929.

One of the striking features about the Tianjin Women's Shelter was the revenue used to support its operation. Mrs. Zhang had specifically requested that the funds be drawn from taxes collected on yuehu. As mentioned previously, yuehu was a term often associated with prostitution and other forms of female entertainment. Although this kind of policy could be found in many cities around China it was often strenuously contested by those who sought to eradicate prostitution all together. This debate was often manifest in the form of conflicting laws passed by the social bureau. However, Mrs. Zhang's proposal was accepted without reservation, merely two years later the bureau also passed a law banning smoking, gambling and prostitution in #3 Special Zone in the fall of 1929.¹⁴¹

Along with the controversy regarding its funding, for some social commentators, the work of the shelter was just too insignificant when compared with the “overwhelming darkness” of the prostitution industry in Tianjin. While some women were able to escape prostitution through the women's shelter and the women's association, the majority of the most exploited and abused women still had little access to escape. “Previously there was a prostitute named Jin Heye (金荷叶). She came to the women's association claiming that she was abused by the head of a prostitution house, but after she lived at the women's association for one day, she didn't have opium, escaped and went back to the brothel.”¹⁴² Drug addiction was used by brothel leaders to keep some women dependent and incapable of saving up money to leave. In another example, Lu Zijuan (陆紫鹃) lost

¹⁴¹ “The administration department orders the social bureau and police station #3 to execute order to ban smoking, gambling, and prostitution,” *SZGB* 14, (September, 1929): 87.

¹⁴² “Funü jiujiyuan de jiji gongzuo <luoluo> 妇女救济院的积极工作<落落> [The active work on the Women's shelter],” *BYHB*, December 7, 1929.

half of her life's savings when a brothel owner found out that she saved more than 300 yuan by herself. Brothel owners kept careful eyes on prostitutes' personal savings because those who accumulated too much might try for independence.

Another problem was that brothels restricted the movement of prostitutes and limited their contact with the outside world. Many of the most vulnerable likely had no knowledge of the women's shelter as a possible safe haven. Even when women became aware of the safety offered by the shelter, some were afraid to leave: "This is very similar to when the lion roars all the other animals hide; it's not because the other animals couldn't escape, it was because they were afraid to escape."¹⁴³



Figure 2.15: "A blind woman in the women saving institute Tientsin." ¹⁴⁴

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ "A blind woman in the women saving institute Tientsin," *BYHB*, August 23, 1930.

Along with broadly aimed institutions for sheltering women, associations for specific social problems continued to provide for critical relief needs. The Tianjin Women's Savings Institution, *funv yangji yuan*, focused on providing help to old disabled women. There was no expectation that these women would be industrially productive, but the institute still emphasized in providing for basic needs of shelter and food. A major contributor was the Meiyunshi Philanthropy Club, which helped to raise money for this shelter.¹⁴⁵

Tianjin Police: Critical Agents of Social Relief.

As we have seen under the guidance of Yuan Shikai, the Tianjin Police Force grew significantly to include over 2500 officers and quickly became a major influence in city governance. During the Nanjing Decade, the number of Tianjin officers continued to increase and their responsibilities as community leaders expanded. In a way, Tianjin police became the foot soldiers of modern social science, tasked by the social bureau and city hall with identifying and gathering statistics about social problems within the community, organizing and coordinating government and non-government charity organizations, and establishing their own institutions for poverty relief. These aspects of Republican police institutions have been tangentially discussed by other scholars, but deserve greater attention both as an important way that the local government was able to interact with the community, and as an important shaper of public policy.

In 1928, after the city police had been reorganized by the new municipal government, officers were utilized as valuable tools for gathering population statistics.

¹⁴⁵ “Meiyu she nuli shanju <er> 美育社努力善举 <耳> [The active charity work of Meiyunshe],” *BYHB*, August 23, 1930.

Not simply the passive instruments of the social bureau, they urged local government institutions to provide housing for refugees found on the street. Interacting daily with the city's homeless, correspondence from the Tianjin Police Department remained sympathetic to refugees and beggars, describing them as poorly clothed and facing a pitiful state of malnutrition. For the most part, police department correspondence emphasizing the need to settle, "wandering and lost individuals" focused on need rather than nuisance.¹⁴⁶ Police staff were present at most meetings of the city's philanthropic organizations and were critically involved in coordinating winter relief efforts each year.¹⁴⁷

The Tianjin police acted as an important middle institution for responding to the needs of poor residents who were not housed in state institutions. For example, working with street heads, *jiezhang*, the police distributed one yuan to each poor family in March, 1929.¹⁴⁸ The police also provided security at various shelters and charity events.¹⁴⁹ They even operated their own schools for poor children and helped to distribute winter relief. The schools operated by the Tianjin police were a unique form of state-led charity initiative, as a territory where local and national policies could conflict sharply. These processes came together, for example, in a half-day school operated by the police for poor children with funding from the local business gentry.

¹⁴⁶ "Tianjin police station orders city political party committee to earnestly provide housing for refugees," *SZGB* 5, (December, 1928): 108.

¹⁴⁷ "Tax Department, Special zone #3 police station, and social bureau in the 43rd city government meeting decided to cancel tax for helping beggars and instead use 1% of property tax for helping beggars and rename it the property tax + philanthropy fee," *SZGB* 12, (July, 1929): 85. July 1, 1929.

¹⁴⁸ "Document from the police station, special zone 3," *SZGB* 8, (March, 1929): 55.

¹⁴⁹ "The Women's shelter requests police station to send officers to permanently protect it," *SZGB* 12, (July, 1929): 111. July 12, 1929.

As part of the consolidation effort put forth by the Nanjing government, Tianjin City Hall had planned to place the police-run school under the directorship of the city's *jiujiyuan*. In response, the retired Police Chief Yang Jingchun wrote a letter pleading that its continued private operation be permitted. He argued that the police school was very effective at educating poor youths, requiring ten years of study to graduate. According to Yang, students graduated with a strong ethical foundation and were well equipped to find employment and contribute to society. The school had already graduated several hundred students during its time in operation. At the same time, the school actively recruited the children of police officers, because the police brought many benefits to the local hardworking business community and poor alike. The previous police director, Mr. Chang organized the Poor People's School, *pinmin xuexiao*, into two classes, one which met in the morning and one in the evening so that police officers and staff could volunteer to educate the students. The school was primarily funded by the local business community. Besides requiring daily funding, the school also needed temporary funding which was donated or collected by each police station. These officers did their best without a raise in income, although they did receive a bonus according to the number of students they taught.

In the early 1920s, the name of the school changed to the People's School, however, the structure and content of the courses did not. Yang's letter expressed understanding that the financial bureau needed to consolidate, but argued that this school was originally supported by local businessmen who used charity foundations specifically to fund the educational work. Here we can see that ownership of charitable activities could at times put local and city government interests in conflict and reveals that charity,

at least within the realm of education, could play an important role in community identity and cohesion. Mr. Yang and the other members of the business community feared that if this school came under the control of the city financial bureau, the structure of the school would disintegrate, causing the poor children to be unable to go to school. From this example, it is apparent that local communities were often tightly knit and strategized to protect their own interests from those of the central city government. Bureaucratic consolidation not only promised to lower costs and increase efficiency, for these business leaders at least, it threatened to breakdown an efficient charitable system and symbiotic relationship between the local police and the local business community.

The police also opened their own clinic to provide free treatment to farmers, workers and soldiers, charging only a small fee for medicine. As a pet project of the Tianjin chief of police, he estimated they needed to raise about 30 thousand yuan to open a hospital. Taking the initiative, he had begun to raise funding not only through the private donations of colleagues, but also by appropriating the fines paid by criminals. In this way he was able to raise about one third of the starting expense. To raise the remainder, the security bureau advertised a variety show they were organizing for this purpose.¹⁵⁰

Along with running their own charity operations, the Tianjin police provided support to city charities such as the onetime donation of 200 sets of heavy coats and old police uniforms mentioned previously, to the Tianjin poorhouse during the onset of winter in 1929.¹⁵¹ In times of particular hardship, the police worked with the city

¹⁵⁰ *YSB*, April 14, 1929.

¹⁵¹ "Third special zone police report donation," *SZGB* 16, (November, 1929): 80. November 3, 1929.

government to collect emergency taxes which were typically placed on entertainment establishments.¹⁵²

Of course the police, largely because of their keen awareness and relationship with the streets of Tianjin, could also disrupt traditional ways for the urban poor and displaced refugees to eke out a living. Within Chinese tradition, beggars could claim supernatural connections and were sometimes attributed with magic powers.¹⁵³ As Lu Hanchao has pointed out, ever since the founding of the Ming Dynasty under a desperately poor peasant beggar, Zhu Yuanzhang (1328-1398), Chinese literature has been captivated by the latent potential for greatness among the destitute masses.¹⁵⁴ Even a rich merchant might sneak into the Tianjin slums to seek out the fortune telling powers of some aged beggar. However, this kind of folk religion was at odds with the modernizing efforts of Nationalist governors and on June 25th 1929, the Tianjin Nationalist party branch commanded the police to actively prohibit vagrants from claiming to be immortal or having super powers. According to the party leadership, while this may have interrupted some beggars from making a living, the ordinance was passed in the spirit of protecting the urban poor from exploitation.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵² “The request from the police station which is about helping out the donation committee of North West refugees,” *SZGB* 19, (February, 1930). February 14, 1930.

¹⁵³ Beggars had their own patron gods and literature often surrounded by an aura of mystery. Beggars might be concealed heroes or temporarily impoverished individuals whose fortunes might suddenly spring back.

¹⁵⁴ For more on the legends associated with beggars see the third chapter of Lu’s work: Lu Hanchao, “Legend Has It,” in *Street Criers: A Cultural History of Chinese Beggars* (Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 2005).

¹⁵⁵ “Document from the city party leader to the police department to prohibit youmin from pretending to be immortal,” *SZGB* 11, (June, 1929): 63. June 25, 1929.

However, behind this seemingly benevolent intention of guarding against superstition, other dynamics of power were at work. By rooting out “superstition,” the city government was also exerting its power to occupy the important position of sole arbiter of truth and legitimacy. Moreover, these poor ‘witches’ and ‘gods’ were gathering money illegally without submitting to tax. By depriving some poor from making a living through soothsaying and fortune-telling, police and street heads were helping to establish modern governance as the ultimate authority on the borders of acceptable individual identity.¹⁵⁶

This antagonism to superstition and folk belief also extended to more broadly accepted beliefs such as Buddhism. In April of 1930, the Chinese Nationalist Party Central Executive Committee sent out a nationwide memorandum that would forbid temples from adopting young monks and nuns. The police were encouraged in this memorandum by the interior ministry to investigate children who had recently become monks. This command sent down from the central government, describes the recruiting of children into the Buddhist priesthood as “inhumane and impedes society’s progress.”¹⁵⁷ Any adolescent child who appeared to have gone through tonsure was to be investigated in order to enforce the ban and “promote human rights.” This particular campaign against tonsure, placed institutional Buddhism and state authority into direct conflict. Many temples resisted these regulations, so each province and city was commanded to inform, earnestly investigate, and ban the practice. The Nanjing central

¹⁵⁶ “Document from the city party leader to the police department to prohibit youmin from pretending to be immortal,” *SZGB* 11, 63. June 25, 1929.

¹⁵⁷ “Documents from the social bureau, police station, and #3 special zone,” *SZGB* 21, (April, 1930) 7. April 8, 1930.

government strongly urged that each regional government would actively promote this regulation. Why would the Guomindang be concerned with child tonsure as a violation of human rights?

Clearly it recognized Buddhism as a competing force in its vision for China's future. By singling out Buddhism, the Nanjing government was forcibly redefining not only society's values but also where those values originated. Although Qing Dynasty officials claimed legitimacy by performing long-held rituals with precision, the Nanjing government sought to undermine traditional cultural and social forces with the homogenizing power of the state.¹⁵⁸

The police also began operating a “wicked people reform institution,” *yǒumín gǎnhuà suǒ* (莠民感化所). Although falling under more typical police duties of incarcerating social delinquents, this institution is important to examine because of similarities in its organizing principles that closely reflect contemporary charity operations. For example, inmates were expected to take classes in basic literacy and mathematics, learn trade skills, and participate in physical labor. Lectures often focused on “getting rid of bad roots.” The reform institution was populated by “fallen youth,” *duoluo qingnian* (墮落青年) with a maximum capacity of 240 inmates. By providing a separate reformatory from the prisons reserved for hardened criminals, it becomes apparent that while many institutions were consolidating in the Nanjing Decade, others were becoming more specialized, largely along the lines in a growing understanding of sociology.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ “Tianjin special city police station Youmin ganhuasuo 莠民感化所 (wicked people reform institution) general regulations,” *SZGB* 21, (April, 1930): 25. April 17, 1930.

Police also functioned as government hiring agents in Tianjin's day labor market. When city hall decided to provide road construction work to homeless beggars, the security bureau was tasked in selecting candidates for the work. The process repeated after the official opening of the #1 Tianjin Poor Factory as well. While the task of selecting who could work, on one level, increased the potential exploitive power of officers, there is also evidence that the security bureau supported the presence of day laborers in public space as the bureau publicly affirmed the demands of a group of beggars protesting the repeal of the 1% property tax to fund the operating expenses of the #1 Pinmin Gongchang.¹⁶⁰

Evidence of Agency: Mutual Aid Associations and Self Organized Relief.

Although much of this chapter has focused on how government agencies provided various forms of relief to the Tianjin urban poor and refugees from the surrounding areas, these individuals also found ways of organizing and helping themselves. Groups of poor residents applied to organize and open a *pinmin shichang* or poor people's market at the southwest corner of the city called *Fuxinzhuang*.¹⁶¹ Here poor farmers organized to sell especially to poor urban residents directly.

One of the more exciting controversies that unfolded in this period surrounded the fate of the pinmin gongchang, the poor people's factory. Much fanfare surrounded the opening of the #1 Factory and Tianjin City Hall hoped to use this form of charity relief as a model for modern, productive, self-reliant charity work, but the whole plan nearly

¹⁶⁰ *YSB*, May 9, 1929, the police were not the only government officials tasked with recruitment of poor labor for temporary work. The Social Bureau and the department of city labor (*gongwuju*) would also send officials to charities to find labor for road construction projects. Also see: *YSB*, April 10, 1929.

¹⁶¹ "Dong Liandi asks the city government to open a poor people's market at Fuxinzhuang," *SZGB* 12 (July, 1929): 247. July 15, 1929.

completely derailed within only a few months of its opening. As I have demonstrated the opportunity to work for a living was clearly recognized by the Nationalist regime as an essential human right. From the very beginning, the Poor People's Factory was invested with the labor of able-bodied homeless residents at the city's vagrant shelter. Many of these residents were not lifelong beggars, but victims of unemployment and economic instability. They helped to transform a dilapidated school into the first of what was to be a series of city-run factories for the poor. The work was dirty and backbreaking as the school was located in a geographic depression, which meant that its grounds were a giant slick of mud.¹⁶² Even the roads leading up to the location were in a state of such utter disrepair that the workers could barely drag the construction materials to the site.

Before its grand opening, signs that not everything was well with the factory began showing up in the newspapers. These were the opening salvos between city government departments before degenerating into an all-out "slug fest" when it became clear there was no money for the factory's operation. On February 20th the social bureau published a letter that was sent to the Tianjin City Hall, Department of Education, and Security Bureau, expressing alarm that no one had been appointed to direct the factory. That no one could be found to direct such a lauded model of modern charity was odd.¹⁶³ Concerns were heightened when even by the official opening day on February 28th, no director had been assigned to the factory. Despite the leadership problems, the social bureau organized a team of officials to observe a poor factory that was operated by the Guangrentang as part of the inauguration activities.

¹⁶² *YSB*, February 2, 1929.

¹⁶³ *YSB*, February 20, 1929.

Along with traveling observation committees, the supposed words of the beggars who would soon be working at the factory were presented in a spirit of praise:

Dear Tianjiners from all over, today we have received relief, we have shelter, people are teaching us how to work for ourselves and study. We think back to when we had to beg as beggars, the bad shape we were in. It is as though we escaped from the depths of hell into heaven. This great blessing is coming from all of you, your monthly donations. From now on we will work hard and study hard to be productive and pay back your care and love.

We have to yell Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! And we will work hard not to disappoint your expectations for us. Hopefully all the poor people will get real help and relief and this community will work to expand this poor workhouse to increase social productivity.¹⁶⁴

Although this is more likely from the pen of a secretary at the social bureau than the words of any actual shelter resident, it does present the “beggar” as someone willing to work and desirous to serve the public good, not as some lazy delinquent.

The financial problems of the factory came to a head on May 7th when rumors began to circulate that the beggar’s tax, a 1% property tax increase on wealthy urban residents, was illegally budgeted to support the factory work and would be repealed.¹⁶⁵ After publically venting its frustration that a director of the factory had still not been appointed and there was no funding for the factory’s operation budget, the social bureau sent a memo to Tianjin newspapers washing its hands of responsibility for the factory and divesting its control to city hall. The social bureau’s memo captures both an appeal to modern principles and nationalism:

There was a plan to tax each family 20 cents a month for the first three months to raise about 160,000 yuan and then decrease the tax to 10 cents for the operating budget. In this way we would be able to build the factory and take in all the homeless and poor people and make sanmin zhuyi a

¹⁶⁴ *YSB*, February 2, 1929.

¹⁶⁵ *YSB*, May 7, 1929.

reality. But since the beginning until now, it's been one big disappointment. No new factories could be built and so they had to rent a run-down school to turn into a factory, and even this place couldn't purchase any machinery. The Gonganju and each district sent a total of 170 people to the first factory already, and because city hall never sent anyone back in April, no one is in charge. So we have no funding and we can't do anything. It's just a mess. We have no payroll and no funding for anything. So that's why they started having the beggar's tax but they didn't get the approval of all parties, they didn't go by all the proper channels, and really no one is in charge so they don't even know who is responsible for this mess and there was no previous example to follow. So for all these reasons they have to stop the beggar's tax and we're not sure if the factory can even carry on.¹⁶⁶

The social bureau took all the money left over and donations of clothing from the Guangrentang and transferred it to city hall.

A follow up report the next day said the workers were very nervous and finally decided to march on the city's offices to demand the funding be reinstated. This apparently caused quite a stir in the city. About 95 workers carrying banners demanding the reinstatement of the tax and wearing pinmin gongchang uniforms, began marching and yelling down the street. Although not a violent protest, the workers targeted two officials specifically who were rumored to be at the heart of the taxes' dismissal, Li Rongpei and Liu Mengyang. According to the flyers passed out by the beggars, these two were against the Guomindang national policy and should be "beaten down" because they opposed the people's welfare, *minsheng zhuyi*. "They are gentry and anti-democratic, eliminate these two because they destroyed the factory and are causing damage to the poor people so they are our enemy. All people unite to get rid of these two!" The workers demanded these two be harshly punished by city hall and pleaded that the beggar's tax would be continued.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁶ *YSB*, May 8, 1929.

What followed was a tragic comedy as the group went from government department to government department and each passed responsibility to the next. They first stopped at the headquarters of the social bureau in the city's second district and the head of the bureau himself came out to address the workers. In his brief speech he commended the workers and then explained, "I myself, cannot stop city hall because I have no authority to stop them so you need to go to the city hall yourself to make your petition."¹⁶⁸ The petition group then traveled to the public security office and again the chief came out to address the crowd, express his sympathies and encourage them. He then sent them away with a police escort and his full support for their petition. From the security bureau they traveled to the Guomindang Executive Party office which also expressed its support. The next stop was City Hall where the group elected four representatives to meet with the mayor. In the meeting the mayor told the representatives that everything was just a rumor, not to worry and that everything was fine and that they should go back to the factory.¹⁶⁹ Not completely satisfied with the mayor's assurance, the group's final stop was the Tianjin branch of the National Labor Union office where they received more support. Below is the text of their petition:

Because of the war, the famine, and the communists have destroyed our villages and so many workers are unemployed, we are homeless and suffering. Those rich people, those gentry they, they live in the tall buildings eating good food, dressing so nicely with their wives and concubines. They ride their horse and carriages throughout the city and they have no sympathy for the poor. They treat us like we're nothing that we should be content to just be alive. Fortunately we have you leaders, district heads, and some other very good hearted people making the *Mínshēng Zhǔyì* a reality. You promoted the beggar's tax to help out with

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ *YSB*, May 9, 1929.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

the poor people's factory so we could work, have food and clothes, and learn a trade so we can get out of the mud and have a decent life for the past few months. But then the newspaper reported about how many government committees were discussing about ending this tax.

In the first congress of the national party, it was proclaimed that everyone other than those loyal to the imperialism or the local warlords should enjoy freedom and privilege, even the poor. But now the beggars who are the most abused under imperialism and the local warlords, you officials who claim to be the voice of the government, really should have more sympathy for us. We suffer more than any other group of people. How come you are taking away that tax for beggars when we suffer so much more? Among all people we are the ones who suffer the most, so you should help us more. We are even lower than farmers. You cannot just talk the talk and not walk the walk. Whatever you approved at the meeting about repealing the tax should be reversed. Actually you should tax more of the gentry, to them this tax is nothing. Share your wealth. We are the poorest among the poor. Go back to your meeting and reverse your decision. We come here crying to you with tears in our eyes, our petition is with our tears.¹⁷⁰

The article following this one included an interview with the two men identified as the culprits behind the suggested tax repeal. Besides declaring their complete innocence, they implicated the mayor's office as the real culprit behind the rumor.

The public pressure caused by the marching beggars seemed to be quite effective. After two months of confusion, the city hall finally appointed a director, Zhang Zhuxu, to run the operations of the factory. The social bureau also appointed an official overseer to monitor the operations.¹⁷¹ While the operations of the pinmin gongchang were temporarily secured, the tax was still repealed and funding for establishing additional factories slashed.¹⁷²

¹⁷⁰ *YSB*, May 9, 1929.

¹⁷¹ *YSB*, May 10, 1929.

¹⁷² *YSB*, May 14, 1929.

Even though police often provided security for urban charity work, refugees and other disaster victims could also work for police themselves. In the temporary camps maintained by the Tianjin Christian Relief Association, capable refugees were appointed to maintain a record of who entered and left the charity, patrol major gates on the refugee shelter compound, and root out any potential fire dangers.¹⁷³

International Connections: Relief Work in the Nanjing Decade.

The continued conspicuous presence of foreign concessions in Tianjin throughout the Nanjing Decade, and the charity efforts of foreigners in the city must be considered as parallel to the development of indigenous city institutions. Foreign concessions both provided an important source of income for city charities and often foreigners were present at meetings to plan and establish new charity work in the city. Here I will survey several of the important foreign charities in Tianjin and subsequently examine in the following chapter, the specific work of the YMCA in China and Tianjin.



Figure 2.16: “Rehearsal of the Chinese Costume Display, Jan. 16th – As shown in the Rotary Charity Night at the Astor House Hotel, Tientsin.”¹⁷⁴

¹⁷³ *Tianjin jidujiao jiuji hui baogao shu* 天津基督教会报告书 [Report of the Tianjin Christian relief team], June 1933: 6.

¹⁷⁴ *BYHB*, January 17, 1929.

Although established in 1923 with only two foreign members, the Tianjin Rotary Club was influential in organizing many activities to promote charitable giving. By its first anniversary, the club had over 184 members and friends representing British, American, French, Italian, Japanese, and Chinese nationalities in attendance.¹⁷⁵ International associations like the Rotary Club, YMCA, and Red Cross provided important networks for city elite to express the specific challenges facing China to an international audience while also providing crucial experiences with international relief agencies whose ideals would influence the conversation on social welfare among Tianjin's most influential members.¹⁷⁶ Beyond its stated purpose which was to create a more peaceful and just world, rotary members sought to build up relationships through networking and develop businesses that served society. In 1927, the Rotary joined with the Huayang Blindness Prevention Organization of China to form the Blindness Prevention Association. In 1929, the Tianjin club had between 10 and 20 Chinese members or about one-fourth of the total membership in the city. Their charity work focused on education and a club that ran several schools, however, they were eventually shutdown because of unstable funding. The charity also employed two eye doctors specializing in curing Trachoma. The club was entirely privately funded through donations gathered at annual funfairs. These funfairs drew many city elite and included both Chinese and foreign business leaders.

¹⁷⁵ Rotary International, "Proceedings: Fifteenth Annual Convention of Rotary International," Toronto, Ontario, Canada, June 16-20, 1924.

¹⁷⁶ Rotary International, "Proceedings: Nineteenth Annual Convention of Rotary International, Minneapolis, MN, June 18-22, 1928.

Rotary funfairs usually consisted of art exhibitions and fashion shows which became an increasingly popular way to raise charitable donations during the Nanjing Decade. In Tianjin, the prime location for any charity to host an event was the Astor International Hotel. Along with t-he main attraction, visitors played games, watched dramas and juggling shows, observed Western fortune-tellers and dance.¹⁷⁷ Rotary events were well-respected in the Tianjin elite social community and even drew Japanese participation during a time of growing hostility.¹⁷⁸ Although membership in the club remained small, it was very active at the highest levels of Tianjin society and worked to modernize charitable concerns in the city. For example, the club raised over \$4,000 to help disabled children.¹⁷⁹ The Rotary Club in Tianjin was terminated in 1952.

¹⁷⁷ “Fulunshe cishan ye 扶轮社之慈善夜 [Charity night for the Rotary Club],” *BYHB*, January 19, 1929.

¹⁷⁸ The *Beiyang Pictorial Newspaper* is one of many salacious gossip rags that were popular during the Nanjing Decade. Although its reporting is often more focused on the curves of the women models than the cause charity events are held for, it provides an excellent window into popular elite culture in Tianjin during this period.

¹⁷⁹ Rotary International, “Proceedings: Twenty-Fifth Annual Convention of Rotary International,” Detroit, MI, U.S.A., June 25-29, 1934.



Figure 2.17: Chang Ting “Chinese Costume Display by the Chinese Society ladies of Tientsin. At the Rotary Club’s Charity Night on Jan. 17th.”¹⁸⁰

Although missionaries decried Nationalist attempts to consolidate charity work in China under state control, philanthropists often organized themselves under umbrella organizations that united the charity work of various denominations. For example, the National Christian Council of China, *Zhonghua quanguo Jidujiao xiejin hui* (中华全国基督教协进会) was formed in 1922, the same year that Ni Tuosheng (Watchman Nee) began the Fuzhou Church Movement. Delegates from Protestant missions and churches all across China comprised this council, excluding Roman Catholics who organized their own Apostolic Delegation.¹⁸¹ The growing crisis of the early twentieth century meant

¹⁸⁰ *BYHB*, January 19, 1929.

¹⁸¹ For more on the National Christian Council of China, see: The Burke Library Archives at Columbia University, Union Theological Seminary, New York. *National Christian Council of China Records, 1919-1950*. Ni Tuosheng’s work in Fuzhou is commonly attributed as the beginning of Protestant Church localization in China.

that local church leadership along with citizens' groups in general faced greater demands on their individual charitable resources.

The international dimension of poor relief meant that Japanese aggression in China's cities ran in direct conflict to the efforts of many Western philanthropists. While Tianjin may have escaped the devastation of Japan's initial military offenses perpetrated in China in the early 1930s, it was by no means left unscathed. In 1931, the city was rocked by artillery shells launched from the Japanese concession as Chinese bandits, hired by the Kwantung army, descended on the city's public utilities and ex-emperor Puyi was spirited away to be installed as the puppet dictator of Manchukuo. An explosion of articles condemning Japan's actions appeared in foreign owned newspapers like the *China Press*, the *North China Herald*, and the *China Weekly Review*.

However, while the city core escaped the magnitude direct devastation experienced in Shanghai during the January 28th Incident until the city was conquered in 1937, beginning in the early 1930s, Tianjin received a rapidly escalating number of war refugees. These refugees, often displaced from rural towns and villages and thus ill-equipped to make a living in the city, sought to escape the sporadic violence of military aggression and roving groups of lawless soldiers that had turned to banditry. As refugees fled contested areas in the hot summer sun often with only the clothes on their backs, they made their way to the open areas outside of Tianjin city. Bandits set up check points along the routes to the city in order to extract any valuables they might have carried with them. The Tianjin Christian Churches worked together to provide temporary shelter to these refugees. As one young woman explained:

I was so afraid of losing my child and with the soldiers chasing us with their guns, we just kept going and didn't care about our personal property.

If we and wasted time worrying about our valuables we would have lost our child. When I first arrived here, it was just an open shelter. During the day we suffered from the hot sun and during the night the rain and wind assailed us without cover. It was so horrible until the association started building temporary shelters. They have taken in as many as possible and all the refugees are happy and grateful.¹⁸²

The temporary shelters were communal, providing housing for multiple families. Men were required to sleep in their carts outside, while women and children could sleep in the tents of 50 to 60 people each.

By 1930, Tianjin was also experiencing a growing localization of Chinese church authority and the extensive experience of Christian charities in providing emergency relief meant that Chinese Christian leaders were often sought out by local government officials when organizing committees to respond to the increase in city-bound refugees. In the aftermath of the Japanese invasion of Manchuria, the Tianjin Christian Relief Association organized a shelter for provincial refugees at Dongjuzi. One Tianjin pastor explains the emergence of this united charity association in the midst of great turmoil:

My country for the past few years has suffered from floods, famine, and bandits. All our society is in a perpetual state of turmoil and the people's suffering is unendurable. Recently, in four provinces, there was a coup and this coup has spread down to the mainland. Many war refugees have come to Tianjin without shelter, food, or clothing, the situation is terrible. During this wartime, my organization has united with other churches, the Salvation Army, the YMCA and YWCA, and all Chinese and foreign missionaries and medical doctors to create the Christian Relief Association. As the bombs fell, we desperately tried to rescue refugees and provide them with safe shelter as a duty of love. Fortunately Tianjin itself seems to have escaped the bombing. But outside the city, people in many areas couldn't take all the abuse and robbery deciding to abandon their homes and come to Tianjin. More than thirty thousand people came. So all the charity groups in the city needed to work together to assist them. This relief association set up over 200 temporary shelters. We provide their daily food and all the workers here are from local churches, the Salvation Army, and the YMCA. We all share the work. Volunteers have

¹⁸² *Tianjin jidujiao jiuji hui baogao shu* 天津基督教会报告书 [Report of the Tianjin Christian relief team], June 1933: 1.

also come from a Tianjin youth fellowship group and include many students. From morning till night they work tirelessly and their spirit of charity brings much encouragement. The shelter will choose representatives to go to other areas to observe and investigate and after the battle has quieted we will send out ambulances to take families back to their homes. In this way, we will complete our responsibility. In this magazine we wish to publically recognize all the volunteers and charitable donations as well as establish a written record of this good work.¹⁸³

Unity and consolidation were not questioned in the face of such overwhelming need.

There is no “hypothetical mandarin” here that requires imagined sympathy, only the bleeding masses of war victims clamoring for survival and eking out their subsistence.¹⁸⁴

While the commemorative publication describing the work of the Tianjin Christian Relief Association clearly emphasizes the vulnerability of refugees in a blatantly gender specific way, it also reveals rural refugees as possessing great tenacity and independence. “The refugees that came looked like farmers. They came with donkey and horse-driven carts. In the countryside it is their way to make a living, they cannot carry their land so they carry all their personal possessions on their cart. They can abandon their money and their clothes but not their cart. If they do, when they return to their homes, they will be refugees forever.”¹⁸⁵ Rural refugees were mobile and could continue to make their livelihood even after losing their homes and fields.

Emergency war relief focused on providing temporary shelter to those displaced by violence, but they often had to contend with the long-term effects of displacement.

Although most of the refugees were sent home after the fighting died down, about 130

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ Eric Hayot’s work, Eric Hayot, *The Hypothetical Mandarin: Sympathy, Modernity, and Chinese Pain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

¹⁸⁵ *Tianjin jidujiao jiuji hui baogao shu* 天津基督教会报告书 [Report of the Tianjin Christian relief team], June 1933. Includes descriptions of refugees focused primarily on pregnant women or women who had just given birth and their particular hardship of waiting for husbands.

refugees could not return because their husbands were dead, their homes occupied or their health failing. As the temporary relief work drew to a close, rather than release these refugees into the care of state facilities like the jiujiyuan, the Tianjin Christian Relief Association (TCRA) transferred these remaining refugees to more permanent shelters maintained by the city's Red Cross and each refugee was provided with a small amount of food and cash.

The provisioning of temporary war relief by the TCRA also provides another important example of how faith-based charity organizations and state relief programs overlapped and functioned together. After an outbreak of small pox at the shelter, the Tianjin weishengju ordered infected refugees to be sent to the clinic for treatment. Often the refugees who contracted these communicable diseases were children. While the city hospital provided these children with room and board free of charge, they took no responsibility for the parents. Recognizing this as a legitimate need, the association began sending food to the parents of sick children on a daily basis. The TCRA also worked with the interfaith Red Swastika Society which was often the first civilian organization to enter war-torn areas to determine if it was safe to send refugees back to their homes.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁶ Ibid. 26.



Figure 2.18: “Children Holding Book and Reading.”¹⁸⁷

Similarly, the association adopted several practices typical of government social relief programs particularly in education. The education department of the association utilized a popular textbook called *The Farmer’s 1000-Word Textbook* to teach children basic reading skills and other textbooks for two hours each day. After studying, nurses stood ready to check the health of the children and inform them about how to maintain their personal hygiene. Religious education was also held at the camp but it was not mandatory to receive relief aid. Of the several thousand refugees in the camp, only about 100 attended the Wednesday night services held there. Following the influence of the

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

YMCA's focus on physical education and activity, the charities organized group game activities.



Figure 2.19: “Refugee Children Playing Games.”¹⁸⁸

Far from Home: Tianjin’s Foreign Refugees.

As a thriving treaty port in North China, Tianjin was also attractive to foreign nationals fleeing their own countries. While significantly smaller than settlements in places like Shanghai, these foreign populations still left an important mark on the city. Jewish refugees, fleeing the Russian Revolution, made their way to Tianjin and settled

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

there establishing a small but thriving community.¹⁸⁹ Although an extremely small percentage of the population of residents at Tianjin's charity institutions, white orphans captivated the imagination and interest of newspaper readers and deserve some discussion.

Leonid Petrov, a researcher at the Australian National University, described the journey of Russian Jewish refugees as one wrought with danger from bandits and the threat of Soviet attack.¹⁹⁰ In September 1929, the city police began to systematically record the location and occupation of all Russian refugees.¹⁹¹ They found that most of them lived in the #3 Special Zone. An article in the *Sentinel* commented on the many Russian female refugees that migrated to Tianjin in the 1920s, "These seductive creatures all seem to have gravitated down to Peking, Tientsin and Shanghai."¹⁹² Of the 59 identified, most relied on charity to obtain their daily bread or they participated in the day labor market to earn a subsistence. Several had been contracted by the horse track in the British concession to feed the horses.¹⁹³ As Helen D. Dahlin, the daughter of a medical missionary in Tianjin recalled, "As to other foreigners, I remember my French tutor who

¹⁸⁹ The Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People hold archives of the Jewish people in Tientsin from (1920-1957). The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Edmond J. Safra Campus, Givat Ram, Jerusalem.

¹⁹⁰ Leonid A. Petrov, "Out of the Frying Pan, Into the Fire: Russian Immigrants in China," Presented at the 14th Biennial Conference of the Asian Studies Association of Australia in Hobart, Tasmania, 30, June 3 - July 2002, <http://www.north-korea.narod.ru/immigrants.htm>.

¹⁹¹ Isabelle Zimmerman Maynard, *China Dreams: Growing Up Jewish in Tientsin* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1996).

¹⁹² *The Sentinel*, (April 16, 1926): 15.

¹⁹³ "Ministry of Foreign Affairs Investigate and reply about situation of Russian refugees," *SZGB* 14, (September, 1929): 56. September 5, 1929.

was a White Russian refugee. She told me some harrowing stories about her escape and trek across Siberia. One of her children starved to death on the way.”¹⁹⁴

Another group of foreign refugees living in Tianjin included German Jewish refugees after Hitler took power in 1932. Although far removed from the persecution of Europe, Jewish families living in Tianjin were not exempt from the influence of anti-Semitism. Ernst Wolff grew up in China in the German concession. His family was active in the German Association. After studying law in Germany, and then being fired after the Nazis took power, he returned to Tianjin to continue his law practice. “To the German in China... the Hitler movement at first appeared only as a strong nationalist movement.”¹⁹⁵ However, gradually the overseas community was infiltrated by Nazi agents, and the Jewish families were kicked out of the German Club.¹⁹⁶

The Nanjing Decade brought with it a heightened awareness that the plight of the poor was inseparably wedded to China’s modern identity. Charity work became even more closely associated with patriotic expression as a clear demand of a modern society. While the Xinhai Revolution transformed the motivations and sources of charity, as did the growing influence of foreign concessions, a greater emphasis on educating the poor coincided with increasing literacy rates which brought more and more people to address the needs of the city’s underclass. Newspapers provided a public space to both increase the transparency of charity operations and establish a lively public sphere for posing new ideas and criticizing existing institutions. While the organs of the Nanjing government

¹⁹⁴ Clemens Mathews Granskou, “Midwest China Oral History and Archives Project, Helen D. Dahlin,” Midwest China Oral History and Archives Collection, St. Paul, MN, (1976): 5.

¹⁹⁵ Ernst Wolff, interview by Clemens Mathews Granskou, “Midwest China Oral History and Archives Project,” Midwest China Oral History and Archives Collection, St. Paul, MN (1976): 538.

¹⁹⁶ Wolff, interview, (1976): 39.

were able to exert authority at a level unprecedented since the fall of the Qing Dynasty, local authority and autonomy remained important values defining charity work in the city. A new emphasis on *weisheng* generally improved the experience of receiving charity, for women especially. The new birthing centers at the women's shelter allowed women to give birth in a clean environment. The city also operated free clinics and hospitals for refugees and urban poor alike treating minor illness and vaccinating against disease.¹⁹⁷

In the following chapter I will look specifically at how attempts to reorganize charity work on a city government level interacted with private religious concerns among traditionally established charities like the *Guangrentang*, Christian charity organizations, the work of ecumenical groups like the Red Swastika Society and other allied faith groups.

¹⁹⁷ "Health bureau report on Liu Xisan, a nurse at the poor hospital," *SZGB* 14, (September, 1929): 182. September 19, 1929.

CHAPTER 3: FASHIONING A MODERN ETHIC: RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS AND INDUSTRIAL WELFARE IN TIANJIN.

Tianjin is a relatively young city by Chinese standards, which by the mid-nineteenth century had become the most important seaport in North China with a population in 1840 of over 100,000.¹ This population later skyrocketed to around one million by the turn of the century as it became the essential trading capital of North China. John Innocent, a missionary in Tianjin for over thirty years, described the city as both modern and progressive, explaining, “Tientsin is the Birmingham, the Chicago of China.”² As a trade city which drew migrants from many of the farthest corners of China, religious traditions in the city were both diverse and well-developed. Before being forced to open large international concession areas to foreign powers after the Treaty of Tientsin (1858), Buddhism, Daoism, Islam and the Lijiao folk religions claimed numerous followers within the city. By the middle of the nineteenth century, there were over 500 temples in the city and its suburbs.³ By the 1880s, there were four mosques in Tianjin with Islamic households accounting for more than six thousand families. Buddhism, however, was clearly the dominant religious influence in the city with ninety percent of all families belonging in some way to the religion.⁴

In this chapter, I will examine how several religious traditions intersected with modernizing ethics of productivity in ways that both influenced and informed one

¹ Kwan Man Bun, *The Salt Merchants of Tianjin: State-Making and Civil Society in Late Imperial China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001), 12.

² G. T. Candlin, *John Innocent: A Story of Mission Work in North China* (London: United Methodist Pub. House, 1909), 65.

³ Ren Yunlan, *Jindai Tianjin*, 223.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 224.

another. As I have demonstrated in the first two chapters, regardless of the idealism of state projects, fiscal restraints meant that the local government was never capable of enacting a social welfare policy that would exclude faith-based organizations, rather they were fundamental to any measure of success. While the municipal government made many promises to improve the welfare of the city's homeless, many of these promises were met, in some degree, by community organizations. The Tianjin bureaucracy, although sometimes antagonistic, worked with local organizations ranging from secret societies to foreign missionaries, to meet the needs of the urban poor. Rather than interpret the period from 1911 to 1949 as one of failed central governance, I argue it represented a period of immense creativity, civic responsibility, and great interest in service learning. Here collaboration is used in the best sense of the word, to imply cross institutional alliance, interfaith charity work, and civilian led disaster relief. As an immigrant city as well as a concession territory, Tianjin was host to the widest possible range of religious and secular charity organizations.

Rather than skipping rapidly through the vast landscape of Tianjin's religious philanthropy, I will look at three specific examples. The first of these is the appearance of Protestant Christianity after the city's establishment as a treaty port in 1860. I am interested in the Tianjin YMCA specifically because of its significant impact and involvement with relief work among Chinese elite, its use as a model for nationalist officials, and its nearly complete indigenization prior to the communist victory in 1949. I will also situate the YMCA's activities within the larger ecumenical missionary movement, known as the National Christian Council of China (NCC). Although based in Shanghai, the NCC became a powerful influence on Christian social policy in China and

its strategies for improving the conditions of cities, especially among poor workers, clearly influenced the scope of Christian charity in Tianjin as well. I will then turn to examination of the uniquely interfaith swastika societies which organized to promote Buddhism as a transmitter of benevolence and charitable giving.

This chapter further connects with existing case studies of Tianjin relief by focusing narrowly on how institutions of charity and philanthropy intersected with the experiences of rural migrants and refugees. Through this study of Tianjin's religious social welfare provisions, I will seek to demonstrate how diverse private organizations functioned alongside the city government to shape and reflect modernizing ethics of social responsibility by responding to transforming definitions of humanitarian need. These institutions often worked in tandem to address the social welfare requirements of the city and region while maintaining distinct motivations and identities. Based on internal documents and local news media sources, I will explain how these religious organizations rationalized policy changes and the focus of their relief efforts, often compelled by city government attempts at welfare consolidation and control. It will further explore how various segments of the public received these changes and encouraged specific forms of aid. The destruction wrought by continuous warfare, natural disasters and a weak central state in early twentieth century China combined to produce an almost constant stream of refugees traveling through and to this important center of foreign influence which set the stage for varied Nationalist experimentations in governance modernization.

Christianity and Public Health Advocacy.

After the founding of the Tianjin YMCA, the organization very quickly became an important host for lectures on China's social welfare. Many of these lectures centered on health advocacy. In 1903, the YMCA/YWCA hosted several public lectures on the practice of foot-binding. The *Dagongbao* described the work of the Tianjin branch as seeking to change local customs and traditions to recognize that girls have the same capacity for learning and understanding that men do.⁵ Doctors and students from the Tianjin Medical School were invited to talk about women's health and explain the harm foot-binding did to women.⁶ Besides lecturing on women's equality, several members of the YWCA organized a girl's school. The Tianjin YMCA/YWCA also partnered with local elementary schools to supply equipment and organize physical education classes.⁷ Much of the reporting about the Tianjin YMCA's activities centered on education. They opened evening classes in 1904 and sent promising students to continue their education in Japan.⁸

The YMCA lecture hall in Tianjin also served as a pulpit for young Chinese intellectuals who advocated democratic principles. In a meeting which included members of the business community, several local banks and city newspapers, the speaker argued that all people have the right to participate in the government. Without representation, the state had no reason to respond to the needs of the people.⁹ The YMCA was a bastion of

⁵ *DGB*, April 5, 1903.

⁶ *DGB*, May 1, 1903.

⁷ *DGB*, September 3, 1903.

⁸ *DGB*, May 23, 1904.

⁹ *DGB*, June 3, 1910.

free speech and cultivated civic responsibility by hosting leaders of suppressed newspapers and allowing them to use the lecture hall.¹⁰

One arena where this was most visible was the realm of public health. The YMCA promoted health education in Tianjin as it did throughout China through large mass demonstrations and lantern slide shows. Lecture titles included, “Policing the Mouth” and “The Strange Case of Mr. Smith.” “Policing the Mouth” was a 45-piece lantern slide show that focused on how diseases enter the mouth or nose. It emphasized the importance of clean air, drinks and food, utensils, and food handling, of customs in foreign countries and personal habits in relation to health; qualities that were later replicated in the Pudong model village. In “The Strange Case of Mr. Smith,” the story calls attention to how germs are spread through his careless habits to members of his family and others. Emphasis on preventative measures including covering coughs and sneezes, refraining from kissing and handshaking,¹¹ using clean handkerchiefs, and washing frequently; the slide show was specifically pointed towards women’s clubs and industrial settings.¹²

The YMCA also actively contributed to *Weisheng Magazine*, established in March 1924 in Shanghai, and promoted the public health activities of W. W. Peter, M.D. who traveled widely in China promoting cleanliness and health. Particularly popular were

¹⁰ *DGB*, June, 6, 1910.

¹¹ “Catch ‘Em Young,” *Health Measures Adopted in Modern China Child Health Magazine* (June 1924): 247-250, Box 94, Articles, undated and 1917-1924, Records of YMCA international work in China, Kautz Family YMCA Archives, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis. “About Policing the Mouth” & “About the Strange Case of Mr. Smith” Box 94, Articles, undated and 1917-1924, Records of YMCA international work in China, Kautz Family YMCA Archives, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

¹² “News Bulletin #73” (undated): 2. Box 94, News Bulletin #73, Health Education, Records of YMCA international work in China, Kautz Family YMCA Archives, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

lectures on how to take care of your baby, which taught mothers how to bathe their infants and other wellness measures.

In the two pictures below, the image on the left shows the YMCA public lecture hall prepared for Dr. Peter's lecture, the image on the right shows Police Chief Yang and several of his officers observing one of Peter's exhibits:



Figure 3.1: (Left) YMCA Lecture Hall prepares for Dr. Peter; (Right) Police Chief Yang and Officers observe Dr. Peter's Exhibits.¹³

Dr. Peter encouraged Chinese leaders to mandate vaccinations in schools and organize students to promote public health.¹⁴

As part of his campaign, Dr. Peter organized a survey of health conditions in seventeen schools in two East China cities with 3300 students examined. The School Hygiene Program of the Council on Health Education included: (1) physical and medical examinations of the students, (2) correction of defects and treatment of remedial diseases, (3) continuous health supervision of the students by relating doctors and nurses of the

¹³ "The World's Work," (undated): 551. Box 94, Articles, undated and 1917-1924, Records of YMCA international work in China, Kautz Family YMCA Archives, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

¹⁴ "Science and invention: A Health Campaign to Increase China's Population," *Literary Digest*, (Undated). Box 94, Articles, undated and 1917-1924, Records of YMCA international work in China, Kautz Family YMCA Archives, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

community to the school, (4) training teachers in summer schools and systematic health teaching in schools, (5) supervised play, and (6) sanitation of school buildings.¹⁵

The picture presented to the public by these surveys was largely sympathetic, and received praise by the increasing number of students being sent to school. All of the schools that Dr. Peter visited were overcrowded, and the consensus among parents and educators alike was that health services were equally important to education. In addition, while previously little attention was given to providing playground space, city schools had begun to organize more facilities and time to play in the open air. The activities of the school children, who played games like tug of war, drew the attention of many bystanders which helped to draw further interest in discussions of public health. An article from *China Health Magazine* suggests that the work in public health provided a less politically charged alternative for China's young people to address their country's problems than boycotting foreign goods, going on strike, or forming patriotic associations. Many of the students in these modern schools were enlisted by administrators to give health talks on the street corners.

Christian Models of Social Welfare.

After the city was opened to foreign concessions and the Treaty of Tientsin established the right of foreigners to travel throughout inland China, Tianjin became a major hub of missionary activity in the northern regions. Although the agents of Christian proselytization were often met with considerable hostility and misunderstanding, few

¹⁵ Sonya Grypma's recent work on Canadian nurses in China provides an excellent study of how the missionary movement helped to shape public health in China, see: Sonya Joy Grypma, *Healing Henan Canadian Nurses at the North China Mission, 1888-1947* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2008), <http://site.ebrary.com/id/10348855>.

other foreigners interacted at as many levels with China during the early twentieth century. Many Western recollections of China describe missionaries as populating a unique world. For example, Helen Dahlin who grew up in the British concession in Tianjin explained, “you are certainly aware of two worlds: the world of the Chinese, and that doesn’t touch us, and the world of the comfortable foreigners.” This was often the case especially for foreigners who were not involved directly in missionary work. Acts of generosity towards Chinese beggars could be interpreted as foolishness by the foreign community in Tianjin. In the same interview, Helen remembers how her father was chastised for giving his coat to a beggar. “In other words, close your eyes and your heart.”¹⁶ Often for the children of foreigners, their only major contact was with servants. Ernst Wolff the son of a German Jewish family working in Tianjin, explained: “From a social point of view, the two groups (military and missionaries) maintained a different lifestyle... The foreign communities, in the treaty ports at least, stayed very much among themselves. We had no Chinese friends, no Chinese children to play with.”¹⁷

Consequently, while missionaries made up only one component of the foreign presence in China, they were often the most eager to interact with Chinese people. Christian organizations, although not claiming as substantial a membership as other philanthropic religious groups, could exert an important influence in shaping the ethics of social responsibility and organizational structure of contemporary charity work because of the unique interest in European and American forms of social organization. Jun Xing

¹⁶ Dahlin, interview, 3.

¹⁷ Wolff, interview, 6, 19.

rightly places this enthusiasm within the context of the American Social Gospel Movement.¹⁸

One important way that Christian organizations functioned to influence the expectations of labor was through establishing model communities. The first model community established by the YMCA was created in the Pudong District of Shanghai in 1925.¹⁹ The Pudong model village was copied by other YMCA's throughout China, including Tianjin. The village included about 60 homes, some of which were contributed by the Shanghai Rotarians.²⁰ The YMCA sought to create cheap sustainable housing along with a sense of community through group events. Volunteers taught village children to sing Christian hymns and patriotic ballads, while handing out small gifts and sweets. The community brought together 24 families that included 88 people. At the center of the village stood a social center equipped with classrooms, game rooms, and club rooms. Although the village was very small, people from the surrounding neighborhood often came to participate in the community activities of the village. Architecturally, the construction focused on providing ample windows for light and fresh air, using cheap building materials to keep rental costs low, semi-detached houses to provide privacy, and small gardens to beautify the environment. In addition to the

¹⁸ Hsing Chün, *Baptized in the Fire of Revolution: The American Social Gospel and the YMCA in China, 1919-1937*, (Bethlehem: Lehigh University Press, 1996).

¹⁹ Shanghai YMCA, "Anniversary Report of the Industrial Work of the Shanghai Young Men's Christian Assn. Pootung Model Village Tenth year Robinson Road Social Centre Fifth year," November 1935, Industrial Work, Box 94, Miscellaneous reports, undated and 1923, 1935, Records of YMCA international work in China, Kautz Family YMCA Archives, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

²⁰ "A Girdle of Service," *The Rotarian*, (February 1927): 14.

community center was a playground for children.²¹ The YMCA was particularly important for advocating the importance of play in adolescent education.

The village utilized several regulations to ensure that it would continue to serve low income workers. Each tenant was required to have steady employment, no one with an income of more than 40 yuan per month, and no subletting was permitted. This effectively controlled the village's population and prevented overcrowding. Regulations on social behavior were also implemented: No opium smoking, excessive drinking, gambling, or immoral practices were allowed. Villages were also required to keep their houses clean and the village gate was closed at night from the hours of 10:00 pm to 5:00 am.²² YMCA volunteers also helped watch the children of workers during the day and distributed free vaccinations against cholera and typhoid. The community also worked together to complete simple projects that would improve the overall health of the community.

The two following images show children from the model village attending a kindergarten class. Images of Sun Yat-sen and national flags adorn the classroom demonstrating that Christian leaders understood the importance of nationalism for

²¹ Playgrounds represent an important change that Christian practices brought to the Chinese educational system. Confucian education stressed learning as a means of creating disciplined moral behavior and although play was never entirely absent from Chinese ideas of youth education in the late Qing, it remained of secondary concern. That YMCA introduced physical education and play as fundamental components of childhood education was met with much enthusiasm among young Chinese educational reformers. For more on education and Chinese adolescence, see: Limin Bai, "Children at Play: A Childhood beyond the Confucian Shadow," in *Childhood* 12, no. 1 (2005), and Jon L. Saari, *Legacies of Childhood: Growing up Chinese in a Time of Crisis, 1890-1920* (Cambridge, MA: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1990).

²² Shanghai YMCA, "Anniversary Report of the Industrial Work of the Shanghai Young Men's Christian Assn. Pootung Model Village Tenth year Robinson Road Social Centre Fifth year," November 1935, Industrial Work, Box 94, Miscellaneous reports, undated and 1923, 1935, Records of YMCA international work in China, Kautz Family YMCA Archives, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

establishing their legitimacy to educate. The YMCA promoted a labor education campaign which provided free education for worker's children and vocational training for personnel to diversify their skills and minimize unemployment. The picture to the left demonstrates the outdoor physical games that the YMCA educational staff practiced with children. The YMCA introduced collective physical education as a cornerstone of modern education.²³



Figure 3.2: (Left and Right) Image of Children from the YMCA Model Village.²⁴



Figure 3.3: (Left) Disinfectant Spray Cart (Middle) Boys Win Awards for Killing Flies (Right) Workers at YMCA Model Village Clean Fetid Water.²⁵

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid

The left image above shows a cart used to spray chemical disinfectant around the village. In the picture on the right, members of the model village are working together to clean up a small ditch that contained fetid water. The middle image shows a group of boys tasked with trapping and killing flies. Particularly in the warm months, flies were targeted as transmitters of disease. Thirty boys from the village were taught how to catch and kill flies and also keep their hands washed. The YMCA offered prizes to the boys who caught the most flies and paid 5 coppers for each pound collected.

Along with setting up a school for the children of workers, the YMCA village also accepted neighborhood boys into their day school and offered classes for adults. The picture on the right shows neighborhood children that attended Saturday classes held at the community center and the image on the left shows rickshaw pullers gathering around a YMCA teacher. These open air meetings taught classes in English, Chinese, math, and Christianity and operated night schools for students from 14-38 years old.



Figure 3.4: (Left) Rickshaw Pullers Gather around YMCA Teacher (Right) Neighborhood Children Attend Saturday Classes.²⁶

Several additional unique aspects of the YMCA model village in Pudong included a music club, a service club that organized twelve strong young men from the village to

²⁶ Ibid.

render service wherever needed such as in building the village's roads, acting as ushers at meetings, providing protection as night watchmen, presenting YMCA movies to thousands of residents of the surrounding community and picking up any trash on the roadside.²⁷

While the village expanded little over the course of several decades, hundreds of notable Guomindang leaders visited the village and attempted to replicate their success, often on a much more massive scale. As Lipkin has pointed out, the YMCA house experiment inspired the construction of model workers' villages in Nanjing in an attempt to eliminate slums.²⁸ Jiang Jieshi praised the YMCA village, "A New Model for Villages and a new scheme for building up better society. May it be developed from near to far in order to help the construction of a new China."²⁹ One of the qualities of the village that particularly interested Nationalist Party leaders was its success in cultivating strong healthy potential laborers. The Chinese YMCA was a vocal advocate for public health and often held seminars on how to take care of children with competitions for healthy babies as shown in the following picture on the left. The image of the young man flexing his muscles below, describes him as a "product" of the village. The third image in this line shows the group of young men who served as leaders of the health campaign. On the far left of that same picture is the village's leader, the European-educated, M. Thomas Tchou. While the village may have influenced GMD dreams of modernizing slums, it is

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Lipkin, *Useless to the State*, 117.

²⁹ Shanghai YMCA, "Anniversary Report of the Industrial Work of the Shanghai Young Men's Christian Assn. Pootung Model Village Tenth year Robinson Road Social Centre Fifth year," (November 1935): 9, Industrial Work, Box 94, Miscellaneous reports, undated and 1923, 1935, Records of YMCA international work in China, Kautz Family YMCA Archives, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

also clear that militarism, nationalism, and youthful vigor valued by GMD officers helped to shape YMCA strategies as well.



Figure 3.5: (Left) Healthy Baby (Middle) Young Man Flexing His Muscles, (Right) Leaders of the Health Campaign including M. Thomas Tchou.³⁰

Workers from the village also participated in labor safety training seminars and were tasked with conveying these safety practices to their workplaces to reduce factory accidents. Workers were also encouraged to join hiking groups to broaden their conception of China.

³⁰ Ibid.

Christian Relief Work in China: The Interdenominational Melting Pot.



Figure 3.6: YMCA Refugee Camp outside of Tianjin.³¹

The dominance of Buddhism began to decline after a series of modernization campaigns which targeted Buddhist temples for conversion into modern schools. Its dominance was also shaken by the arrival of foreign missionaries in the wake of the Second Opium War. Rev. Henry Blodget, from the American Congregational Church was the first of these Christian missionary to enter Tianjin in 1860 along with British troops that arrived in the port to enforce the newly ratified concession treaty. Within the next several decades, Christian influence in the city grew dramatically.³² Much of the early Christian philanthropy in Tianjin took the form of medical aid.³³ By 1895 when the

³¹ The Tianjin Municipal Government often required refugees to be settled outside the city in temporary camps especially during times of widespread famine or war. These camps were placed under the direction of specific charities. This image presents a YMCA Refugee Camp outside the Tianjin, YMCA/YWCA refugee resettlement, photo album, undated. Box 20-AV. National Board of the Young Men's Christian Associations Armed Services Department, Scraps and Photographs, Kautz Family YMCA Archives, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

³² Candlin, *John Innocent*, 73.

³³ For a useful introduction of the importance of the medical field to early Protestant missions in China see: William Lockhart, *The Medical Missionary in China: A Narrative of Twenty Years' Experience* (London:

YMCA established their first branch in Tianjin, the city was home to numerous Christian hospitals, schools, and orphanages and a sizable number of Christian students who graduated from the mission schools. At the same time, Protestant missions across the globe were coming together in unprecedented ways that sought to overcome denominational difference.

After the meeting of the World Missionary Conference (WMC) in Edinburgh, 1910, several societies formed among missionaries working in China to continue the society's ecumenical work. In 1913, the chairman of the WMC, John R. Mott, traveled to China to encourage local meetings and organize a series of six regional and one national conference which discussed the past, present, and future of Protestant missionary work in China. This grew into the China Continuation Committee (CCC) which was reorganized and combined with other unifying organizations into the National Christian Council of China (NCC) in 1922. Throughout the 1920s and 30s, the council represented about 70% of the Protestant missions in China.³⁴ These councils were critical in organizing and promoting disaster relief abroad and coordinating Christian charity efforts throughout the Republican Period.

In many ways the YMCA was the poster child of NCC industrial policy, and its work is often cited in the council's reports. For example, the YMCA effectively transferred authority of its local governing bodies from foreign leadership to a Chinese

Hurst and Blackett, 1861): 150. For more on medical missions in Tianjin, see: Floyd L. Carr, *John Kenneth Mackenzie: Beloved Physician of Tientsin* (New York City: Baptist Board of Education, Department of Missionary Education, 1926).

³⁴ For more on the NCC and CCC see the archival collections held in the Burke Library Archives, Columbia University Libraries, Union Theological Seminary, New York, National Christian Council Records 1919-1950 and China Continuation Committee Records, 1912-1922.

majority advising board by 1936, a longstanding goal of Protestant missions in Asia.³⁵ This represented a significant achievement towards becoming a “self-governing, self-maintaining, self-perpetuating, and self-propagating” organization as had been set out in several of its initial charters.³⁶ The YMCA also narrowly focused the majority of its activities at attracting participation from the local elite through cultivating individual relationships. In 1902, after its original building was destroyed during the Boxer Uprising and the new headquarters were established in the French concession, YMCA missionaries in Tianjin aimed at encouraging the sons of Chinese gentry to join their Sunday school. The Y’s emphasis on civic consciousness and martial physical discipline resonated with many.

Along with drawing on a local elite population, the Y also drew missionaries from a wide range of mission organizations to serve in their ranks and ensure no particular doctrinal issue usurped the primary purpose of their organization.³⁷ In R. R. Gailey’s 1902 report, the membership of 133 in Tianjin was primarily foreign, with 25 Chinese attending the Sunday school and 35 Japanese attendants. Although comparatively small, the YMCA began to draw local support, “The Chinese merchants have shown in a very substantial way their appreciation of the work of this department by pledging \$10,000

³⁵ Ren Yunlan, *Jindai Tianjin*, 238. C. Peter Williams explains how self-governance of the indigenous church evolved as a policy in Protestant missions in his work: C. Peter Williams, *The Ideal of the Self-Governing Church: A Study in Victorian Missionary Strategy* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1990).

³⁶ Robert R. Gailey, “Report of Robert R. Gailey, Tientsin (Tianjin)” (1902): 13. YMCA International Work: An Inventory of Annual and Quarterly Reports of Work in China, 1896-1949, Kautz Family YMCA Archives, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

³⁷ In 1911, Tianjin YMCA missionaries included members from the China Inland Mission, The Church Missionary Society, The United Free Church of Scotland, the English Baptist Mission, the Irish Presbyterian Church Mission, the Canadian Presbyterian Mission, the American Presbyterians, and the Scandinavian China Alliance. Raymond S. Hall, “Report of R. S. Hall, Associate Secretary, Tientsin (Tianjin)” (1911): 29-31, YMCA International Work: An Inventory of Annual and Quarterly Reports of Work in China, 1896-1949, Kautz Family YMCA Archives, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

Mexican towards securing a site for a building.”³⁸ By 1908, the Tianjin branch began to offer a wider range of educational programs like industrial education.³⁹ In a little over five years, the membership of the Tianjin YMCA had grown exponentially with over 20,000 attendees to an athletic meeting in 1912.⁴⁰ By 1927, Tianjin Chinese YMCA membership included bank managers, doctors with overseas education, compradors in charge of foreign mine holdings, engineers and technicians, professionals from export businesses, heads of insurance and stock market companies, university professors, low-level government officials and officers from the Guomindang.⁴¹

The presence of the YMCA in Tianjin not only influenced how modern philanthropic work was understood in the city, but as demonstrated at the end of chapter one, the demands of famine work often equally shaped the organizations involved in providing relief. When A. G. Robinson, one of the founding leaders of the Tianjin YMCA, returned from the China field to New England in order to raise financial support in the U.S. for famine relief during the 1921 drought in North China, his usual networking activities were completely absorbed by the task of raising support.⁴² It is

³⁸ Robert R. Gailey, “Report of Robert R. Gailey, Tientsin (Tianjin)” (1902): 4. YMCA International Work: An Inventory of Annual and Quarterly Reports of Work in China, 1896-1949, Kautz Family YMCA Archives, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

³⁹ Robert R. Gailey, “Robert R. Gailey, General Secretary, Tientsin, Annual Report year ending September 30, 1908,” (1908): 7. YMCA International Work: An Inventory of Annual and Quarterly Reports of Work in China, 1896-1949, Kautz Family YMCA Archives, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

⁴⁰ Raymond S. Hall, “R. S. Hall, Secretary, Tientsin, China. Annual Report for the year ending Sept. 30, 1912,” (1912): 43. YMCA International Work: An Inventory of Annual and Quarterly Reports of Work in China, 1896-1949, Kautz Family YMCA Archives, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

⁴¹ Ren Yunlan, *Jindai Tianjin*, 240.

⁴² “A. G. Robinson Report,” 1921, Box 107, Survey of YMCA in China, 1920-1924 (2 folders), Chinese Christian Student Association, YMCA International Work in China: An Inventory of its Records, Kautz Family YMCA Archives, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

possible to speculate that at times the physical needs of China's poor could supersede the spiritual needs that were the focus of the organization's charter.

Free primary schools and night classes were some of the consistent social work that the YMCA provided in the city. In training the children of the elite, the YMCA sought to raise social consciousness by encouraging students to volunteer their time teaching in private Christian schools, opening day and night classes for police and servants on campuses, carrying propaganda against opium and cigarette smoking to the surrounding villages and visiting the sick.⁴³ YMCA students in Tianjin also gathered "children of the community together, seeing that they are washed and kept clean, teaching them games, singing and reading."⁴⁴ Students, working with the Social Service League, a branch of the YMCA, also began to conduct surveys of rickshaw pullers in the city. In 1914, 300 students distributed over one hundred thousand fliers to raise awareness about pests like flies, mosquitoes and rats. Students went to street chapels and provided lectures on private and public hygiene.⁴⁵ The public health campaigns were particularly influential among representatives of the Tianjin Municipal Government.

Since the YMCA wasn't wedded to any single denomination, it could often partner with other international aid agencies active in Tianjin that were not essentially

⁴³ Raymond S. Hall, "R. S. Hall, Secretary, Tientsin, China. Annual Report for the year ending Sept. 30, 1912," (1912): 40. YMCA International Work: An Inventory of Annual and Quarterly Reports of Work in China, 1896-1949, Kautz Family YMCA Archives, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 40.

⁴⁵ Raymond S. Hall, "R. S. Hall, Associate Secretary, Tientsin, China. Annual Report for the year ending Sept. 30, 1914," (1914): 14. YMCA International Work: An Inventory of Annual and Quarterly Reports of Work in China, 1896-1949, Kautz Family YMCA Archives, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

religious like the Red Cross Society of China and relief organizations of other faiths.⁴⁶ In 1912, the Red Cross was encountering more refugees than it could shelter. Subsequently, the association began to help organize its own areas of refuge in the city. YMCA staff in Tianjin also played a leading role on the American Advisory Committee for Famine Relief during the famines that struck five provinces in North China in 1920.⁴⁷ During this particular famine, the Advisory Committee raised over seven million U.S. dollars by 1921 to aid refugees. The Tianjin YMCA held classes on first aid to help equip student volunteers who often participated in dangerous efforts to relieve suffering soldiers.

Another rather unique function of YMCA philanthropy was the children's festivals hosted by the Poor Children's Association, *pinerhui*. These festivals included public speeches, Chinese music, ventriloquists, harmonica music, folk art and local comedy performances as well as other fun activities in order to educate the poor children through entertainment. They also distributed corn noodles and other small gifts. At the end of 1934 to the beginning of 1935, more than 2400 people participated in two *pinerhui* events.⁴⁸ Sometimes the banquets invited poor children to eat many delicious foods that they couldn't normally enjoy. Children also received free soaps, towels, and candies. This type of activity provided temporary encouragement to those children who lived on begging and picking up coal. The *piner* banquet in 1937 lasted for three days and more

⁴⁶ Raymond S. Hall, "R. S. Hall, Secretary, Tientsin, China. Annual Report for the year ending Sept. 30, 1912," (1912): 43. YMCA International Work: An Inventory of Annual and Quarterly Reports of Work in China, 1896-1949, Kautz Family YMCA Archives, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

⁴⁷ "Report on Famine Conditions in North China and Student's Relief Work in New York City up to May 6 1921" Box 94, Famine Relief, Famine Reports, 1921, YMCA International Work in China: An Inventory of its Records, 1890-1991, Kautz Family YMCA Archives, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

⁴⁸ Ren Yunlan, *Jindai Tianjin*, 240.

than 300 people participated.⁴⁹ Along with aiding the poor children of Tianjin, the Poor Children's Association also helped to encourage empathy and responsibility of young rich Chinese children.

Towards a More Christian Industrial Order in China.

*I sought earth's gold and gained more greed;
I sought earth's fame and found more need;
I sought earth's pleasures, at last found pain:
Who follows earth's phantoms follows in vain.⁵⁰*

As previously stated, establishing ethical industrial behavior was at the core of Guomindang social welfare policy in the 1930s.⁵¹ Unwilling to accept communist solutions, industrial policy was open to numerous interpretations. Christian leaders were sensitive to the potential of gaining influence by helping to stabilize labor relations. Advocating for the fair treatment of labor became a significant agenda for the NCC which devoted much of its publishing efforts to exhorting Christian organizations throughout China to encourage standardization of labor safety regulations and the legal protection of worker's rights. Many of the fundamental points of the NCC proposals did eventually make their way into the language of Guomindang labor policies, even if they were never effectively enforced by local governments. The members of the NCC included many powerful representatives from China's ruling elite.⁵²

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ J. Herbert Bean, "Seeking and Finding," *Christian Advocate* (March 15, 1923): 327.

⁵¹ Henry Coffin lays out a clear representation of this idea of a Christian industrial order in this work. Much of the industrial policies formed by the NCC reflect his concerns and ideals, see: Henry Sloane Coffin, *A More Christian Industrial Order* (New York: Macmillan, 1920).

⁵² The Industrial Committee 1924, "An Industrial Programme for a Chinese City" The National Christian Council of China, 23 Yuen Ming Yuen Road, Shanghai, Box 94, Industrial Work, Industrial reconstruction pamphlet series, nos. 1-4 undated and 1924, YMCA International Work in China: An Inventory of its Records, 1890-1991, Kautz Family YMCA Archives, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

Generally speaking, the recommendations of the council focused on safety conditions found in factories own by Christian employers. These regulations included limiting the number of hours each employee should work and eliminating child labor. The council also recommended and organized case studies into the cost of living in numerous cities. These informal sociologists gathered statistics on the percentage of family budget spent on food and sought to identify a universal standard of essential human need that could still be adapted to local economic situations. From these statistics, regional committees made recommendations on establishing a reasonable living wage.⁵³ The primary mechanism used by the NCC to influence policy changes was to utilize local newspapers to leverage both positive and negative public opinion.⁵⁴

“For example, if the only persons who have any power to improve conditions are employers of labor, a type of publicity which holds them up to execration may block the way of advance, whereas a publicity which recognizes their good will (or possible good will) and yet the extreme difficulty of their position may win them to cooperation.”⁵⁵ It is clear that the NCC was not necessarily outright hostile towards factory owners, but it did hold the threat of public ostracization as a tool for forceful change.

Simultaneously, the council encouraged a program of education among church membership across the country that linked Christian faith to social service, emphasized a

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ “The Church in China and The Industrial Problem,” *Industrial Reconstruction Series*, no. 2: 5. Box 94, Industrial Work, Industrial reconstruction pamphlet series, nos. 1-4 undated and 1924, YMCA International Work in China: An Inventory of its Records, 1890-1991, Kautz Family YMCA Archives, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

⁵⁵ “An Industrial Programme for a Chinese City,” 4. Box 94, Industrial Work, Industrial reconstruction pamphlet series, nos. 1-4 undated and 1924, YMCA International Work in China: An Inventory of its Records, 1890-1991, Kautz Family YMCA Archives, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

brotherhood of believers which transcended class distinctions, and sought to secure unity of message towards specific labor issues.⁵⁶ Along with advocating for local churches to participate in Chinese labor reform, the council recommended establishing social centers in cities to serve as meeting places for worker employer arbitration. The Tianjin YMCA, although minor in terms of membership, served as an important host to many high-level meetings on labor relations and disaster response. While Christian leaders understood that philanthropic work could provide a valuable means for propagating their faith, they were also sensitive to recognize that such work could be potentially appropriated to prolong the legitimacy of exploitive labor practices by alleviating some of the social and physical problems caused by industrial labor. A NCC publication explains: “the local committee should regard it as a prime duty to see that a social center does not degenerate into putting a piece of plaster on the sore, but that the workers always keep before them the great task of the Church to lead men to desire and work for a social order which expresses the principles of Jesus Christ in the fullest way the king of God on earth.”⁵⁷ For example, a factory visited by Christian doctors on a regular basis may actually be less inclined to provide for the health of its workers. Consequently, Chinese Christian leaders sought to open their own experimental factories and villages that would exhibit its ideals and utilize experts from the church to create sustainable communities for workers. Under the aegis of NCC policies, the Protestant pulpit in China communicated values of the

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ “An Industrial Programme for a Chinese City,” 5, Box 94, Industrial Work, Industrial reconstruction pamphlet series, nos. 1-4 undated and 1924, YMCA International Work in China: An Inventory of its Records, 1890-1991, Kautz Family YMCA Archives, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

integrity of facts and agitated against evil practices like child labor only through peaceful means.⁵⁸

Concerns for the practical implementation of Christian principles to the problems of social welfare were among the most critical topics confronting missionaries in China during the 1920s.⁵⁹ To highlight the positive effects Christian industrial theory could have on the welfare of workers, many articles appeared in local newspapers and Christian journals describing the improvements. In one such case, a Chinese tannery run by a local Christian was described in an article appearing in the *Christian Advocate*:

The conditions here are said to be the best of all the smaller factories in the city. The usual 16 hour work a day is reduced by this Christian to ten. Men and boys earn from 5.50 to 8.50 a month. Apprentices sleep in a loft above the shop, and in addition to their food and clothes, receive thirty-five cents a month during the first year. The second year they are paid a dollar a month and the third year nearly 4.00 a month or 13 cents a day. The industrial department of the YMCA was permitted to put on a program of welfare work, athletics and games for the workers. It was most touching to see the faces of these boys light up with gratitude when they saw the industrial secretary of the YMCA enter the shop. He knows them personally and is bringing a ray of light into the hearts of hundreds of these weary little toilers.⁶⁰

This above article combines several important elements. Rather than strictly decry the employment of young workers, it emphasizes their humane treatment and clearly presents

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Miss W. T. Zung, "Modern Industry in China," *The Chinese Social and Political Science Review*, (October 1923). Box 94, Industrial Work, Miscellaneous reports, undated and 1923, 1935, YMCA International Work in China: An Inventory of its Records, 1890-1991, Kautz Family YMCA Archives, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

⁶⁰ Sherwood Eddy was a national secretary of the YMCA and spent over 15 years working with students in China and across Asia. Sherwood Eddy, "The Industrial Problem in China: Glimpses of the Land of the Eighteen-Hour Day," *The Christian Advocate* (March 15, 1923): 327, Box 94, Industrial Work, Miscellaneous reports, undated and 1923, 1935, YMCA International Work in China: An Inventory of its Records, 1890-1991, Kautz Family YMCA Archives, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

their work as valuable. A big part of improving working conditions, was also evoking a social response that emphasized the dignity of the laborer. The Christian service of the YMCA did not extend to treating sickness caused by physically hazardous conditions. The employer was held responsible for the working conditions, which in this situation were rather positive. Instead, the YMCA provided recreation. These activities are often presented as positive alternatives to the other ways that workers might spend their free time such as smoking opium and gambling. The YMCA, and by extension the NCC, presented Christianity as a positive alternative to social evil and consequently in direct support of strengthening the Chinese nation. The Christian tannery, as a smaller factory, is more representative of China's small cottage industry. Not only does the Christian model of industry preserve the dignity of the worker, it also integrates Chinese tradition in a way that traditional methods of production are not at odds with Christian values and concerns.

In this model of a Christian factory, Eddy noted a stark contrast to the large weaving factories that made up most of Tianjin's fabric industry:

There are five hundred such weaving factories in Tientsin with an average of fifty boys working at looms in prosperous times. Even after learning their trade, unless the workers can turn out more than three pieces of cloth a day, each eighteen feet in length, they receive no pay whatever. The dark hovels in which they work often affect their eyes until many are suffering and some can scarcely see. There are no labor unions here and no man dares to strike. If he drops out of his work he knows he will face starvation, for there is a hungry multitude waiting to take his place.⁶¹

⁶¹ Sherwood Eddy, "The Industrial Problem in China: Glimpses of the Land of the Eighteen-Hour Day," *The Christian Advocate* (March 15, 1923): 327-28, Box 94, Industrial Work, Miscellaneous reports, undated and 1923, 1935, YMCA International Work in China: An Inventory of its Records, 1890-1991, Kautz Family YMCA Archives, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

Christian missionaries in China clearly saw the U.S. as having a superior system of labor relations rather than the conditions in China, however, Eddy was quick to point out the problems in both: “The wages of the common laborer in both countries is often below a fair living standard, and the twelve-hour day is inhuman whether it is in the East or in the West.”⁶²

Miss W. T. Zung (Cheng Wanzhen), who was a member of the YWCA National Committee in Shanghai and served as the China YWCA representative to the Industrial Women’s Conference at Geneva in 1922, was an outspoken advocate of improving working conditions and argued that Marxist principles were not antithetical to Christian social reform.⁶³ Starting in the early 1920s, debate over the merits of communism intensified among Chinese Christian leaders. Zung argued that collective bargaining and strikes were natural responses to worker exploitation and the rising cost of living. She labored for constitutional reform that would mandate government inspection of factory conditions and set standards regarding ventilation, safety, sanitation, and temperatures permitted.⁶⁴ The YMCA National Committee also advocated for the strict prohibition of white phosphorus to manufacture matches, and the unfair treatment of female and child labor, both of which were major issues among Tianjin’s factories. Zung explains:

They (women) are there in great demand because of the low wages they are willing to accept. So every time when a man’s position can be filled by

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ H.B.T., “New Books and Publications,” *The Weekly Review of the Far East* (March 18, 1922): 119, Box 94, Industrial Work, Miscellaneous reports, undated and 1923, 1935, YMCA International Work in China: An Inventory of its Records, 1890-1991, Kautz Family YMCA Archives, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

⁶⁴ Miss W. T. Zung, “Modern Industry in China,” *The Chinese Social and Political Science Review* (October 1923): 5, Box 94, Industrial Work, Miscellaneous reports, undated and 1923, 1935, YMCA International Work in China: An Inventory of its Records, 1890-1991, Kautz Family YMCA Archives, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

a woman we find the woman there. And in turn if a woman can be replaced by a child in ninety nine out of a hundred the child is found there. Thus the majority of the workers in cotton and silk factories in Shanghai are women and on account of the extreme poverty and famine in the north, thousands of young children are found in Tientsin cotton mills working on what is called the apprentice system. The system means that no regular wage is required to be paid to the apprentices. As long as there is no provision for protecting the women and children from being exploited, the standard of wages will be kept low.⁶⁵

The Shanghai YWCA formed an alliance with several other women's associations that were appointed by the Shanghai Municipal Council to form a Child Labor Commission. Although its primary reach was the foreign businesses working in the concessions, these labor reforms set an important precedent for the amendments enacted by the central government. The YMCA in Tianjin followed this emphasis by establishing its own department for industrial service that sought to perform accurate studies of the conditions in specific industries and move public opinion towards increased regulation.⁶⁶

The National Christian Conference, held in Shanghai May 1922, identified four major problems with industrialization in China that the church would need to collectively respond. These included: (1) the growth of population density in cities and a consequent decrease of living conditions among workers, (2) unreasonably long hours working in overheated factory conditions that severely impaired worker health, (3) the particularly heavy burdens of labor on children, young people, and women, and (4) the growth and expansion of factory workers who tend to become separated from the owning of property leading to class war.⁶⁷ Besides decrying this as a system of exploitation and inequality,

⁶⁵ Ibid., 6-7.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 8-9.

Chinese Christian leaders saw their engagement with labor policy as also protecting the integrity of Chinese national sovereignty. I will discuss the role of Chinese Christian patriotism later in this chapter when we turn to discussion of the activities of the YMCA during the Second Sino-Japanese War.

During the same conference, the NCC established a standing committee on industrial and social relations which sought, through unity, to express the collective concerns of Chinese Christians regarding specific social problems.⁶⁸ This agenda of promoting social welfare was not immediately recognized by all Protestant leaders and eventually led two of the earliest and well-respected Protestant missionary orders, the China Inland Mission and the Christian and Missionary Alliance, to part with the council in 1926. The council rationalized its social welfare policies through four principles: (1) that just as Jesus Christ devoted much of His strength to helping people physically, the church must be collectively devoted to the physical, mental, and moral development of the people; (2) physical conditions of industrial labor in China threaten the moral and spiritual welfare of the Chinese people, (3) the church in China is responsible for the welfare of the nation and must seek Christian solutions to the grave problems the nation faced, and (4) the church must seek to overcome evil wherever it appears and establish the reign of righteousness. These specific motivations are important for understanding how Chinese Christian leaders and their foreign missionary counterparts interpreted the aims of social work.

⁶⁷ "The Church in China and the Industrial Problem," National Christian Council, Shanghai (1923): 1, Box 94, Industrial Work, Miscellaneous reports, undated and 1923, 1935, YMCA International Work in China: An Inventory of its Records, 1890-1991, Kautz Family YMCA Archives, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 2.

The 1189 delegates present at the first National Christian Conference nearly unanimously agreed to encourage church members to actively research economic and industrial problems in China while identifying solutions proven to work in the West, adopt the labor standards approved by the League of Nations, and advocate against child labor, one day rest in seven, safeguard worker health, limit working hours, improve sanitation, and install safety equipment in factories.⁶⁹ Local churches began responding to these objectives by collecting statistics on family budgets, conducting in-depth investigations of specific industries, researching the background of strikes, and publishing articles in Chinese and English newspapers against child labor.

Rather than deplore China's industrial system as backward or a failed attempt at modernization, the NCC Industrial Committee published works that both praised China's traditional system and shifted blame to the destructive aspects of industrialism.⁷⁰ These Christians saw China's past not merely as some kind of agrarian idealism, but as a society supported by a relatively mutually supportive system of small cottage industry. Modern industry, then, was a corrupting force which created the deplorable working conditions now present in Chinese factories and invaded and profaned the relationship between worker and employer. Notions of Christian equality permeate arguments made by the Industrial Committee for improving worker's lives: "and see what points the conditions are contrary to such standards of justice and humanity as we demand for our own lives. And secondly to examine our own relationships to all whom we employ in our house or

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁷⁰ "The Church's Labor Standard," *Industrial Reconstruction Series*, no. 3 (1924), Box 94, Industrial Work, Industrial reconstruction pamphlet series, nos. 1-4 undated and 1924, YMCA International Work in China: An Inventory of its Records, 1890-1991, Kautz Family YMCA Archives, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

school or workshop and see whether we are upholding the standard which the church has set up.”⁷¹ This statement was both a self-criticism of the church and also of all foreigners staying in China. Sherwood Eddy was even more straightforward in his criticism of foreign business practice in China: “the mercenary employer and money-loving foreigner must yield to the more normal standard of American home life and working conditions.”⁷²

Nevertheless, Eddy also targeted China’s traditional manufacturing system as a system of exploitation:

It is true that conditions are perhaps more dangerous to the life and health of the workers in factories with modern machinery, but conditions in the home and in small workshops are also contrary to the principles of humanity and justice: servants working from five or six to late at night, small boys apprenticed to trades under conditions almost equivalent to slavery and women working in such a way as to endanger not only their own health but the lives of their offspring.⁷³

This assessment placed the church in the unique role of moral arbiter between China’s new and traditional manufacturing systems. “Here (China) we have an average working day of twelve hours, the maximum being sixteen: women and children on night shifts; no minimum age, and in consequence children of five or six or seven working all day or all night; no care of women before or after childbirth; no safeguarding of the health of the workers. We find that everywhere the most modern machinery is being introduced such as the Western countries have only known for a few years, but everywhere the most antiquated methods for dealing with the workers.”⁷⁴

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid., 2.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 4.

From Tianjin to Hong Kong, the NCC organized local industrial commissions, often under the leadership of the local YMCA and also pressured Chinese Christian colleges to pay more attention to training social workers. This continued pressure among the Chinese Christian community did achieve some results. The NCC organized medical care for workers and educational facilities for their children. In Chefoo (modern day Yantai), Christian employers began providing Sundays off, and in Shanghai the NCC organized nurseries for some mill workers.⁷⁵

Another important service the Christian Council provided for Chinese labor was continuous appeals for oversight. Although labor reform policies sounded good on paper, for the most part, there was no plan for implementation or enforcement.

On March 29, 1923, the ministry of agriculture and commerce published factory legislation for temporary application. These regulations were applied both to Chinese and foreign industry, focused on child labor (section 4), set regulations on working time to an eight-hour work day for minors and ten-hour day for adults. Employers were encouraged to give workers at least two days rest every month and rest periods throughout the day which stipulated how workers should be paid. However, in reality, few of these measures were ever successfully implemented.

Since there was little incentive for businesses to comply with such regulations, it was up to philanthropic organizations to campaign for public pressure to meet the demands of labor. The YMCA pressured foreign business leaders to adopt pledges to follow Christian practices in the treatment of workers. Allied Christian organizations

⁷⁵ Zung, "Modern Industry in China," 12. Housing schemes, cooperative stores, rec. rooms, public baths, savings banks, and pension schemes were among some of the other improvements the industrial committees sought to implement.

advocated creating a “truly Christian industrial order in China” that would employ no children under the age of twelve, enforce one day’s rest in every seven, and employ safeguards for workers such as limited hours, improved sanitary conditions, and the installment of safety devices.⁷⁶ In 1923, the Tianjin YMCA joined branches across China in refusing to provide welfare in factories which continued to press laborers into long extended hours.

After the Japanese invasion on July 7th 1937, much of the publication efforts of the NCC were redirected towards advocating patriotism and caring for the needs of a society at war. The efforts to improve working conditions were largely shelved as a priority to be reawakened by Henry D. Jones (1918-1987) who temporarily joined the NCC staff from 1947-1950 after working with the Detroit Labor Movement for 13 years.⁷⁷ Jones helped to establish the industrial mission as a ministry field in China. By 1947, the NCC was almost entirely composed of native Christians rather than foreign missionaries and the council would remain active until it was displaced by the Three-Self Patriotic Movement in 1951. While the council’s activities in the postwar period were significantly limited, the industrial committee reported negotiating favorable terms for workers in Christian hospitals and the continued work of the YMCA and YWCA in the realm of worker’s education.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ “China Industrial Work,” *Industrial Reconstruction Series* 3, (1924): 1, Box 94, Industrial Work, Industrial reconstruction pamphlet series, nos. 1-4 undated and 1924, YMCA International Work in China: An Inventory of its Records, 1890-1991, Kautz Family YMCA Archives, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

⁷⁷ The Henry David Jones Collection, 1950s-1970s Papers are held at the Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

⁷⁸ T. L. Chang, Executive Secretary (1950), “Biennial Report of the Committee on Christian Service in Industrial Relations of N.C.C. in China 1948-1950,” Box 94, Industrial Work, Miscellaneous reports,

In 1949, the committee distributed several publications that foreshadow the changes that would be later enforced through the PRC: a pamphlet titled: “The Significance and Means for Chinese Christians in Organizing Cooperatives” advocated for the self-reliance of Chinese churches by creating cooperatives. Another series detailed how Christian hospitals could extend free medical care to workers by creating cooperative insurance plans and opening special labor hospitals that cared exclusively for workers and their families. The publications department also announced a series of titles on Christianity, labor and poetry about Jesus by communist authors.

Additionally, the NCC arranged for students to spend time working in factories to study the daily life, habits and thinking of workers. Fourteen students from the North China and Central China Theological Seminaries were recruited for this program. Along with laboring alongside factory workers, the seminarians taught workers to sing and read and visited labor welfare institutions. In the second half of 1950, the NCC Industrial Committee set an agenda to direct Christians to a “correct attitude towards workers” in order to implement worker’s education, improve factory sanitation and advance medical mutual aid projects, distribute literature on forming cooperatives to eliminate exploitation, promote industrial evangelism, sponsor programs for worker recreation, provide daycare, and economic relief.⁷⁹

undated and 1923, 1935, YMCA International Work in China: An Inventory of its Records, 1890-1991, Kautz Family YMCA Archives, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

⁷⁹ All reported in: T. L. Chang, Executive Secretary (1950), “Biennial Report of the Committee on Christian Service in Industrial Relations of N.C.C. in China 1948-1950,” 651-2 to 651-3, Box 94, Industrial Work, Miscellaneous reports, undated and 1923, 1935, YMCA International Work in China: An Inventory of its Records, 1890-1991, Kautz Family YMCA Archives, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

YMCA Labor Investigations.

The YMCA was particularly active in responding to the NCC charge for Christians to conduct their own investigations into labor. The vice president of the Christian college in Guandong, Lingnan University, Y. L. Lee conducted one of these first surveys and published his findings to the YMCA National Committee.⁸⁰ His study sought to consider the major issues confronting labor in China. From 1925-1926, he sent surveys to union leaders, which were largely influenced by the Communist Party. Although only 180 of the unions of the 250 he solicited responded, this portion represented a sizable three hundred thousand workers. His findings on the labor movement in the city were largely positive, arguing that it had improved the lives of workers and lifted them up not only financially but increased their social status and preserved their human dignity. Along with becoming better educated, the workers in the labor unions were also more patriotic, although Lee was more critical of the Communist Party's influence. He concluded that both the GMD and CCP should leave labor unions alone to allow workers to lead the unions themselves.⁸¹ Although a strong advocate of the labor movement, the YMCA investigations met with resistance from both factory owners and labor associations. While Lee's examination of Canton represents one of the most

⁸⁰ "Some aspects of the Labour Situation in Canton," Y. L. Lee vice president of Lingnan University, Acting General Secretary of Canton YMCA. Box 94, Industrial Work, Miscellaneous reports, undated and 1923, 1935, YMCA International Work in China: An Inventory of its Records, 1890-1991, Kautz Family YMCA Archives, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis. Wang Dong discusses the progressive influence of Lingnan University in his work: Wang Dong, "Managing God's Higher Learning: U.S.-China Cultural Encounter and Canton Christian College (Lingnan University) 1888-1952," (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2007).

⁸¹ "Changing Industrial Life," Y. L. Lee vice president of Lingnan University, Acting General Secretary of Canton YMCA, 2, Box 94, Industrial Work, Miscellaneous reports, undated and 1923, 1935, YMCA International Work in China: An Inventory of its Records, 1890-1991, Kautz Family YMCA Archives, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

extensive investigations conducted by YMCA staff, numerous individual pastors and YMCA members also published their own reports as well.

For example, Kenneth Duncan, who served as a missionary at Canton Christian College, saw his work with labor as fundamental to advancing the Christian message in China:

It has often been observed that the Christian Church has an extraordinary opportunity in connection with the problem of the industrialization of China. If by its efforts the Church can anticipate the coming of the industrial order in this country provide those safeguards that will insure to the masses of workers just treatment and fair working conditions, and by its organized effort and the influence of its members humanize industry and foster relationships of brotherhood, cooperation, mutual respect and happiness, it will be a splendid achievement in Christian service rivaling in importance any other activity the Church can undertake. The Church has an opportunity, and indeed a responsibility, in taking the initiative in the intelligent study and solution of the labor problem that should challenge its finest talents, its broadest sympathies, and its most generous efforts.⁸²

He clearly felt the church was positioned to spare China from the grueling history of labor exploitation that was experienced in Europe and its morally degenerative consequences, and that it should not only take the lead in arousing and enlightening public opinion, but also in shaping public policy to ensure enforcement of existing laws.⁸³

The conclusions of Duncan's report exhibit a Christian pastoral idealism. When describing the concentration of labor into small unsanitary urban areas; he laments "the loss of fresh air and the freedom of country life to the rush and congestion of the factory worker." Under the lens of the Chinese Christian intellectual and the foreign missionary,

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Kenneth Duncan, "Changing Industrial Life," (1925), 3-4. Box 94, Industrial Work, Miscellaneous reports, undated and 1923, 1935, YMCA International Work in China: An Inventory of its Records, 1890-1991, Kautz Family YMCA Archives, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

European industrialization is deconstructed into a system of poverty creation. In a report from the city of Wuhan, Charles C. Shedd argues that the exploitation of labor leads men to become a parasitic class:

The regrettable thing is that modern industry seems to carry an accompanying increase of poverty, at least poverty is here seen in its more objectionable phases. Closely related also are a greater insecurity of work, more unemployment, children doing men's work, and women becoming wage earners instead of home keepers. Many men are therefore being pushed out by the lower paid women and children; some of whom take this chance to go into more remunerative occupations, while others see in it a chance to loaf allowing the wives and daughters to support the family, the percentage of men in this parasitic class being alarmingly high.⁸⁴

Although Shedd's comments are somewhat condescending towards Chinese male labor, he places responsibility for this degeneracy on the system of industry.

J. W. Nipps, who served as secretary of the Tianjin YMCA, wrote a report on the city of Yantai, which was a popular camping spot for the Tianjin Boy Scouts. His survey of several factories that produced hairnets and lace argued that female labor was a positive influence on individual well-being and improved the overall social status and freedom of women in the city. As an example of how this freedom was expressed, he mentioned that working women in Yantai were more likely to get divorced or break marriage arrangements. Nipps concludes his report by arguing that the system of European industrialization is a corrupt system at its core and the only way to create something different in China would be to reject at least some of the fundamental principles of that system.⁸⁵

⁸⁴ Charles Shedd, "Charles C. Shedd, Industrial Work Wu-Han Cities, China, 1922 Administration Report," YMCA International Work: An Inventory of Annual and Quarterly Reports of work in China, Kautz Family YMCA Archives, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

⁸⁵ J. W. Nipps, (1922) "A Study of the City of Chefoo," YMCA International Work: An Inventory of Annual and Quarterly Reports of work in China, Kautz Family YMCA Archives, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

Thomas Tchou who was also the head of the Pudong, Shanghai model village conducted a survey of Shanghai's slums areas in his report which utilized several images to reveal the squalor of worker's housing.⁸⁶ Tchou argued that the urban migration caused by the factories created overcrowding that was unprecedented in Chinese history even during times of great famine. The following image on the left shows the main entrance of a worker's community with large pools of disease laden stagnant water; the image to the right shows the houses inside the compound, some made of the hulls of old boats and also surrounded by cesspools of standing water.



Figure 3.7: (Left) Disease Laden Water (Right) Shelters with More Stagnant Water.⁸⁷

According to his report, the average worker in Shanghai in 1925 spent no more than 2 yuan on housing per month, though many spent less than 1 yuan. The highest quality housing among the city's poor were two story houses that had underground ditches for drainage, access to outdoor public toilets, some basic infrastructure including gas or electric lamps and one water tap for a row of

⁸⁶ M. Thomas Tchou, "Outlines of Report on Housing and Social Conditions Among Industrial Workers in Shanghai," The Industrial Department National Committee YMCA of China, 20 Museum Road, Shanghai, China, May 1926, Box 94, Miscellaneous reports, undated and 1923, 1935, Industrial work. all images below are from his report.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 4.

houses. Although these homes are four to six hundred square feet, they were usually 6 to 9 yuan per month, making it necessary for two to four families to live together with an average of seven members per family. The odor combined with the noise of so many people living in such a small space meant that most of the residents were impatient and unhappy. Tchou also pointed out the complete lack of education that would help young people better their situation was absent. The second level of poor housing was distinguished by its even dirtier conditions, disrepair and unsafe construction which often resulted in collapse. The worse housing were the dormitories that offered nothing more than a bed to a single male for a rate of 30-80 cents a month.⁸⁸ YMCA reports would often emphasize the need for recreation time in forming national citizens and instilling the collective morality that industrialization seemed to destroy.

The images below show temporary housing that was used by poor workers in Shanghai. The image in the first line on the right is an old boat that housed a family of nine. The second row shows two images of a hut that cost about 20 yuan to build.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 4-5.

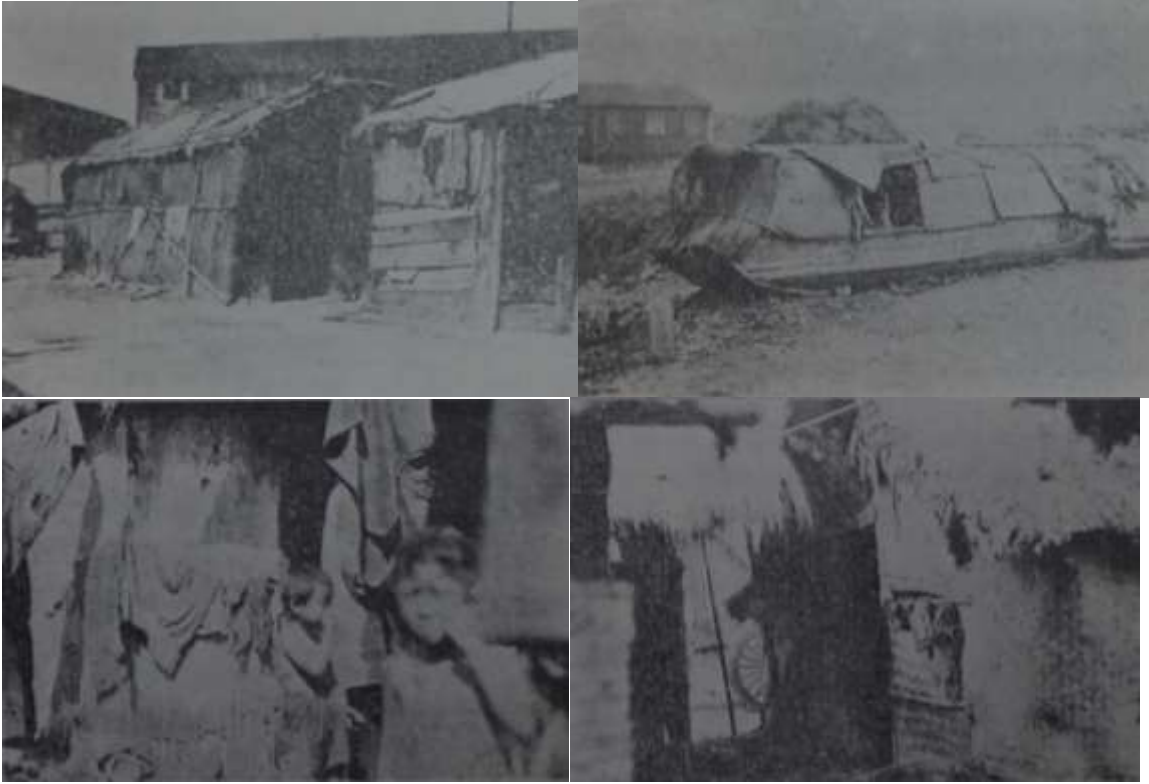


Figure 3.8: (Top Left) Temporary Housing used by Workers in Shanghai (Top Right) Housing made from an old Boat (Bottom Left) Worker's Children (Bottom Right) Fragile Huts made from Mud and Grasses. ⁸⁹

Tchou identified overcrowding as the most significant problem for the working class and saw all other social betterment programs from education to recreation as necessary but ultimately secondary.⁹⁰ Tchou described the migrant laborers in very positive terms. The several hundred thousand Northerners who came to Shanghai were:

...friendly and hardworking people who have come to the city to find a livelihood. Having no patrimony and no relatives who can help, they come to the city unbefriended by the native people and are subjected to the worst of hardships in making a living. Being driven often by disillusion and hunger, they are willing to do the most menial work for very low wages. So they have become the beasts of burden of a toiling community. Their income is so small and the cost of living is so much higher here than where they come from, that they cannot as a rule afford to pay the rent in

⁸⁹ Ibid., 6-7.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 8.

any of the houses described above. So they are obliged to choose between the open air and mud huts to be built by themselves. As a result, Shanghai is now surrounded by a dotted chain of mud hut colonies which are readily visible to anyone who travels about the outskirts.⁹¹

Tchou also described the process of gentrification which drove poor tenants out of their homes. After migrant workers would rent empty lots, they would build huts and drive up the property cost. Then the landlords would evict tenants and resell the land to richer families. These huts usually had no windows, and were extremely frail to the elements. Although these migrant worker communities were the most destitute, located on the literal periphery of the city, they were almost completely untouched by any kind of social welfare. They lacked all public utilities, had no access to medical service and no access to clean water or garbage disposal.

The YMCA was especially critical of the international municipal police who occasionally burned down these mud huts because they violated local building regulations. After burning several hundred huts down, a number of labor organizations mobilized to protest these actions. “Appeals for help and mercy were addressed to the foreign officials of the settlement and Chinese officials by the General Labor Union, the Shanghai Students Union, the Street Unions and a relief committee. Much publicity was given the matter in the Chinese press and wide interest was aroused.” Then Tchou went on to describe concession police tactics as “ruthless inhumanity.” As a final credit to the authenticity of his findings, he mentioned his own contraction of granular conjunctivitis while conducting the research and ended his assessment of Shanghai’s industry with a compelling question: “Is it inevitable that industrial communities should be what they

⁹¹ Ibid., 10.

are; does it mean that when China becomes more and more industrialized the whole nation will eventually be transformed into a big slum; shall society continue its callousness and indifference; what is the new social order going to be?”⁹²

War Relief, Patriotism, and Solidarity.

While some missionaries may have sought to remain neutral in response to the Japanese invasion of China, the preponderance of Christian organizations in China and Chinese Christian student associations abroad expressed a profound sense of indignation towards Japan’s aggressive actions. As one Chinese student studying abroad put it: “Japan’s frequent display of military, naval and aerial prowess on Chinese soil is the most stupid way of promoting trade relations with China.”⁹³ YMCA missionaries helped to shape public opinion on the Japanese occupation of Manchuria both in China and abroad. Sherwood Eddy sent eyewitness cables to be published in the *New York Herald Tribune* after the invasion of Manchuria:

I was present at the capture of Mukden. Evidence of many witnesses interviewed at time and on spot points to premeditated, carefully prepared offensive plan of Japan army without provocation of any Chinese attack, producing bitter resentment when China suffering with flood disaster and world preoccupied. Japanese troops not withdrawn, but all strategic points southern Manchuria still held by Japanese and Chinchow bombed. I testify to evidence of efforts to establish puppet independent government in Manchuria under Japanese military control. I have forwarded sworn statements of interviews with Chinese leaders in Manchuria who testify to repeated pressure of Japanese to induce them to head independent governments.

⁹² Ibid., 17.

⁹³ William Lin Yu Shen, “The World Crisis in Manchuria” *Manchuria Before November 16,*” this was a special article published though the *Chinese Christian Student*, part of the Chinese Student Christian Association, 347 Madison Avenue, New York City, Y. E. Hsiao general secretary.

Similar condemnations came from YMCA leadership after the Shanghai War roughly four months later.⁹⁴ In response to the more than 165,000 refugees created by the conflict, ninety-two camps were opened in every available building in the international settlement and French concession. The YMCA, YWCA, and churches all opened their doors. The YMCA buildings alone housed over 5000 refugees, not including those in the camps.⁹⁵

The YMCA and YWCA secretaries, working alongside members of the Salvation Army and Shanghai Rotary Club, ran the refugee camps. YMCA Boy Scouts helped by admitting and registering the refugees. The scouts were also responsible for the camp's security and discipline:

With such a large family disciplinary measures are sometimes necessary. In the Continental Bank there is a bench on which men and boys who have disobeyed the rules must stand to be seen of all. Women and children must stand on the floor beside them with their faces to the wall. One man was caught stealing. A peaked cap was stuck on his head and he was escorted all over the building, upstairs and down, by the scouts who announced to all in Chinese and English This man is a thief.⁹⁶

The YMCA refugee camps encouraged residents to attend classes for studying Chinese, and making some of the supplies needed by the hospitals attending to wounded soldiers. Training refugees in various job skills was seen as a necessary step towards economic recovery. There were also many examples of "sent down youth," parents sending their children to help farmers rebuild their homes after they were destroyed, and to sow the next year's crops.

⁹⁴ "Report of The Christian War Relief Committee," Shanghai, 1932, Box 95, Miscellaneous articles and printed material, undated and 1918-1940 (3 folders), YMCA International Work: An Inventory of Annual and Quarterly Reports of work in China, Kautz Family YMCA Archives, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 15.

A monthly YMCA magazine published in Guangzhou captured much of the patriotic enthusiasm that merged with the YMCA mission after the beginning of the war. The Guangzhou branch called for everyone to stand up for the survival of the country, and unify for justice. Wu Tiecheng, a local member, argued that war must be fought by the whole of society and that it involves everyone's resources and power. The Guangzhou members wanted to greatly expand membership and non-member participation in the activities it hosted to educate and train society to mobilize for war. One article entitled "The Guangzhou YMCA I Know," claimed that by not serving others you are being served yourself. The branch emphasized many nationalist ideas that replicated parts of Jiang Jieshi's New Life Movement principles and the philosophies of The Three Principles of the People, *Sanmin Zhuyi* (三民主義). They claimed to teach morality, build up individual character, cultivate a scientific brain, encourage a life of physical exercise and to develop a healthy community. As part of this initiative to mobilize Chinese citizens, the YMCA established a Committee for Working through Hardship, *guonan gongzuo hui* (GNH) which organized all Christian churches to cultivate patriotism and provide support to the military. For example, the GNH organized collection drives to comfort army soldiers and campaigns to sell government war bonds. In three months they claimed to have raised over 1.3 million yuan. YMCA staff was also put in charge of several government refugee shelters in the area. The Guangzhou members wanted to make clear that their work was not confined to propagating their religious message, but that they had done much to promote the current needs of the Chinese people and embodied the Cantonese revolutionary fighting spirit.

As mentioned earlier, Wu Tiecheng noted several ways that the YMCA was working towards national salvation. The first of these was the use of YMCA printing facilities and for members to distribute thousands of fliers and books on the topic of “Discovering the hidden agenda of Japan, our attacking enemy.” Regarding the promotion of public health, the Y was experienced in promoting and setting up lectures. During the war, the association set up lectures with models of goods produced in Japan and Chinese market equivalents.⁹⁷ Meetings also featured famous scholars to discuss the problems caused by Japan’s invasion and how China could leverage its international influence. Rather than singing Christian hymns, they organized affiliated church members to compose and sing patriotic songs in public and utilized their movie and slide show equipment to hold public viewings of patriotic films and drama, *huaju*. Training programs included organizing emergency medical teams to help victims after aerial bombardment and how to guard against poison gas. The YMCA even hosted mass training sessions for teaching civilians to use swords. Much of their work centered on bringing encouragement to soldiers. They organized groups of civilians to make trips to the front to distribute medicine, extra clothing and other gifts to encourage morale. In Guangzhou alone, the YMCA organized thirty more schools to aid wartime children and worked alongside the Guangzhou Red Cross to manage shelters and educate refugees.

After the war with Japan became total, the China YMCA remained active not only in free China where it became a growing force for nationalism but also in occupied cities where, until 1941, foreign concessions provided some measure of protection to relief

⁹⁷ Donald Jordan has shown how effective Chinese boycotts could be at damaging the Japanese economy in Donald A. Jordan, *Chinese Boycotts versus Japanese Bombs: The Failure of China's "Revolutionary Diplomacy, 1931-32,"* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1991).

agencies. Years before the U.S. entered the war against Japan, the YMCA promoted news about Japan’s atrocities abroad while training civilians to support the war effort. Christian organizations in China were feeling the devastating effects of Japan’s colonial endeavors in China.⁹⁸ A report issued in 1939 described the tremendous cost that Japanese occupation had on the Christian effort in China:

...for almost two years death and destruction have stalked over the land. The nation’s vast ten year program of reconstruction was rudely interrupted in July 1937. Thirty to forty million refugees have suffered untold privations and hardships. The loss of civilian lives has been stupendous. The advancing invaders have brought havoc and destruction to cultural and Christian institutions. Japan’s crusade has taken toll of a total of 34 Christian hospitals since the outbreak of hostilities.⁹⁹

What’s remarkable that even in the midst of occupation and war, the China YMCA also responded to global appeals for emergency help. For example, Dr. J Usang Ly, the president of Chiaotung University and a member of the NCC and YMCA in Shanghai and Kiangsu sent around 1000 yuan to the Czechoslovakian YMCA for emergency relief.

The YMCA also supported yearly nationwide fundraising events to gather contributions to assist wounded soldiers:

Money Raised by YMCAs in 1938 for Soldier Relief		
<i>City</i>	<i>Goal</i>	<i>Actual</i>
Peiping	10,000	11,000
Tientsin	10,000	17,462.50
Shanghai	50,000	56,000
Ningpo	3,000	3,300

Table 3.1: YMCA 1938 Soldier Relief Fund.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ “The Y in China’s Trial 1939” Issued by the National Committee Young Men’s Christian Association of China, 131 Museum Road, Shanghai. Box 95, YMCA Emergency Service to Soldiers in China, 1939, YMCA International Work: An Inventory of Annual and Quarterly Reports of work in China, Kautz Family YMCA Archives, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 1.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 12.

Table 3.1: (cont'd)

Hongkong	20,000	21,000
Canton	15,000	40,000
Changsha	20,000	22,000
Hangkow	50,000	52,000
Sian	0	5000
Kunming	0	0
(Yunnanfu)	10,000	10,713.00
Total	188,000	238,476

The China YMCA also received large cash donations from the central government, Hong Kong and overseas Chinese for their work with soldiers.

While the members of the YMCA only represented a small fraction of the population, their members often held immense political and social importance. Their well-known experience in managing disaster relief meant that their staff were in high demand throughout the first half of the twentieth century by Nationalist government officials working with providing emergency relief.¹⁰¹ The Second World War in China also encouraged self-reflection among YMCA missionaries. Not only did the atrocities of war shake the faith of Chinese Christian youth in a just God, they also questioned the leadership of Christian democracies which were toppled by Japanese militarism.

As part of its war relief campaign, the YMCA also sought to raise money to help students displaced by the war. By March 31st 1939 they had raised 185,795 yuan which was allocated to a joint YMCA/YWCA project, the National Student Relief Committee. This wartime work with underprivileged children and the children of refugees continued the YMCA's intense focus on educational development. It is significant that many of the YMCA members were also affiliated with China's many public and private universities.

¹⁰¹ For example, General Zhang Zhizhong requested that Chang I-fan, the secretary of the Changsha YMCA head a disaster relief program entirely financed by the government for Hunan Province in 1939, see: "The Y in China's Trial 1939," 14-15.

As mentioned earlier, several members were the presidents of these colleges. It is important to note, for example, Zhang Boling, the founder of Nankai University, also served as president of the Tianjin YMCA. Below are two images of the schools set up by the YMCA war relief work in Shanghai. Once again, images focus both on classroom discipline and physical training.¹⁰²



Figure 3.9: (Left) YMCA War Relief Classroom Training (Right) YMCA Physical Training.¹⁰³

The Tianjin YMCA, even under occupation, also remained active at organizing and providing relief during the war. A report from a branch in the city described the growing problems North China faced with thousands of innocent people lacking basic food, clothing, or housing. In 1937, the NCC established the National Christian Council War Relief Committee (NCCWRC) which aimed to do large scale relief to cope with the unprecedented suffering and displacement caused by the invasion. The branch of the NCCWRC in Tianjin was composed of members of the local churches, the YMCA and YWCA.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² Ibid., 17.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 18.

¹⁰⁴ National Christian War Relief Committee (Tientsin Branch), Report Part 1, Office YMCA, 60 Rue de Paris, Tientsin, China, Telephone 31043, June 30, 1939, Box 95, YMCA Emergency Service to Soldiers in

In the fall of 1939, the Tianjin NCCWRA began relief work in 17 counties including Tianjin with an initial budget of 55,000 yuan. More than 13,000 was raised locally in Tianjin, 30,000 came from the North China Committee on Coordination of Emergency Relief; 8436.44 was provided by the Three Service Clubs Fund of Tientsin and 2402.90 was already in hand. The majority of this fund went to relieve refugees who were living in the rural areas around Tianjin.¹⁰⁵ The following two charts on the next pages show the origin of the money collected and how it was distributed; both come from the Tianjin NCCWRC report:

Fundraising for NCCWRC Tianjin Branch		
North China Coordination Committee		27000
British Fund for Relief		3000
Service Clubs Fund		8436.44
YMCA		2682.94
YWCA		2545.73
Wesley Church		1342.9
Taku Road Christian Church & TACC		1463.34
English Methodist Church		374.5
Tung Ma Lu English Methodist Church		107
Hopei Kung Li Hui		304.82
Ts'ang Men K'uo Chinese Christian Church		237.14
Tientsin Church of England Fund		180.4
Nan Men Wai MEM		171.1
San I Chuang MEM		130.97
His Men Li MEM		81.4
Kuo Lou Hsi Chinese Christian Church		129
Chung Hua Sheng Kung Hui		339.43

Table 3.2: Fundraising for NCCWRC Tianjin Branch.¹⁰⁶

China, 1939, YMCA International Work: An Inventory of Annual and Quarterly Reports of work in China, Kautz Family YMCA Archives, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ *Report of the Tientsin Chinese Committee: United War Work Campaign, November 11-18, 1918*, (1919): 14. Box 94, YMCA International Work: An Inventory of Annual and Quarterly Reports of work in China, Kautz Family YMCA Archives, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

Table 3.2 (cont'd)

Tientsin Union Church		103.57
Kung Hsueh Students		992.08
Kuang Tung School		628.02
P'ei Ts'ai School		569.2
Chiu Chen & Yang Shan Schools		536
Huei Wen Academy		152.8
Keen School Students		96.5
Keen School Faculty		53.5
Individual Subscriptions		1461.2
Balance from Mr. Henderson		4402.9
Less amount paid out to Pastor Li		-2000
		55522.88
Advanced from North China Coordination Committee		477.12
Total		56000

The report from the NCCWRC in Tianjin included several pictures of their work along with a moralizing caption that rationalized their work with existing paradigms of self-reliance. The image below shows a refugee receiving seed grain for rebuilding his livelihood. The caption which reads: “we furnish the seed, the refugees furnish the land and labor, Result: Living problem solved.”¹⁰⁷



Figure 3.10: Refugees Receiving Seed Grain.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

A strong sense of self-reliance is present in many of the captions in this year-end report from the Tianjin YMCA, several images say straightforwardly, if you don't work you don't eat. To illustrate, the image below on the extreme left shows female refugees making padded winter clothes for other refugees. The second image shows children returning home after a day of schooling and light industrial work. The third image, again emphasizing work with children, shows refugees pasting envelopes.



Figure 3.11: Tianjin YMCA (Left) Refugees making Padded Winter Clothes, (Middle) Children Returning Home after Day School (Right) Refugee Children Working Pasting Envelopes.¹⁰⁹

The NCWRC in Tianjin also organized young boys into teams to shine shoes and purchased a small number of rickshaws to help healthy refugees make a living.



Figure 3.12: (Left and Middle) YMCA Organized Boys to Shine Shoes (Right) Rickshaws Purchased for Healthy Refugees to make a Living.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

Sinicizing Western Charity.

Along with international Christian associations like the YMCA, Tianjin was also host to numerous national and international charity agencies organized by Buddhist and other religious organizations. Pierre Fuller has argued that although Buddhism did not have the same level of influence it once did, practitioners of the religion found new ways to adapt the religion to China's needs in the early twentieth century.¹¹¹ One interesting example was the various swastika societies active nationally since the 1920s.¹¹² The World Red Swastika Society¹¹³ originated from several leading members of a syncretic folk religion called Dao Yuan which emerged in China's Jinan, Shandong area.¹¹⁴ It quickly spread across China and to Japan and Korea as a powerful charity organization.¹¹⁵ The Red Swastika Society found favor and official recognition as a charity through its established purposes for promoting ethics and encouraging philanthropy while attempting to blend moral components from Confucianism,

¹¹¹ Pierre Fuller, "North China Famine Revisited: Unsung Native Relief in the Warlord Era, 1920-1921," *Modern Asian Studies* 47, no. 3 (2013): 820-850.

¹¹² Currently, the scholarship on red and other swastika societies is still rather undeveloped. However, a dissertation by a recent graduate student from Nankai University, Hou Yawei promises to provide the first comprehensive academic study of this religious charity organization.

¹¹³The World Red Swastika Society continues to exist, with branches in Taiwan, Japan and Singapore, see: <http://www.twrss.org/>.

¹¹⁴ Li Guangwei 李光伟, "Minguo Shandong dao yuan ji shijie hongwanzihui shi shi guochen 民国山东道院暨世界红卍字会史事钩沉 [Republician Shandong Dao Yuan & World Red Swastika Society historical events and literature]," Shandong shifan daxue lishi wenhua yu shehui fazhan xueyuan, Shandong, Jinan 2008.

¹¹⁵ Duara describes the Red Swastika Society as part of the anti-Western movement in Asia towards a Pan-Asian discourse. Prasenjit Duara, "The Discourse of Civilization and Pan-Asianism," *Journal of World History* 12, no. 1 (Spring 2001): 111. However, Dr. Ren Yunlan argues that these societies were careful to profess an international spirit of community that was anti-political and focused on philanthropy. That the five religions these societies sought to unify included Christianity and Islam seems to lend credence to this view. Ren Yunlan, *Jindai Tianjin*, 231.

Buddhism, Taoism, Christianity, and Islam.¹¹⁶ Xiong Xiling became the society's chairman in 1925. By 1937, the Red Swastika Society claimed approximately seven to ten million followers.¹¹⁷ Besides the more commonly known Red Swastika society, Yellow and Blue Swastika Societies were also active in Tianjin with largely the same Buddhist philosophical characteristics, but with a somewhat different specific relief focus.

The Yellow Swastika Society originated from the very specific efforts of Wang Zhen, one of Shanghai's most public philanthropists. Andrea Janku also argues that the swastika society movement was evidence of the internationalization of disaster relief in the early twentieth century that patterned other organizations like the Red Cross, YMCA, Salvation Army, and others.¹¹⁸

Broadly speaking, these societies provided spiritual counsel, natural disaster and war relief, education, and poverty alleviation.¹¹⁹ Within China, their presence was quite significant. In the fifteen years between 1922 and 1937 they created 317 branches, conducted 84 disaster relief efforts for floods, war, and drought. They built 84 primary schools, 18 facilities for abandoned infants, *yuyingtang*, 4 poor work houses, *xiyisuo*, 5 orphanages, *gueryuan*, 3 workhouses for children, 2 institutes for caring for the disabled

¹¹⁶ Although it still exists in places like Japan and Taiwan, it has been driven from the Chinese mainland by the PRC policies against non-traditional religions.

¹¹⁷ Duara also cites several other studies which placed the number of members or followers between 30,000 to 3 million, Duara, "The Discourse," 118.

¹¹⁸ Andrea Janku, "The Internationalization of Disaster Relief in Early Twentieth Century China," *Berliner Chinahefte/Chinese History and Society* 43 (2013): 6-28. Also see: Mechthild Leutner and Izabella Goikhman, *State, Society and Governance in Republican China* (Berlin, Lit, 2014).

¹¹⁹ Liang Jiagui 梁家贵, "Dongdang shiqi de minjian zuzhi yu shehui jiuji: Yi Minguo shiqi de shijie hongwanzihui li 动荡时期的民间组织与社会救济: 以民国时期的世界红卍字会为例 [Turbulent period of civil society organizations and relief: The case of the World Red Swastika Society during the Republican period]," Fuyang shifan xueyuan wan bei wenhua yanjiu zhongxin, Anhui, Fuyang, 2012.

canfeiyuan, 12 homes for caring for widows, *xuliju*, 14 clinics for helping poor women before and after they gave birth, *xucanju*, 3 poor factories, *pinmin gongchang*, 51 banks for lending to the poor *daijisuo*, 16 hospitals, 175 clinics, 11 vaccination clinics, and 39 places to provide coffins and burial expenses to the poor for a total of 343 organizations nationwide.¹²⁰

The first swastika society was established in Tianjin, in 1922, in the Japanese concession area. The work of the swastika societies can be divided into two categories, emergency relief and continuous relief. Because of the turbulence and financial instability of the Republican Period, government relief organizations were insufficient in responding to the needs of refugees and urban poor and often needed to rely on organizations like these societies.

The Tianjin swastika societies helped in times of disaster by setting up temporary soup kitchens to respond to refugees passing through or settling in Tianjin. These kitchens were especially important during the winter months when each year peasant beggars and unemployed farmers came to Tianjin looking for work and supplemental food. In 1929, the relief provided by the Red Swastika Society fed up to 3,000 people per day.¹²¹ Not only did the Tianjin Red Swastika Society provide soup, they also raised money to supply clothes and pass out grain.¹²² In areas affected by famine and drought, the society distributed seed for planting in the villages around Tianjin and in the surrounding

¹²⁰ Ren Yunlan, *Jindai Tianjin*, 231.

¹²¹ Hou Yawei 侯亚伟, "Jiu ren, jiuji yu jiushi: Tianjin hongwanzihui cishan shiye tanxi 救人、救己与救世: 天津红卍字会慈善事业探析 [Save People, save Self, and save the World: The Origins and Cause of the Tianjin Red Swastika Society's Charity Work] *Shijie zongjiao wenhua* 世界宗教文化, (March, 2012), 28.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 27.

provinces. They also provided temporary hospitals for wounded soldiers and opened their own schools. The provisions they made for the disabled are a unique part of Tianjin's history of philanthropy.¹²³

Along with providing emergency relief measures to respond to the many crisis of the early Republican Period, the swastika societies also established permanent institutions for helping the poor and refugees in the city. The Tianjin Blue and Yellow Swastika Societies were particularly active in establishing schools in poor rural villages around Tianjin such as the #3 Branch School located in Xinmin Zhulin village. These schools not only provided free education, they also helped students obtain clothes¹²⁴ and coal for cooking and heating.¹²⁵ Although established as independent, private schools, the Nationalist government played an important role in investigating and regulating what was taught,¹²⁶ each school providing yearly reports of faculty and student rosters.¹²⁷ The swastika societies also established retirement homes, help for widows, clinics and vaccination centers throughout Tianjin. City taxes went to support specific swastika society relief programs. During the war with Japan, the city helped to

¹²³ In 1930, the canfeiyuan accommodated 50 residents, 16 in 1947 and 22 in 1948, see: Ren Yunlan, *Jindai Tianjin*, 231.

¹²⁴ TMA, J0110-1-001703-001, 1946. Tianjin Municipal Archives [note on searching for documents related to the swastika societies in the Tianjin archives – although some of the documents related to the swastika societies are posted correctly in the catalogue under 卅字会 the majority can be found by searching using the Chinese character for ten thousand 万 instead of 卅].

¹²⁵ TMA, J0025-3-006280-002, November 16, 1948.

¹²⁶ TMA, J0110-3-000503-001, June 29, 1946.

¹²⁷ TMA, J0110-3-000506-001, June 21, 1946.

supplement the costs of relief work through a tax on fish sales and by hosting charity drama performances.¹²⁸

During the Japanese occupation of Tianjin, the swastika societies remained active. For example, in 1940 they set up booths to sell tea and give out vaccinations. However, their position was often tenuous. All branches of the swastika societies were required to register their membership and apply for passes to conduct relief work. In 1937, an incident involving a Blue Swastika Society soup kitchen drew the attention of the Japanese occupied city police.¹²⁹ Although claiming to be anti-political, in 1943 the Yellow Swastika Society did organize some projects to protect Chinese economic interests against the Japanese.¹³⁰

After the war with Japan, the swastika societies proved vital to assisting in the city's recovery. In 1946, the Red Swastika Society applied to the Tianjin Social Bureau to open a food distribution center and set up a transportation network for moving food into the city.¹³¹ The swastika societies worked with the city government in the postwar period to bring running water and electricity to the refugee camps, *nanmin xiuxizhan* and were provided with special tax exemptions and rates to facilitate the relief effort.¹³² Along with providing special subsidies, the city police department also provided extra

¹²⁸ TMA, J0218-3-007341, 1940. Also see: TMA, J0001-3-010181-211, November 18, 1939.

¹²⁹ TMA, J0218-3-004220, January 1937.

¹³⁰ TMA, J0128-2-002749, January 1943. The Yellow Swastika Society was very active in vocalizing anti-Japanese sentiment, this file from the Tianjin chamber of commerce describes their participation in boycotting Japanese goods.

¹³¹ TMA, J0025-3-001156-003, February 26, 1946.

¹³² TMA, J0025-3-006266-004, December 27, 1947.

security forces for the Yellow Swastika camps to protect refugees from fire and night time theft.¹³³ The relationship between the city government and the swastika aid agencies was definitely not a unidirectional reliance. In the immediate post Anti-Japan War period, the city government relied on the well-established networks of the Yellow Swastika Society to collect data on the situation of the poor living in the city.¹³⁴ The Tianjin Social Bureau also coordinated relief; commanding the Red Swastika Society to provide food and relocate refugees staying at their native place associations in Baodi.¹³⁵

However, this supportive relationship between the city government and the shelters began to breakdown by the end of 1948 as more and more requests for support and materials for the refugee shelters were turned down or approved on only a short-term basis.¹³⁶ This city police also played an active role in determining who would be allowed to stay at camps, sending patrols to check refugee ID, *hukou*, status.¹³⁷ The relationship between the swastika societies and the city government was one of mutual assistance and reliance during periods of immense disaster and in dealing with the daily demands of refugee populations.

The Tianjin YMCA and Swastika Societies each played a significant role in the economics of philanthropic relief. Driven by diverse motivations, their popularity and importance for refugees in North China grew in direct proportion with the decline of city government stability. The YMCA provides an excellent case study for examining how

¹³³ TMA, J0025-3-006266-021, August 13, 1948.

¹³⁴ TMA, J0219-3-029626, December 12, 1945.

¹³⁵ TMA, J0025-3-006269-027 July 12, 1948.

¹³⁶ TMA, J0025-3-006266-032, August 10, 1948.

¹³⁷ TMA, J0025-3-006266-038, September 2, 1948.

Tianjin elite internalized Christian concepts of social responsibility and how at least some missionaries became increasingly aware of the detrimental effects that unregulated industry in foreign concessions had both on Chinese workers and the reputation of Christianity itself. The Red, Blue, and Yellow Swastika societies revealed the complex relationship between non-government charities and the Tianjin Social Bureau which sought to coordinate relief work with any and all available resources.

CHAPTER 4: COLLABORATION AND RENEWED VISION: JAPANESE OCCUPATION, U.S. AID IN POST-WAR TIANJIN, 1937 – 1949.



Figure 4.1: “The Bombing of Tientsin.”¹

The pressure of Sino-Japanese relations erupted on July 26th 1937, when the Kwantung Army began their all-out general offensive in North China, occupying Beijing by the 28th.² The onset of war between China and Japan effectively crippled, if not outright annihilated, plans for welfare expansion in Tianjin and placed all city administration under the control of the North China Executive Committee, a “puppet state” based in Beijing. The Japanese also brought new systems of governance and organization that sought to rationalize all aspects of urban political life. From their

¹ “The Bombing of Tientsin,” *British Pathé*, 1937, <https://youtu.be/dnr4E7VMLkc>.

² This is known alternatively as The Battle of Beiping-Tianjin, Ping Jin zuozhan 平津作战, Peiking-Tientsin Operation or North China Incident.

occupation in Manchuria, Taiwan, and Korea, administrators knew that improving social welfare could support their legitimacy. As Rana Mitter has suggested, programs to build up public infrastructure could be good propaganda even among those who otherwise resented their presence.³

This was not simply propaganda, the Japanese did build some impressive infrastructure for the benefit of social welfare. For example, a doctor working with the Chinese National Relief and Rehabilitation Administration in Shandong, Herbert K. Abrams, describes some of the medical improvements made by the Japanese in Northeast China, particularly Qingdao:



Figure 4.2: Postcard of Dojinkai Hospital. 4

³ Mitter, *The Manchurian Myth*, 122-125.

⁴ Last accessed 2/13/2016 <http://www.ebay.ie/itm/China-Tsingtao-Japan-Mil-Post-Card-Dojinkai-Hospital-Tsingtao-C-1930s-/172064400157?hash=item280fd6631d:g:mJYAAOSwT6pVwAqk>.

The Japanese occupation caused many of the better doctors to flee to free China, but certain aspects of the health system were modernized. The Japanese-run Dojinkai hospitals in Tsinan and Tsingdao, established before the war, were strengthened. A medical school was established in Tsingtao, a civilian hospital in Poshan, and a 1000-bed military hospital in Tsingtao. Certain public health programs were initiated: the entire population in the cities was compelled to receive cholera immunizations annually, and an excellent water reservoir was constructed in Tsingtao.⁵

In what ways did the Japanese promote social welfare as legitimacy in Tianjin? This chapter will show how urban charity functioned under the Second Sino-Japanese War as a means of legitimizing Japanese colonialism in Tianjin. Tianjin provides a critical context to study the contradictions of Japanese civilizing ideologies and military and economic objectives. As William Beasley has suggested, there was an obvious conflict between the idealism and self-interest of Japan's approach to forming a Co-Prosperty Sphere. Yet irrespective of these contradictions, a working bureaucratic structure did emerge. In the aftermath of the initial invasion of North China many of these contradictions were clearly defined within the context of the city.⁶

The Japanese invaded Tianjin on July 30, 1937, just two days after Beijing, making it one of the first major cities occupied by the Japanese. The occupation was relatively less violent than elsewhere as the Nationalists did not put up major resistance and the Japanese largely respected the foreign concessions in the first years of the war. Residents from the United States and Great Britain with interests in Tientsin were able to successfully place pressure on Foreign Minister Hirota to cease military action, help arrange for ceasefire in the city, and coordinate relief efforts.⁷ Throughout the war, the

⁵ Herbert K. Abrams, "Abrams Health Rehabilitation in Shantung," *Far Eastern Survey* 15, no. 22 (1946): 341-344.

⁶ W. G. Beasley, *Japanese Imperialism, 1894-1945* (Oxford [Oxfordshire]: Clarendon Press, 1987), 243.

Japanese concession in Tianjin remained a particular stronghold for the Japanese army in North China that sheltered many high-level Chinese collaborators.⁸

There has been a renewed scholarly interest in examining China's wartime collaborators since the Reform Era. In China, the issue of collaboration remains intricately linked with national identity. Although there has been some variation, the word for collaborator, *hanjian*, unequivocally evokes the most diabolical sense of the term as traitor. Where analysis of the Vichy regime began quite swiftly after the Second World War, similar debate of China's occupation regimes was not possible. However, this began to change after Deng Xiaoping came to power and reinstated the university examination system in 1977. Renewed interest in wartime collaboration was pioneered in the 1970s by John Boyle and Gerald Bunker. Their research focused primarily on high-level collaborators like Wang Jingwei and sought to contextualize his government within Japan's failure to negotiate peace with China or affect a unified occupation policy.⁹ These works inevitably shed more light on Japanese military factionalism than they did on occupation governance. In contrast, this chapter will focus on how the Tianjin executive committee functioned under the Japanese.

Poshek Fu and Edward Gunn demonstrated that the Japanese conquest of Chinese cities inspired a complex identity of passivity, resistance, and collaboration among

⁷ An interesting side note regarding the Japanese occupation was that few of the government communications I've worked through initially called it a Japanese invasion and instead referred vaguely to it as the "unexpected and unfortunate event." For example, see: TMA, J0001-3-000277-008, "Guanyu cishan tuanti she shourongsuo jiuji nanmin han 关于慈善团体设收容所救济难民函 [Regarding the setup of charity shelters to relieve refugees]," *Jiujihui* 救济会, August 9, 1937.

⁸ Charles Nelson Spinks, "The Puppets of East Asia," *Asia and the Americas* (May 1944): 213.

⁹ John Hunter Boyle, *China and Japan at War, 1937-1945: The Politics of Collaboration* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1972). Also, see: Gerald E. Bunker, *The Peace Conspiracy: Wang Ching-wei and the China War, 1937-1941* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1972).

intellectuals who stayed behind in occupied areas.¹⁰ Fu's work was really the first to emphasize the gray area between patriotism and treason and bring to discussion the moral decisions of individuals trapped by the context of wartime Shanghai. Similarly, this chapter will bring into focus the work of philanthropists, Chinese and foreign, whose actions both nurtured the weak while legitimating the oppressive. As Gunn points out, the occupation generated intellectual fatalism and individual disillusionment, and yet the persistence of social welfare also presents a narrative of hope and willful struggle, if not against Japanese authority, then against futility.¹¹ While it is difficult to discuss the motivations of Tianjin's collaboration regime and how they may have negotiated or resisted Japanese policies from the archival records available, I will argue that it is clear social welfare remained a critical foundation for effective occupation governance and demonstrates that Japanese civil administration was keenly aware of the economic and civil disruption caused by their occupation and sought to minimize at least some of the unrest it caused.

Parks Coble has shown that while occupation authorities clearly favored Japanese industry, Chinese business leaders could occasionally find ways to demand special consideration from the occupation government in Shanghai.¹² Similarly, the Tianjin Chamber of Commerce remained an active advocate for the difficulties of Chinese refugees and helped to negotiate Japanese concessions to release food, medical supplies

¹⁰ Poshek Fu, *Passivity, Resistance, and Collaboration: Intellectual Choices in Occupied Shanghai, 1937-1945* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993).

¹¹ Edward M. Gunn, *Unwelcome Muse: Chinese Literature in Shanghai and Peking, 1937-1945* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980).

¹² Parks M. Coble, "Japan's New Order and the Shanghai Capitalists: Conflict and Collaboration, 1937-1945," in *Chinese Collaboration with Japan, 1932-1945: The Limits of Accommodation*, ed. David P. Barrett, and Lawrence N. Shyu (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001).

and funding to charities helping refugees. Although in retrospect, “the principal way in which the collaborationists could vindicate themselves after the war was to show that they had made a vital contribution to the Chinese people’s welfare,” such thinking was probably not at the fore of people’s minds from the beginning of August to the end of October, 1937.¹³

Discussing wartime collaboration in Tianjin is also relevant to present relations in East Asia. Timothy Brook has argued that the study of collaboration helps to undermine Chinese Nationalist myth-making which often appropriates Japanese wartime atrocities to achieve its contemporary political aims. One has only to look at the mainland protests over the Diaoyu Islands or the celebrations organized to commemorate the seventieth anniversary of the end of the Second Anti-Japanese War of the past several years to understand the relevance resistance narratives continue to play in Chinese politics.

In reality, occupation created impossible situations where dedicated public officials seeking to protect Chinese civilians worked alongside cronies of Japanese Imperialism. Complicity with occupation authorities most certainly fails to elicit the heroism of resistance, it neither automatically suggests treachery.¹⁴ Charity and refugee relief remained just as important to the survival strategies of the poor and continued to save lives and alleviate suffering. Yet even within the context of humanitarian aid, the occupation created a terrain of conflicting and contradictory outcomes. While soup kitchens and Red Cross shelters brought emergency aid to occupied areas, they also

¹³ Coble, “Japan’s New Order,” 122.

¹⁴ Timothy Brook, *Collaboration: Japanese Agents and Local Elites in Wartime China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005).

helped to stabilize society and indirectly legitimate the Japanese occupation.¹⁵ Finally, this chapter intersects with a growing interest in how the geographic displacement caused by war affected individual and communal identity.¹⁶

Post-Occupation Refugee Relief.



Figure 4.3: “Japanese post in Tientsin where heavy fighting took place.”¹⁷

Although Japan occupied Tianjin for about nine years, very little scholarship discusses the impact of the occupation on social welfare in the city. The bureaucratic reforms under the Tianjin collaboration government are stunning even within the first

¹⁵ Wakeman discusses this ambiguity in his chapter “Hanjian (Traitor)! Collaboration and Retribution in Wartime Shanghai,” in *Becoming Chinese: Passages to Modernity and Beyond*, ed. Wen-Hsin Yeh (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

¹⁶ Keith Schoppa makes the compelling argument that rather than encouraging nationalism, occupation reinforced localism, see: R. Keith Schoppa, *In a Sea of Bitterness Refugees During the Sino-Japanese War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011).

¹⁷ “China: Japanese Invasion,” A Japanese post in Tianjin, where heavy fighting took place, August 1937, <http://www.granger.com/results.asp?image=0065088&itemw=4&itemf=0001&itemstep=1&itemx=47>.

month. For example, although the Tianjin Health Department was woefully underfunded under Guomindang management, the concern of the Japanese for maintaining public health meant that it was at least provided some measure of consistent income.

One of the earliest governing institutions set up by the Japanese after their invasion of North China was the Tianjin Security Maintenance Organization, (TMSO) *Zhi an weichihui* (治安维持会), which quickly became an important part of the occupation infrastructure. The primary purpose of this organization was to suppress anti-Japanese activities while maintaining stability in the early days of the war. The head of the Japanese Tianjin garrison, Shigeru Nakagawa, was charged with organizing candidates for the TSMO. Among other duties, Nakagawa kept track of all charitable spending and approved funding for urban welfare projects.

While Tianjin itself escaped much of the Japanese bombing, it became a focal point for refugees fleeing the chaos of war in the countryside, as it would again during China's civil war. As the Japanese established a more permanent collaboration regime, the weichihui was replaced by the Tianjin City Special Commission, *Jin tebieshi gongshu* (津特别市公署) which also operated as the mayor's office. As I discussed in Chapter 2, both the foreign and local charities in Tianjin had increasingly unified to respond to specific natural disasters and helped to fund the various social welfare programs in the city. After the Japanese occupied the city, this charity union, *lianhehui* (联合会) functioned like a department of the municipal government. In order to provide funding to the Tianjin Bureau of Public Health, the security bureau had to formally request approval of the weichihui to borrow money from the charity union for this purpose. This

bureaucratic process demonstrates two important aspects of welfare governance under the collaboration regime. First, funding was not appropriated without bureaucratic approval, and second, private charity and ideas of benevolence persisted despite the incredible turmoil caused by national invasion.¹⁸

To help sustain the refugees in Tianjin, several businesses provided large cash sums to purchase grain and other foodstuffs. The Beining Railroad Company donated 10,000 yuan to help with refugee relief. We are left to ponder the motivations for donating this sum to a collaboration regime put in place by the Japanese. Were business leaders genuinely concerned with helping displaced people, or did their donations reflect a desire to look good in the eyes of Japanese administrators? While this represented the new bureaucratic structure, that local philanthropists agreed to direct funding through this new structure which indicates that it had already established a level of trust, or at least authority, among the Tianjin elite.¹⁹

Although the social bureau and other government offices remained in operation after the Japanese occupied the city, real authority was held by the weichihui so charity organizations seeking funding turned to this office rather than traditional channels. For example, the Red Swastika Society made its request for funding from the Tianjin Charity Union to assist refugees through this office directly.²⁰ In response, the weichihui not only approved the funding request, but also established the charity's legitimacy: "Your

¹⁸ TMA, J0001-3-000181-017, August 1937 describes the appropriation of funds given to the public health bureau to assist refugee relief. Also see: TMA, J0001-3-000181-018, August, 1937 in regard to the responsibilities for refugee relief entrusted to the public health bureau, as does TMA, J0001-3-000258-001 August, 1937.

¹⁹ TMA, J0001-3-000257-001, August 1937. Receipt of charity donations from the Tianjin Railroad Administration.

²⁰ TMA, J0001-3-000277-001, August 1937.

organization has been a big help with our refugees and has a history of providing effective assistance.”²¹

Similarly, the Tianjin branch of the Red Cross worked directly with the weichihui to provide medical services and temporary shelters to house refugees. Although these government communiqués from Tianjin charities to the new government office usually follow a similar logic of briefly mentioning their work and requesting funding, they were not entirely sterile representations of the suffering of refugees in Tianjin. The Tianjin Red Cross sent separate funding requests for building shelters and collecting and burying corpses helps to illustrate the grim reality.²² Although the Red Cross assisted in constructing temporary shelters for refugees, they encountered great difficulty obtaining supplies and transporting them to needed areas.²³

²¹ TMA, J0001-3-000277-002, August 1937. Lists of reports and expenses regarding refugee relief.

²² TMA, J0001-3-000277-005, August 1937. A letter from the Tianjin Red Cross regarding refugee relief and resettlement.

²³ TMA, J0001-3-012061-025, September 3, 1937, consists of a report from a temporary refugee hospital set up by the Red Cross in Tianjin regarding the refugee situation.



Harodove Arhivum: Cyfrowe, sygn. 1-F-2181

Figure 4.4: “Japanese military police reviewing Tianjin residents on the street.”²⁴

Individual Requests.

What is more interesting are the requests for aid made by individual refugees. A letter from an unemployed refugee name Liu Xiaoyi explains:

Because of the incident (Japanese invasion) Tianjin has become a disaster zone and the severity of the disaster has spread to many villages in Hebei. For miles and miles there are poor people everywhere. Even in the normal times, 9 out of 10 families are suffering. Now it’s even worse and the villagers helplessly wait to die.²⁵

²⁴ “Japanese military police reviewing Tianjin residents on the street,” accessed 10-15-2015, <http://histomil.com/viewtopic.php?f=338&t=3918&start=5030>.

²⁵ For the letter from Liu Xiaoyi, see: TMA, J0001-3-000277-024, August 12, 1937. For the report from the collaboration government regarding the request, see: TMA, J0001-3-000277-027, August 1937.

From Liu's description, it is clear that refugees expected the new government to provide for their subsistence needs. Although he, like other charity heads, did not specifically mention the Japanese invasion as the source of the current disaster; this could have just as easily been caused by a drought or flood. Liu Xiaoyi's appeal was for compassion for those who are already suffering and must rely completely on the mercy of this new state. Although it is not clear from the archival record exactly what kind of aid, if any, was sent to the villagers, Liu represented, the head of the weichihui. Gao ordered that the situation be investigated and emphasized that unemployed workers should be assisted under existing guidelines.²⁶ When the weichihui approved a request for funding, it usually directed the social bureau to carry it out but often sent copies of directives to all government departments. This reflects the increased bureaucratic interconnection under the Japanese.

Individuals or individuals representing groups of refugees also made direct appeals for aid in the aftermath of the 1939 flood. Shen Zhichen described the plight of himself and coworkers at the Tianjin International Racetrack located in the British concession. The British municipal council had organized to provide for the daily meals of about 3000 refugees who were temporarily housed at the racetrack. Refugees were provided with flour each day and by October many of them had begun returning to their homes. When there was only about 1000 left, there was an incident between supposed members of the Chinese Communist underground and the police so the British refused to continue conducting relief work there. By October 26th, there were only about 476 refugees remaining as the location had become increasingly dangerous. The problem for

²⁶ TMA, J0001-3-000277-025, August 1937.

these remaining refugees was that the majority of them were in some way previously employed by the racetrack and were now unemployed. Some tried to continue working by setting up small vendor shops, but the majority had no other work to turn to. The team sent from the mayor's office noted that their homes were extremely cramped and dirty.²⁷ Since the British stopped their relief work, the situation deteriorated and the municipal government sent in police and food supplies to improve the situation.²⁸

Although detested among the majority of Chinese historians as a traitorous faction of the puppet government and invading Japanese army that helped to establish occupation control, the weichihui was an important advocate to Japanese administrators regarding local need, and worked to establish local governance and maintain law and order, while at the same time suppressing anti-Japanese activities. Dealing with the refugee crisis caused by the outbreak of war and keeping a handle on the flow of unsettled people was necessary both for asserting the right to rule and monitoring for potential threats. For instance, when the Huasheng Chinese Church, which was taking in refugees experienced a shortage of supplies, the weichihui quickly approved their request and recommended the church to Japanese authorities as very reliable. What's more, they approved the funding request even before obtaining the consent of the Japanese military authority.²⁹

Another instance where collaboration officials worked with the Japanese military office to promote aid to refugees was through a request to allow refugees to turn in their old currency, which had recently become worthless, for 60% its original value.³⁰ This

²⁷ TMA, J0001-3-003520-002, October 10, 1939.

²⁸ TMA, J0001-3-003520-005, November 3, 1939.

²⁹ TMA, J0001-3-000277-014, August 1937. Funding was provided by the Union of Tianjin Charities, the *lianhehui*, which also organized fundraising events to help with refugee aid.

request made by the office of Tianjin Mayor Wen Shizhen (温世珍) was approved with some restrictions. Rather than distributing cash for the old currency, two banks issued coupons that could only be used in the area and exchanges could only occur for a limited time period. Only individuals classified as refugees could exchange money, and each person could only exchange a maximum of 200 units of the old currency for 120 units of the new.³¹ When the exchange program concluded, several individual refugees and charity groups appealed to the mayor's office to request an extension, however, the Japanese military authority denied this request.³²

While the political climate in China has gradually softened to permit some positive interpretation of Western Christian philanthropic work, there remains a significant bias against the secret societies and indigenous religious movements which were often central in providing charitable relief. Additionally, these organizations worked closely with the other religious based charities drawing from the same revenue sources for conducting their charitable work concluding that there seems to be no distinction between religious foundations. For example, the weichihui approved funding for a minor Daoist community in Tianjin, the *Yixin tiandao longhua sheng jiaohui* (一心天道龙华圣教会), for their work with refugees.³³

³⁰ TMA, J0001-3-003536-011, September 1939.

³¹ A series of correspondence regarding this currency exchange can be found in record group TMA, J0001-3-003536, see in particular: TMA, J0001-3-003536-001, August 28, 1939; J0001-3-003536-003, August 31, 1939; J0001-3-003536-005, August, 1939; and J0001-3-003536-006, August 29, 1939.

³² TMA, J0001-3-003536-012 through J0001-3-003536-016.

³³ TMA, J0001-3-000277-016, August 1937. Although this may have been partly due to the connection between this Daoist sect and several Japanese converts. Also see: TMA, J0001-3-000277-023, August, 1937.

While the Japanese were very careful to swiftly suppress any anti-Japanese news outlets and arrested and tortured many intellectuals, like the Nationalist city government before and Communist city governing committees after it, they relied heavily on local private organizations to investigate and gather statistical data on the numbers and situation of refugees.³⁴ Local charities and government bureaus were organized to gather statistics. Nevertheless, the healthcare responsibilities of the bureau of hygiene, weishengju remained underfunded. A letter to the head of the WCH, Mr. Gao, complained that “although we are treating some 4 or 5 hundred wounded refugees in the temporary hospital, many of the doctors were hired without any qualifications and we have no money to buy medical supplies.”³⁵

While the weishengju could not perform its primary function to support public health during the Japanese occupation effectively, its place within the bureaucratic structure in occupied Tianjin never completely dissolved. Japanese administrators were keenly interested gathering detailed information about potential epidemics, and did so through the bureau of public health.³⁶ This is important, because it demonstrates that much of the clinical militancy associated with Republican Era medical relief really codified under the Japanese occupation. Eventually, even the minimal amount of refugee work that the public health bureau managed was dissolved and redistributed among several smaller clinics.³⁷

³⁴ TMA, J0001-3-000277-028, August 1937.

³⁵ TMA, J0001-3-012061-021, August 29, 1937.

³⁶ TMA, J0001-3-012061-020, August 18, 1937.

³⁷ TMA, J0001-3-012061-023, August 31, 1937.

Furthermore, the weichihui actively solicited the advice of foreign charities with international ties like the Tianjin branch of the Red Cross. In a letter to Mr. Gao, the Red Cross recommended prioritizing road reconstruction and transportation improvement in order to effectively distribute relief supplies. The Red Cross also requested military protection for transporting relief goods.³⁸ The WCH responded by ordering the police to provide protection at the refugee hospital and encouraged the RC to notify them with any future problems or concerns.³⁹

One of the problems with demonizing the weichihui as an evil extension of Japanese control is that it implicates organizations which have been singled out by Chinese historians as unequivocally patriotic. For example, Ding Weiping and Bai Zheng proclaim the virtuous heroism of the Tianjin chapter of the Women's National Salvation Council which was established by members of the Communist Party and anti-Japanese activist Zang Fenghua in 1935.⁴⁰ However, this organization did not hesitate to call on the weichihui to provide refugee assistance. Consequently, the context of emergency relief complicates definite categorizations of *hanjan* and guilt by association.⁴¹

³⁸ TMA, J0001-3-012061-016, August 11, 1937. Also see: TMA, J0001-3-012061-018, August 18, 1937.

³⁹ TMA, J0001-3-012061-017, August 13, 1937.

⁴⁰ Ding Weiping 丁卫平, "Guotongqu funu jiuguo hui he funu kangri jiuwang yundong 国统区妇女救国会和妇女抗日救亡运动 [The Guotong Women's National Salvation Movement and the Women to Oppose Japan]," *Jilin daxue, shehui kexue xuebao* 吉林大学社会科学学报, June 30, 1993. Also see: Bai Zheng 白正, "Mo dao sang yu wan we ixia shang mantian – ji baodingjun fenqu yuan fu siling Zang Fenghua 莫道桑榆晚, 为霞尚满天——记保定军分区原副司令员臧凤华 [Remembering Baoding Army Commander Zang Fenghua]," *Zhonghuagui* 中华魂, November 5, 2012.

⁴¹ TMA, J0001-3-000459-006, November 1937.

The International Settlement and Wartime Relief.

Japanese strategies for colonial control were often mixed and self-conflicting. Part of the Japanese strategy of occupation was to cut off all news from outside Tianjin and other areas it controlled in North China. This included a blocking of all shortwave radio traffic that essentially isolated the city.⁴² Yet, the Japanese did permit the doctors of the international settlement along with a group of Chinese doctors to organize an International Refugee Medical Relief Organization, *Wanguo nanmin ziliao jiujihui* (万国难民资料救济会) in the pharmacy office of a mining company in the British concession.⁴³ This international relief organization worked with the collaboration regime to build up temporary shelters for refugees along with providing medical care. Although their letter to the weichihui is careful to avoid placing blame directly on the Japanese,

In Tianjin there was an unexpected and unfortunate event. Homeless citizens are everywhere. The refugees in the foreign concessions are being taken in by all charity groups and the injured or sick need urgent treatment.⁴⁴

However, they did organize and begin distribution of relief several days before obtaining approval from the Japanese temporary committee. This organization had already selected several locations to help people and began distributing supplies on the 7th of August.

Since the Japanese closed or appropriated many of the government-run hospitals to serve wounded soldiers, private hospitals were inundated with injured refugees. The

⁴² Wolff, interview, transcript (1976): 46.

⁴³ TMA, J0001-3-000277-008, August 9, 1937.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

weichihui forwarded a letter from one such hospital to the social bureau which explained their situation:

A private charity hospital, due to the 'event', is taking in people for treatment and requesting funding. [Attached letter] Our leader of this charity hospital has been with the organization for about 20 years, and we have done a lot of free treatment to take care of the poor each year. Since the July 29th sudden event, the bombing, and the hail of bullets flying everywhere many were injured. The city is in a dangerous situation now because the public hospitals have all been shut down and we are the only one still in operation in this location. Our location is right in the middle of the disaster area so we are well positioned to help. There are so many injured refugees that they are lying on the street everywhere. We took in hundreds of refugees and whatever medicine we had stored has all been used up. We are also feeding the patients and have set up a soup kitchen to feed refugees.⁴⁵

The shutdown of government hospitals also affected the bureau of public health. Patients were transferred from these hospitals to temporary shelters set up by the bureau.⁴⁶

Even though foreigners in Tianjin attempted to help Chinese refugees and accommodated many thousands in the various concessions, the international settlement felt overwhelmed by the presence of poor Chinese and requested their removal. For example, the British requested that refugees at a shelter opened on Machang Road be relocated.⁴⁷ After a confrontation between the Japanese and the British in June 1939, the ability of Western concessions to protect Chinese people was severely diminished. The dispute occurred after six men fled to the British concession after the manager of a Japanese owned bank, Cheng Hsi-kang was assassinated. Initially the British turned the suspects over for questioning, but refused to release them back to the Japanese after it

⁴⁵ TMA, J0001-3-000277-054, October 1937.

⁴⁶ TMA, J0001-3-010647-007, September 18, 1937.

⁴⁷ TMA, J0001-3-003520, 1939.

was found they were tortured. In response, the IJA surrounded the British concession with electrified wire and blockaded the settlement. Eventually the suspects were turned over to the Japanese and were subsequently tortured and executed.⁴⁸ Obviously, while the Japanese had no problem allowing foreigners to help legitimate their occupation by seeing to the social welfare of the city, they would not tolerate any challenge to their territorial authority, even a year before declaring war on Allied Powers.

The experience of Japanese occupation then could vary quite dramatically. As Ernst Wolff explained:

The Japanese sent military supervisors, but they quickly realized that they had to have people with knowledge of English and knowledge of business administration. So the type of supervisors that we saw in the Kailan Mining Administration were not the type of rough military that are usually portrayed as the Japanese occupiers of China. However, the Japanese military finally insisted that all the enemies that means the British administration staff and the Belgians of the mines, were sent out to civilian camps that were established in Weihsien. The Japanese administration of the supervisors of the Kailan, particularly the chief supervisor, Mr. Shirakawa, were always very well inclined toward the British staff. I still remember that Mr. Shirakawa gave orders to send food parcels to the interned Kailan Mining personnel at Weihsien. This kind of action seems small and trivial, but under the war circumstances and the temper of the Japanese military it was a remarkable show of friendliness and sympathy.⁴⁹

Besides those Europeans who remained in Tianjin committed to missionary work or whose presence was required to maintain local business operations, a small stream of Jewish immigrants fleeing German eugenics found their way to Tianjin. As Wolff explains:

⁴⁸ For an entire monograph devoted to this particular incident and its diplomatic consequences see: Sebastian Swann, *Japan's Imperial Dilemma in China: The Tientsin Incident, 1939–1940* (London: Routledge, 2008).

⁴⁹ Wolff, interview, 43.

In Tientsin starting in 1937, '38 and up to '41 we saw quite an influx of refugees from Germany and Austria, mostly German Jews who had fled from Hitler and who had been fortunate enough to escape. Now the situation in Tientsin was quite different from that in Shanghai where the refugees arrived by the thousands. In Shanghai before the Pacific War, they could land even without a passport and without a visa. I think it was the only place in the world where that was possible, so that the refugees arrived there by the thousands. In North China, Japanese control was much stricter and they would not allow any refugees to come in. Still there was a trickle of some fortunate refugees who managed to get north. We always had throughout the war years about 80 Jewish families, refugees from Germany or Austria who had to maintain some kind of living in China. The Jewish population of North China were mostly Russian Jews; that is, a group of refugees that had left Russia after the communist revolution there, had settled in Manchuria and drifted down to Tientsin. But when the Hitler movement started in Germany and the refugees started coming to China, the Russian Jews and a few Germans formed refugee committees and looked after the people that came over from Germany and were permitted to come to North China.⁵⁰

On August 9, 1940, all British troops were ordered to withdraw. Roughly one year later on November 14, 1941 the Japanese ordered American troops to leave. Although only a few marines remained in the concession, 49 members of the 4th division were seized on December 8, 1941, one day after the attack on Pearl Harbor. The Japanese would occupy the city until the city was liberated on August 15, 1945, V-J Day.

Welfare Under an Occupation Regime.

While the realities of Japanese Imperialism were both ethnocentric and self-serving, the rhetoric of occupation and expansion represented a notion of Confucian paternalism familiar to our previous discussions. In his comprehensive work on Korean-Japanese relations, Tabohashi Kiyoshi suggests that ever since Japan was able to

⁵⁰ Wolff, interview, 45-46, Two books that describe the Jewish community in Tianjin include a memoir by Isabelle Maynard: Isabelle Maynard, *China Dreams: Growing up Jewish in Tientsin* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1996) and a work by Anna Song: Anna Song, *Youtairen zai Tianjin* 犹太人在天津 [The Jews in Tianjin], (Beijing: Wu zhou chuanbo chubanshe, 2004).

negotiate for colonial rights on mainland China, Japanese leaders like clan chief Itakura Katsukiyo had been arguing for an immediate attack and occupation of Northern China, but one that also ensured the welfare of the conquered people.⁵¹ Louise Young has argued that Japanese colonization set off a process of “intense state building and bureaucratic experimentation in techniques of social management and engineering” that was taken up by collaboration regimes.⁵² These modernization projects included an intense development of the welfare state through the Tianjin Ministry of Health and Welfare.

Particularly as ideological repression increased, many elements within Japan’s progressive intelligentsia looked to China both as an escape and fertile soil to cultivate their utopian visions. Tianjin was often a stop for JCP members who were on their way to Yen’an. These colonial administrators worked to create and contribute to an occupation regime that could put to end to poverty, while at the same time, exported Japan’s economic problems to China. To what degree these Japanese social welfare principles really differed from China’s Nationalist Party ideals is somewhat questionable, especially as the Guomindang was already looking to Japan and Germany as models for establishing a new state-society relationship and invigorating personal moral responsibilities to energize government led welfare programs.

Japanese administrators in Manchukuo were keenly aware that poverty was the most fertile soil for cultivating anti-imperialist and communist sentiments and sought to legitimate their colonial endeavor through a developmentalist agenda. As Young

⁵¹ Tabohashi Kiyoshi, *Kindai nissen kankei no kenkyū* 近代日鮮関係の研究 [A study of modern day Korean relations], (Tōkyō: Munetaka Shobō, 1972): 299-300.

⁵² Louise Young, *Japan's Total Empire: Manchuria and the Culture of Wartime Imperialism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998): 397-398.

suggests, this agenda was easily supplanted when it came into conflict with the imperatives of Japanese empire building or the private interests of collaborating Chinese elite, but did introduce a rhetoric of development that was taken directly from the movement to mitigate rural poverty in Japan.⁵³ When the number of refugees in Tianjin threatened to completely overwhelm the local charity infrastructure, the mayor's office ordered police to encourage refugees to migrate to Manchuria where jobs and uncultivated land were both supposedly plentiful.⁵⁴ However, such encouragement was largely unsuccessful. Instead, many refugees from Dongbei and Dalian made their way to Tianjin. So many in fact, that the city government established a Dongbei Refugee Family Workhouse whose chair was Che Xiangchen (车向忱), an intellectual Marxist and anti-Japanese agitator.⁵⁵

Although urban social welfare before occupation was marked by consistent attempts by an overreaching Guomindang appointed leadership, under the Japanese this was replaced by charities competing for the scraps. Because of the refugee influx brought on by war, Tianjin charities were stretched to their absolute limit. Charities seeking to obtain funding from the executive committee had to submit competing proposals on the most efficient use of funds.⁵⁶ The Japanese military regiment assigned to garrison North China after the 1937 start of hostilities was the Imperial Japanese Army, (IJA) 27th

⁵³ Young, *Japan's Total Empire*, 43.

⁵⁴ TMA, J0252-1-000302, September 1939.

⁵⁵ TMA, J0128-3-009802-004, 1942. For more on Che Xiangchen, see: Chen Zongyan 沈宗艳, "Che xiang chen yu dongbei kangri yiyongjun 车向忱与东北抗日义勇军 [Vehicle to Lichen and Anti-Japanese Volunteer Armies]," *Gongchandang yuan* 共产党员 [Communist Magazine], March 15, 2015.

⁵⁶ TMA, J0001-3-000277-001, August 1938.

Division. This division was preceded by the Tianjin China Garrison Army, *Shina Chutongun* (支那駐屯軍) which was formed as Japan's contribution to the international suppression of the Boxer Rebellion. From 1937 to 1940 this regiment was commanded by Masaharu Honma, better known for commanding the 14th to invade the Philippines and as the orchestrator of the Bataan Death March. The IJA 27th Division supervised charity relief efforts and participated in sending disaster aid to Tianjin after the 1939 flood.

The Tianjin Chamber of Commerce continued to serve as the organizational focal point for charity fundraising throughout the Japanese occupation. As has been discussed, the appearance of the Japanese in Tianjin resulted in the closing of many of the city's hospitals. This created a crisis for women who were pregnant. The women's hospital was inundated with refugee women seeking to have their child in the clean environment of the hospital, however there were few beds available and even as late as August 1939, two years after the initial occupation, hospital facilities remained inadequate. Rather than seek the assistance of the collaboration government, the women's hospital appealed to the chamber of commerce for funds and help with advertising their specific needs in local newspapers.⁵⁷ Later, as the responsibility of social welfare relief became increasingly the responsibility of private charity, the chamber organized groups of refugee women to be sent to the women's hospital.⁵⁸ Chamber members were also organized into investigation teams to gather information on the living conditions of temporary housing set up for

⁵⁷ TMA, J0128-3-009646-002, August 23, 1939.

⁵⁸ TMA, J0128-3-009647-007, August 22, 1939.

refugees.⁵⁹ One of the biggest donators for winter relief was a Tianjin tobacco company which donated two hundred thousand yuan in December 1944.⁶⁰

Access to medical care for pregnant women and sick refugees was also made problematic by existing regulations that classified refugees in the same category as Chinese soldiers employed by the Japanese army. To cover the costs of treating, housing, and burying refugees, the hospital worked with the Flood Relief Assistance Committee established by the TJCOC to come up with new regulations for separately categorizing refugees and military wounded. Under this new plan, the health department provided the medicine needed to treat refugees; the hospital's doctors worked free of charge and the Japanese military covered the costs of daily room and board, for coffins and burial.⁶¹ The proposal was confirmed by the mayor's office and the hospital was ordered to stop charging refugees for treatment.⁶² That a request for the Japanese army to provide funds for sick patients sent by city charities to the Tianjin #2 Hospital also suggests that the Japanese army did not demand free care for soldiers.⁶³

Along with helping to raise funds for all the services mentioned thus far, the chamber began to specifically raise funding for Daoist priests to perform rituals for dead refugees. For example, after a breach of the Yellow River wiped out Chaoba Village, the

⁵⁹ TMA, J0128-3-009647-009, August 22, 1939.

⁶⁰ TMA, J0001-2-000950-015, December 14, 1944. The communication from the Tianjin occupation government does not give the specific name of the tobacco company, but does specify that it was a local company.

⁶¹ TMA, J0001-3-002580-001, August 31, 1939. Also see: TMA, J0001-3-002580-002, August 1939.

⁶² TMA, J0001-3-002580-003, September 1939.

⁶³ TMA, J0001-3-002580, September 1939.

TJCOC raised funds for the salvation of the dead.⁶⁴ Although I found only a limited amount of evidence related to Islamic charity work in Tianjin during this period, it did play an important role nonetheless. The China Huijiao United Tianjin Mosque Association received flood refugees at their organization.⁶⁵

After the 1939 flood, the Jin tebieshi gongshu ordered that plans be made for future flood prevention and a possible budget for needed improvements submitted to the office. This special business office also demanded that each government bureau submit an itemized budget for flood relief to the mayor's office for approval.⁶⁶ Even the *tewujiguan* (特务机关), a Japanese spy agency, worked to raise funding for flood prevention and refugee relief.⁶⁷ Another outright coercive branches of the occupation government, the Tianjin Movie and Drama Censorship Committee, *Tianjinshi yingpian xiqu jiancha yuan lianxihui* (天津市影片戏曲检查员联席会) could function in the cause of benevolence. In October 1939, the committee recommended a list of entertainment establishments that could be shut down to accommodate flood refugees.⁶⁸ The Japanese government office also divided the responsibility of maintaining some soup kitchens and shelters for refugees among specific local businesses which included Japanese owned stores and factories.⁶⁹

⁶⁴ TMA, J0128-3-007336-034, August 1, 1938. Also see: TMA, J0128-3-009646-004, August 23, 1939.

⁶⁵ TMA, J0128-3-009854-001, 1939.

⁶⁶ TMA, J0001-3-002678-002, September 1939.

⁶⁷ TMA, J0001-3-002678, September 1939.

⁶⁸ TMA, J0110-1-000360-027, October 5, 1939.

⁶⁹ TMA, J0083-1-000509, September 1939.

Although the Japanese military command delegated most of the responsibilities for providing social welfare to the civilian arm of its collaboration government, certain aspects of relief work were closely monitored. Every individual who sought to receive government charity, had to register with local police and then all applications were processed centrally by the Japanese. In this way, they could keep track of thousands of displaced and unsettled people and monitor where they were going.⁷⁰

Emergency Flood Relief Under the Japanese.



Figure 4.5: Combating Tientsin Floods (1939).⁷¹

⁷⁰ TMA, J0001-3-003536-008, August 30, 1939.

⁷¹ Combating Tientsin Floods (1939) *British Pathé*. Last accessed 2/13/2016 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x2q9mhBescA>.

In 1939, the Yongding River burst through its northern dikes and flooded 116 counties in the Hai River Basin wreaking total havoc in Tianjin where more than 100,000 residents had to evacuate their homes.⁷² Refugees were everywhere camping out at temples, schools, local shops, theaters, churches and teahouses.⁷³ Many schools delayed opening for months after the disaster.⁷⁴ Some of these sites could no longer be used for any other purpose further damaging the local economy.⁷⁵

During the 1939 flood disaster, the Tianjin Chamber organized its own flood relief committee called the *Tianjinshi shuizai jiuji weiyuanhui* (天津市水灾救济委员会) and worked with other private charities like The Society for General Good, *pushanshe* (天津市普善社水灾救济队) which organized small teams of volunteers to send lifesaving boats to rescue residents trapped in their homes and distribute food with funds provided by the TJCOG.⁷⁶

⁷² Lillian Li, *Fighting Famine in North China*, (Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 2007), 285-292.

⁷³ TMA, J0001-3-009108-002, August 23, 1939. Also see: TMA, J0001-3-009108-012, August 29, 1939.

⁷⁴ TMA, J0110-3-003857. Document folder contains numerous examples. Also see: folder J0110-3-003873 (both document folders contain multiple years).

⁷⁵ TMA, J0113-3-000546, August 1939.

⁷⁶ TMA, J0128-3-009646-003, August 23, 1939. Also see: TMA, J0128-3-009646-017, August 29, 1939.



Figure 4.6: “British troops during the Pei Ho River flood.”⁷⁷

Refugees for this flood lived temporarily in schools and temples where chamber members set up soup kitchens and tents.⁷⁸ When the chamber could no longer raise funds, it turned to borrowing products from its members. For example, the chamber borrowed flour from the Shoufeng Mill and other companies to maintain refugee food supplies, while the Hejing Water Association was instructed to send tea and water to refugee shelters.⁷⁹

While the TJCOG was responsible for organizing much of the flood relief, it was also accountable to the Japanese military authorities for providing accurate audits of how funding was allocated, what refugees were registered, and how much food was distributed to each.⁸⁰ The bureaucratization of social welfare under the Japanese cannot be overemphasized; the chamber was required to provide daily reports of resource

⁷⁷ British troops during the Pei Ho River flood, accessed October 15, 2015, http://www.combinedfleet.com/Tientsin_t.htm.

⁷⁸ TMA, J0128-3-009646-005, August 24, 1939.

⁷⁹ TMA, J0128-3-009647-011, August 22, 1939. Orders were given by the Tianjin Chamber of Commerce. Also see: TMA, J0128-3-009647-012, August 22, 1939.

⁸⁰ TMA, J0128-3-009647-028, August 25, 1939.

distribution.⁸¹ The North China Disaster Relief Committee branch in Tianjin sent reports to the IJA 27th Division to request funding and support.⁸² The division set up a specific office to deal with problems related to refugee management which required daily intelligence on the number and situation of refugees in the city.⁸³ This division required each wing of the Tianjin Municipal Government to provide daily information on all assistance.⁸⁴

While the relief capacity of the municipal government was severely limited under the Japanese, it was still able to coordinate disaster clean up and sought to alleviate some of the suffering caused by the flood. The administration office, *jinshi gongshe* (津市公署) planned to provide free electricity to refugee camps for lighting and electric water pumps to disaster relief teams to help clear out homes and other buildings of waste water. However, the plan faced two problems, first there was little to no electrical infrastructure leading to the camp the second problem was that the roads leading to the affected housing were also destroyed. Roadwork was consequently prioritized and electric street cars were appropriated by the city construction department to transport materials to the damaged roads.⁸⁵

The Japanese seem to have been quite responsive to the requests of Tianjin charities for aid, at least in the months immediately following occupation, going so far as

⁸¹ TMA, J0128-3-009647-062, September 6, 1939. This created a truly impressive amount of data which is housed in the municipal archives.

⁸² TMA, J0001-3-009105-001, October 16, 1939.

⁸³ TMA, J0001-3-009108-002, August 23, 1939.

⁸⁴ TMA, J0001-3-009108-015, September 2, 1939.

⁸⁵ TMA, J0001-3-000010-018, September 19, 1939.

to publish the phone numbers of all members of the 27th Division Department of Refugee Management to the city's flood relief committees in the newspapers.⁸⁶ However, all responsibility for flood refugees was eventually transferred to the Tianjin mayor's office and municipal government by the end of September 1939 and the Japanese army stopped receiving daily reports. Responsibility for the management of the city's shelters and assigning incoming refugees was delegated to the Tianjin Police Department. Here we see a clear example of how the actual process of governing disaster relief and the burden it placed on Japanese resources was managed. While the Japanese began their relief operations with much rhetoric about saving Chinese lives, this responsibility was very quickly delegated to others.

As the IJA transferred relief responsibilities to local city government, it also provided a list of priorities for future relief: (1) calming their (refugees) thinking and controlling their order to nurture their physical strength, cultivate their independence, and promote sanitation and immunization, (2) employment: all government departments will try to find refugees jobs to be self-supporting, and (3) disease prevention. Although the military office would no longer receive the daily reports, they commanded the practice of gathering statistics to continue. The Tianjin Municipal Government was ordered to record how many supplies were needed each day, the number of refugees who died, what diseases and how many were currently being treated, changes in the price of one day's living expenses, how many soup kitchens provided food and how much was provided, the number of animal deaths in the city, vaccinations, the unemployment rate and number of refugees currently undergoing job training.⁸⁷

⁸⁶ TMA, J0001-3-009114-005, August 30, 1939.

In the month following this transfer, it seems that many of these objectives were carried out. Daily food distribution reports were directed to the Tianjin Flood Relief Committee's General Affairs Office.⁸⁸ The hygiene department gathered information on disease treatment from the hospitals.⁸⁹ Sanitary violations were investigated and reported.⁹⁰ The budget for meals for sick refugees at least slightly increased.⁹¹ And charities continued sending their daily reports to the social bureau.⁹²

Relief agencies with international connections remained active. The Red Cross also responded to the Tianjin 1939 flood by organizing refugee shelters and providing them with food. This food was purchased through donations that came from the members of the Tianjin Chamber.⁹³ Chamber members themselves often went to damaged rural areas to report on the situation there.⁹⁴ Private merchant associations who organized their own charities looked to the collaboration regime for guidance and support.

As winter approached following the flood, the Tianjin Commerce Association, *zizhu lin huashang*, which was primarily an association of bank workers, made an urgent appeal to the mayor's office for assistance. The local banks had been collecting food and clothing, but it was miniscule compared to the 10,000 refugees which had taken up

⁸⁷ TMA, J0001-3-012474-042, September 1939.

⁸⁸ TMA, J0001-3-012474-054, October 1939.

⁸⁹ TMA, J0001-3-012475-022, September 1939.

⁹⁰ TMA, J0001-3-012475-031, September 1939.

⁹¹ TMA, J0001-3-012475-035, September, 1939. The per meal budget was increased from three dimes to four.

⁹² TMA, J0128-2-001063-013, 1939.

⁹³ TMA, J0128-3-009647-036, August 29, 1939.

⁹⁴ TMA, J0128-3-009656-021, August 31, 1939.

residence in the French Zone. The YMCA had been providing medical treatment for the refugees, and the commerce association had additional supplies on the way but because of Tianjin's silt laden river ways, transporting supplies was difficult.⁹⁵ The mayor's office then forwarded this request to the Japanese army's special investigations department to ask for help.⁹⁶

Tianjin's established charities like the Guangrentang remained active in assisting flood refugees. During the 1939 flood, it took in over 2300 refugees and provided their daily living needs. Their report to the Tianjin City Flood Relief Committee included details that reflect the ethics of self-reliance noting that they recruited able-bodied refugees to prepare the drinking water and provide sanitation. The benevolence hall also emphasized their illness prevention measures until the conclusion of their relief work on August 19th.⁹⁷ Buddhist relief agencies like the Tianjin Yellow Cross and the Blue Swastika Society operated many independent soup kitchens in Tianjin at approximately 13 different locations that together served roughly 7100 people each day.⁹⁸

Some of the charities that helped to provide flood relief aid reflected Imperial Japanese Army influence. For example, the New People's Association, *Shinminhui*, was a pro-Japanese political organization which sought to purge Asia of communist influence and encourage social "enlightenment" that worked with

⁹⁵ TMA, J0001-3-003541-002, December 1939.

⁹⁶ TMA, J0001-3-003541-001, November 11, 1939.

⁹⁷ TMA, J0001-3-009108-003, August 24, 1939. Also see: TMA, J0001-3-009108-029, September 10, 1939.

⁹⁸ TMA, J0001-3-009108-020, September 4, 1939. Also see: TMA, J0001-3-009108-024, September 6, 1939.

the TJCOC to distribute flour to flood refugees.⁹⁹ According to Ceng Yeying, this organization was established on December 24th 1937 by a Japanese spy unit until it was disbanded in 1945 at the end of the war. Also, a blatantly pro-Japanese newspaper the *Takanori News Wu de bao* (武德报) requested the municipal government help the refugees and also helped to raise charity funds, by approving a plan to sell movie tickets to a theater in the French Zone. Although this fundraising was organized to support winter refugee relief it also reinforced Japanese supremacy and right to rule as the fund drive commemorated the end of the First Sino-Japanese War.¹⁰⁰

After Japan's initial occupation of North China, Tianjin was again placed under the jurisdiction of Hebei Province. During the 1939 flood, the Japanese head of the Hebei Refugee Relief Office, Asami Kikuo, sent a letter to Tianjin promising to supply flour and other donations to assist the flood area in Tianjin city.¹⁰¹ Two days later, the Hebei office sent another letter detailing the shipment of supplies that included flour and vegetables shipped to the city by boat.¹⁰² Regional support also came from the Beijing Salvation Army headquarters which sent 4000 winter coats to Tianjin. It was necessary for Mayor Wen's office to request security from the Japanese military to ensure these coats would not meet with any transportation delays.¹⁰³ The mayor of Tianjin also made a

⁹⁹ TMA, J0128-3-009646-019, August 27, 1939.

¹⁰⁰ TMA, J0001-3-009368-001, January 23, 1943.

¹⁰¹ TMA, J0001-3-003497-001, August 30, 1939.

¹⁰² TMA, J0001-3-003497-002, September 1, 1939.

¹⁰³ TMA, J0001-3-010181-252, November 22, 1939.

personal request to the mayor in Beijing, Mr. Yu, to receive some of Tianjin's refugees.¹⁰⁴ In addition, Mayor Wen sent letters of thanks to the Tangshan city mayor and the city's Japanese military commander for transporting and receiving Tianjin refugees.¹⁰⁵

The Tianjin Municipal Government also helped with flood relief by providing free electricity to light the refugee camps.¹⁰⁶ However, by the end of October, the city began to wind down its flood relief operations.¹⁰⁷ Nevertheless, In March of 1940, several thousand flood refugees remained. The mayor's office continued to emphasize finding any way possible to send these refugees back to their homes.¹⁰⁸

Occupation Police.

The police of an occupation regime are often associated with the most nefarious aspects of colonization, and this assumption is not without evidence. Especially for refugees, police were provided with the power to identify them as inner and outer refugees which could have significant influence on the kind of aid they could access.¹⁰⁹ After the flood, the police were instructed to bar any single men from entering the city as refugees.¹¹⁰ Healthy refugees identified by the Tianjin police could be rounded up and

¹⁰⁴ TMA, J0001-3-011174-005, August 23, 1939.

¹⁰⁵ TMA, J0001-3-011174-010, September 11, 1939.

¹⁰⁶ TMA, J0001-3-000010-018, August 1939.

¹⁰⁷ TMA, J0001-3-012475-040, October 1939.

¹⁰⁸ TMA, J0001-3-004412-001, March 27, 1940.

¹⁰⁹ TMA, J0001-3-003536-007, September 1, 1939.

¹¹⁰ TMA, J0001-3-011174-001, August 22, 1939.

sent to Manchurian labor camps, as police were charged with the responsibility of finding any possible means to resettle the displaced.¹¹¹

After 1941, the foreign concessions offered little protection for refugees as occupation police could now enter unimpeded into those areas to conduct surveys of the poor.¹¹² There was certainly an environment of constant observation and scrutiny demanded by the Japanese colonial government which constantly feared bad elements sneaking their way into groups of refugees, not unlike what the Guomindang would face during the Civil War.¹¹³ The police often rounded up refugees for random investigation.¹¹⁴ Policing under the high-level collaborator Zhou Diping, who served as Tianjin's mayor from March 1945 until the surrender of Japan, was particularly heartless as he would often order the removal and arrest of refugees who were "clogging up the streets."¹¹⁵ Zhou also ordered the police to tear down refugee camps that had been constructed without permission and relocate refugees out of the city limits.¹¹⁶

At the same time however, policing also persisted in many of the socially beneficial capacities it had in previous periods. The city continued to maintain a fire brigade and the TJCO often requested the presence of officers when distributing food to refugees and assigning temporary housing to maintain order.¹¹⁷ Police guards were

¹¹¹ TMA, J0218-3-004617, September, 1939. Also see: TMA, J0252-1-000302, September, 1939.

¹¹² TMA, J0218-3-005372, 1941.

¹¹³ TMA, J0001-3-003262, December 1939.

¹¹⁴ TMA, J0218-3-005868, August 1943.

¹¹⁵ TMA, J001-3-008922-002, May 21, 1945. In the post-war period, Mayor Zhou was arrested and imprisoned as a collaborator by the Hebei high court on May 10, 1946.

¹¹⁶ TMA, J0218-3-006377, January 1945.

¹¹⁷ TMA, J0218-3-004732, August 1939. Also see: TMA, J0128-3-009647-002, August 31, 1939.

posted at the city's temporary shelter, *shourongsue*, and sometimes were recruited to help build new shelters when refugee numbers increased.¹¹⁸ Police also directly distributed relief supplies to refugees via each precinct.¹¹⁹ What is interesting here is that it is still the TJCOG which is organizing meetings with the police to conduct this relief work.¹²⁰ Even individual requests for aid were not ignored.¹²¹ For example, a refugee, Pang Guangli, requested 30 yuan to bury his wife. There was a rumor that he wasn't even married so the municipal government branch office ordered the local precinct to investigate. This short memo shows that the police functioned to distribute monetary aid to refugees, that individual requests were investigated and that refugees knew that they could appeal to the police for help. Further evidence that such a request was not simply ignored the police reported that Pang was indeed a real person who owned a local fabric store but was completely destitute and could not afford to bury his wife.¹²²

The situation of refugees did not always become stable once they entered camps. Not only were conditions often deplorable, but bandits and robbers remained an ever present threat. Still active under the Japanese, the civilian coastguard was commanded by the TJCOG to provide security to these refugee camps.¹²³ The civilian coastguard head, Li Fulin, urgently requested additional boats to help save refugees trapped by flood

¹¹⁸ TMA, J0128-3-009647-003, August 22, 1939. Also see: TMA, J0218-3-008490, August 1943.

¹¹⁹ TMA, J0128-3-009647-017, August 21, 1939.

¹²⁰ TMA, J0128-3-009647-021, August 24, 1939.

¹²¹ TMA, J0001-3-005350-002, October 14, 1941.

¹²² TMA, J0001-3-005350-003, October 20, 1941.

¹²³ TMA, J0128-3-009647-010, August 22, 1939.

waters. This police force was also tasked with the grim assignment of collecting and burying the dead bodies of those who did not make it.¹²⁴

As winter approached following the 1939 flood, the Tianjin police submitted a joint request with the social bureau for the city hall to provide funds to distribute food coupons and steamed buns to the refugees in the city. The request was approved but amounted to a pittance, 28 jin of steamed buns, *mantou*, and 2500 yuan.¹²⁵ While supplies were minimal, each precinct maintained careful records of the number of refugees in their areas. That police continued to meet with the Tianjin United Charity Group throughout the Japanese occupation suggests that such information may have been useful for religious charities to organize their relief efforts.¹²⁶

The Tianjin police also engaged in passive resistance through non-compliance. For example, spy agencies, *tewu jiguan* (特務機關), demanded Tianjin police precincts to conduct a three-day investigation of all the young strong refugees for any undesirables or undercover agents; they complied and even designed the investigation form. But after a very careful investigation, the police reported no corrupt characters to the Japanese authorities. With a population of several tens of thousands of refugees in the city or among those refugees returning to their villages, and considering that street protests were not entirely uncommon, it is likely that this was a demonstration of a certain level of non-compliance, one that the mayor's office fully endorsed and supported.¹²⁷

¹²⁴ TMA, J0001-3-011174-006, August 25, 1939.

¹²⁵ TMA, J0001-3-001184-041, February 27, 1939.

¹²⁶ TMA, J0116-1-001139-004, August 30, 1942.

¹²⁷ TMA, J0001-3-003262-001, December 1939. Also see: TMA, J0001-3-003262-002, December 1939, and TMA, J0001-3-003262-003, December 1939.

Print journalism in Tianjin after the occupation proved to be quite a dismal scene. Both the *Dagongbao* and the *Yishibao* fled the city. However, there is some evidence that newspapers operating under the Japanese still served some benefit to the social welfare. For example, based on a newspaper report that the hygienic conditions in the refugee camp at the #6 Elementary School were abysmal, the communication's department of the mayor's office ordered the public health bureau to investigate.¹²⁸

Tianjin newspapers also continued to carry stories about the problems caused by war and the kinds of relief efforts the municipal government was providing. In June 1944, the head of the Tianjin social bureau, Zhu, traveled to the 27 refugee shelters in the city which had been specifically set up to help those who had been driven from their homes because of bombing. The social bureau also arranged for safety teams to train refugees on how to rescue bombing victims.¹²⁹

¹²⁸ TMA, J0001-3-012474-016, August 30, 1939.

¹²⁹ TMA, J0001-3-009570-001, June 20, 1944.

War Relief and War Refugees: Tianjin's Post-War Recovery.



Figure 4.7: Wartime Propaganda Posters.¹³⁰

Wartime propaganda presented the Chinese as the unique friend of the United States committed to fighting for freedom and democracy. Rev. C. Bertram Rappe, who worked in west China as the vice-Chairman of the International Famine Committee, went so far as to call the Chinese “at heart the most democratic people in the world”.¹³¹ The China’s Children Fund, Inc. argued that donating to China was part of an American’s patriotic duty to safeguard their own interests by rendering all possible aid. It seems that particularly within the context of war, famine relief and charity became major contributors into the special relationship myth between China and the United States. Imagining the children of every war casualty to have “given their lives for the same liberty and democracy we Americans Cherish.”¹³² As seen in the three images above, this

¹³⁰ Images obtainable from the United China Relief Records, Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations, MssCol. 3078.

¹³¹ Rev. C. Bertram Rappe, *Famine Relief: Miscellaneous pamphlets*, undated Box 94, YMCA International Work in China: An Inventory of its Records, Kautz Family YMCA Archives, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

propaganda often depicted Chinese within the family unit suffering together. While this may have blindly overlooked the GMD's affinity for German Fascism, it was effective at eliciting the generosity of U.S. aid to China.

The United China Relief was organized in New York with the aim to provide funds for China's recovery and present a positive image of China to Americans. Like the many federations, *lianhehui*, that formed in Chinese cities among faith-based charities, this UCR brought together numerous philanthropic organizations to reduce duplication and coordinate their activities.¹³³ American charity work during the war and postwar is important for two reasons. First, U.S. food aid continued up through the end of Nationalist control of Tianjin and was a major component of relief work in the city. Second, the presence of U.S. and U.N. aid in China's urban centers brought their own systems of bureaucracy that intersected with local planning and created networks between Chinese philanthropists who were almost always among the elite, and foreigners who were almost always Christian. The image to the right demonstrates the sort of American paternalism that accompanied this aid.¹³⁴

The seven organizations that composed the United China Relief included: The American Bureau for Medical Aid to China helped to remedy the lack of anesthetics and to furnish medical supplies urgently requested by the Chinese Red Cross, which supported emergency aid stations throughout the country, epidemic control programs, and

¹³² "Need! Duty! Privilege!" China Children's Fund, Inc., Atlantic Life Building Richmond, VA, YMCA Famine Relief: Miscellaneous pamphlets, undated Box 94, YMCA International Work in China: An Inventory of its Records, Kautz Family YMCA Archives, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

¹³³ United China Relief became United Service to China in 1947.

¹³⁴ Pamphlet from China's Children Fund, Inc., 1941, Famine Relief: Miscellaneous pamphlets, undated Box 94, YMCA International Work in China: An Inventory of its Records, Kautz Family YMCA Archives, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

training centers for physicians. The Chinese Red Cross, as we have seen, was also active at refugee relief in Tianjin. The American Committee for Chinese War Orphans sought to rescue, shelter, and trains thousands of orphaned children. The American Committee for Chinese Industrial Cooperatives operated 3,000 cooperatives supporting some 500,000 refugees in a vast expanding self-owned, self-help project to rehabilitate Chinese industrial capacity which had been crippled by the Japanese occupation.¹³⁵

The Associated Boards for Christian Colleges in China represented thirteen colleges with an enrollment of nearly eight thousand students; eleven of these schools had been forced by the war to transfer their teaching and research activities as far as 1500 miles inland. The China Aid Council and China Emergency Relief Committee each organized to raise funds for refugee relief. The Church Committee for China Relief served as the official agency of the United Protestant Churches of America for providing direct relief in bombed and famine areas, food and shelter and medical relief for the destitute, and work projects for men and women largely through missionaries and Christian Chinese associates without regard to particular denomination belief.¹³⁶ The major conglomeration of aid agencies further demonstrates the significance of the YMCA and the vice chairman of UCR was Eugene E. Barnet, who was also the acting General Secretary of the National Council of YMCA.¹³⁷

¹³⁵ Documents related to the Chinese Industrial Cooperatives and China Aid Council are held at the Columbia University Library Archives INDUSCO, Inc., Records 1938 – 1985: Rare Book and Manuscript Library, New York.

¹³⁶ “The Purposes and Program of United China Relief,” Famine Relief: Miscellaneous pamphlets, undated Box 94, YMCA International Work in China: An Inventory of its Records, Kautz Family YMCA Archives, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

¹³⁷ United China Relief, “Churches and Synagogues in Relation to United China Relief,” 1790 Broadway New York, NY Pamphlet, Famine Relief: Miscellaneous pamphlets, undated Box 94, YMCA International

U.N. and U.S. oversight remained critical to postwar relief providing not only material support but also implementation solutions for relieving the refugees from Dongbei.¹³⁸ While the Guomindang needed foreign charity to supplement its failing economy, the central government wanted to remain in control of who and how that aid was distributed. When the U.S. military stationed in Tianjin began freely distributing relief supplies, the Tianjin police and GMD military police sent urgent request for this to stop.¹³⁹

Japanese Refugees.

As Tianjin was one of the primary ports for transporting Japanese military and civilian personnel in China back to Japan, it became a major concentration point for Japanese wartime refugees.¹⁴⁰ There, with little national oversight of this process until the middle of January 1946, the Tianjin Municipal Government and police were charged with helping to oversee the departure of these Japanese and ensure their protection (although the U.S. military stationed in Tianjin was also responsible). Part of the departure process was making sure that the Japanese were not taking with them anything of value.¹⁴¹ Japanese refugees had their property confiscated and the acting mayor in Tianjin, Zhang

Work in China: An Inventory of its Records, Kautz Family YMCA Archives, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

¹³⁸ TMA, J0025-3-006259-020, May 19, 1946.

¹³⁹ TMA, J0219-3-025980, May 30, 1946.

¹⁴⁰ Many Koreans also returned to their home country through Tianjin and this is one of the reasons why Tianjin still has a large Korean population today.

¹⁴¹ TMA, J0002-2-000604-019, November 10, 1945.

Yan-e transferred this property to the central government who was supposed to use those funds for relieving Chinese war refugees.¹⁴²

However, on January 18th, an office for preparing Japanese refugees to repatriate established, the Tianjin Returning Overseas China Affairs Office (天津日侨归国准备会) to process their departure and advocate for their fair treatment. This office secured low or at cost pricing for vegetables sold to the Japanese refugees, and arranged for all Japanese leaving to stay at the same Furong school.¹⁴³ Tension between the Guomindang and the U.N. over these refugees is quite visible in the documents. While the Guomindang Central Government commanded the Tianjin Municipal Government to seize all Japanese assets and investigate all foreigners before granting them exit visas, the U.N. began to demand that all foreign refugees be released with haste and that the police department in Tianjin would comply as soon as possible.¹⁴⁴

Korean refugees were also a major problem in North China. At the end of the war, there were some 1.5 million Koreans in China. While many had come to China to fight against the Japanese, others had come as part of Japan's colonial expansion to cultivate land and staff the collaboration government. Dismantling Japanese colonialism was an inevitably messy process and a large number of Korean refugees began arriving in Tianjin from Shenyang, however the municipal government wanted to concentrate its charity efforts on its own citizens. Under pressure from U.S. assistance teams, the

¹⁴² TMA, J0002-2-000604-020, November 15, 1945.

¹⁴³ TMA, J0002-3-000213, March 1946. Also see: TMA, J0002-3-000530, January 1946.

¹⁴⁴ TMA, J0002-2-000501-070, August 29, 1946.

mayor's office was forced to extend refugee relief to Koreans for several months after an August 6, 1948 cease date.¹⁴⁵

Postwar Reconstruction - Raising Funds.

As a focal point of Nationalist strategy in North China, Tianjin was host to a variety of military forces. These forces often helped provide some of the needed supplies for refugee relief. A military unit organized to suppress bandits, the *Dongbei jiao fei zong siling bu zhengwei hui* (东北剿匪总司令部政委会), sent supplies to help with refugee students who came from Dongbei to Tianjin.¹⁴⁶ The Hebei Provincial Government Headquarters also sent officials to help with the strategic management of refugees.¹⁴⁷ The Guomindang Party office also organized fund drives at local middle schools with various booths and a ball game for teachers and other refugees.¹⁴⁸ Much of the fundraising during this period was directed at assisting veterans of the war against Japan.

Although sports had often played a role in fund raising in earlier periods, like the mock Olympics organized by the YMCA, the Tianjin Education Department and local city schools became more active at organizing charity competitions to raise funds for refugees. In order to do this, the education department organized several charity basketball competitions in the spring of 1946.¹⁴⁹ While funds were primarily used to

¹⁴⁵ TMA, J0002-2-000720-019, August 17, 1948.

¹⁴⁶ TMA, J0025-2-002852-003, 1945.

¹⁴⁷ TMA, J0025-3-006214-003, November 7, 1947.

¹⁴⁸ TMA, J0025-3-006335, December 3, 1945.

¹⁴⁹ TMA, J0110-3-000783-001, March 12, 1946.

purchase food and shelter for refugees, the social bureau also provided small cash loans for refugees to start a business at little or no interest.¹⁵⁰

Another cornerstone of postwar reconstruction was trying to send people back to their villages as quickly as possible.¹⁵¹ This of course proved impractical as the civil war caused an ever greater number of refugees from Dongbei to enter the city. In the previous section we discussed some of the problems with the Japanese repatriation process, but refugees were flowing both ways to and from Japan. The Japanese had imported many thousands of Chinese to Japanese mines and factories as forced labor. These laborers returned to Tianjin and combined with unemployed workers, veterans, and other displaced people to swell the number of refugees in the city. The Pingjin Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, Tianjin Branch (善后救济总署天津办事处) [PJRRRA] provided some assistance to relocate these refugees to rural areas, but for the most part, this was accomplished by the local government offices.¹⁵² For example, the social bureau worked to relocate any temporary shelters in Tianjin's urban center to the suburbs.¹⁵³

Another national organization, the Three Principles Youth League in Tianjin (三民主义青年团), gained special permission from the municipal government to assist with relocating refugees who came from communist-occupied areas. Fear that communist agents might be among the displaced destitute that made their way to the city prioritized registration and correct identification over individual necessity in relief decisions.¹⁵⁴ This

¹⁵⁰ TMA, J0025-3-006205-027, May 1947.

¹⁵¹ TMA, J0219-3-024964, November 17, 1945.

¹⁵² TMA, J0002-2-000513-001, April 13, 1946.

¹⁵³ TMA, J0025-3-006187-026, November 22, 1946.

fear also meant that abuse was almost inevitable and the police investigated several cases where refugees were beaten by government administrators.¹⁵⁵ The Youth League also assumed some local government responsibilities. For example, an association of unemployed food vendors requested their permission to organize.¹⁵⁶

Part of the reason refugees couldn't return home was the poor condition of transportation to and from the city. The mayor's office repeatedly set dates for all refugees to be relocated, but these days came and past with little progress made. Instead the number of refugees continued to increase. It is not clear if the Tianjin Municipal Government had a standing policy about how to send refugees back to their hometowns, so groups of refugees often had to be dealt with on a case by case basis. Sometimes the Tianjin police would act as refugee advocates, requesting funding to provide temporary refugees traveling through Tianjin with traveling money to cover the cost of their return trip and basic living expenses on the way.¹⁵⁷ The Mayor's office worked with the chamber of commerce to pressure private shipping to assist with the relocation of refugees. They set minimum refugee passenger numbers first for all private passenger transports and later for all cargo vessels as well.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁴ TMA, J0002-2-000513-031, September 26, 1946.

¹⁵⁵ TMA, J0219-1-002905, April 1946.

¹⁵⁶ TMA, J0025-2-000399-054, October 21, 1946.

¹⁵⁷ TMA, J0002-2-000513-023, March 15, 1947. Li Hanyuan, the head of Tianjin's municipal police requested permission to issue these funds from Mayor Du to cover the expenses of a group of 51 male and 34 female refugees who came from Shanghai and Nanjing, the request was approved. Also see: TMA, J0002-2-000513-024, March 28, 1947.

¹⁵⁸ TMA, J0002-2-000747-005, May 24, 1948.

Refugees weren't always willing to return home. In April, 1946, a group of over 100 refugees began to verbally insult and physically attack relocation officials on a daily basis, they also destroyed public property in protest, making the relocation even more difficult. The PJRRA warned that if they were not sent back soon, the groups might be infiltrated by communist spies who would agitate for further violence.¹⁵⁹ The concern that communist infiltrators were among the refugees was a point of continual concern both in the refugee camps outside the city and in the city's shelters like the jiujiyuan. Several months later, this office began coordinating with the Tianjin police to bar more refugees from entering the city.¹⁶⁰

Besides awakening fear in municipal leaders, the presence of refugees also elicited disgust. Writing to the head of the social bureau, Hu Menghua, Mayor Du complained that Tianjin's streets were overflowing with Dongbei refugees sleeping everywhere, and that the social bureau needed to do something about it.¹⁶¹ While the political instability after the end of World War II was acute, refugees were given permission to organize in some surprising ways. On May 17, 1948, the social bureau gave permission to a group of refugees to organize a public protest movement regarding their living conditions.¹⁶²

The PJRRA often complained that refugees were unreasonable and the work of getting them to return home difficult. In a letter to the municipal government, the PJRRA explained:

¹⁵⁹ TMA, J0002-2-000513-002, April 13, 1946.

¹⁶⁰ TMA, J0002-2-000513-007, September 25, 1946.

¹⁶¹ TMA, J0025-3-006254-022, July 15, 1947.

¹⁶² TMA, J0002-2-000747-002, May 26, 1948.

Those vagrants from Shanghai have some unreasonable requests and are causing disorder so please pass this message along to the police bureau to quickly put a stop to their activities. According to our headquarters, we are supposed to give refugees assistance and shelter, but these are causing all kinds of problems and making unreasonable requests and even physically surround our office. We cannot stop them and cannot reason with them. Even the deputy director of the social bureau came here to try to deal with this personally. We've issued them money and food but they insist that the Shanghai branch office told them that the relief headquarters promised them a certain amount and now they are in Tianjin and they demand that they be given what they were told. We called the Shanghai office, but they denied making any promises. So this is an extra demand that should be denied. There are so many in Tianjin right now and they are causing all kinds of problems by asking for special treatment.¹⁶³

Another reason why refugees were becoming resistant and seeking to avoid government processing was the growing emphasis on recruiting refugees to fight the Communists. In the context, there are some interesting documentary contradictions. While reports on refugees in the city are usually in the tens of thousands, when the discussion is about relief and it turns to recruitment, the population of Tianjin refugee's numbers in the hundreds of thousands. This draft system for refugees was implemented, at least in Tianjin, by December, 1946.¹⁶⁴

Problems were not only caused by refugees from outside of Tianjin. The unemployed poor within the city also organized to collectively petition the municipal government for aid. For example, a group of unemployed food vendors organized in the #1 district to demand the social bureau allow them to open a new street market in a better part of town.¹⁶⁵ Even when refugees were not directly confrontational, they could be demanding. There are numerous letters sent from individual refugees to the Tianjin

¹⁶³ TMA, J0002-2-000513-025, April 19, 1946.

¹⁶⁴ TMA, J0002-2-000553-034, December 12, 1946.

¹⁶⁵ TMA, J0025-2-000399-045, December 3, 1946.

Social Bureau requesting aid or to be given refugee status so that they could access relief.¹⁶⁶ Refugees also used their numbers to overwhelm police directives. A district police precinct sent an exasperated letter to the municipal police headquarters to report that it was impossible to keep refugees from spending the night at an abandoned slaughterhouse.¹⁶⁷

Refugees not only organized by their native place, they also organized by common occupation, to collectively agitate for assistance. Groups of fishermen, tailors, menders, and veteran mechanics each sent in requests to be recognized as independent organizations and to be given approval to set up cooperative markets which sold groceries to members at reduced rates.¹⁶⁸ Refugees were also stimulated to collective action when they were denied access to relief. A group of refugees that arrived in Tianjin from Guizhou were refused recognition as refugees and therefore denied access to supplies and medical care. Rather than make an appeal which emphasized their misery exclusively (although it certainly does this as well), they emphasized their loyalty.

This group had chosen to leave their homes so as not to become collaborators with the Japanese. They called themselves “the people of justice” and complained that the government helps some people without question, even those from the communist areas are given relief without question. But this group’s representative, Liu Shirong argued that they had been begging on the streets with no assistance. He energetically explains that it was like putting the 30 loyal people he represented to death. At the end of the letter it

¹⁶⁶ TMA, December 12, 1946. For example, see letter from refugee Hu Congfang 难民胡崇芳等.

¹⁶⁷ TMA, J0219-3-026109, July 12, 1946.

¹⁶⁸ TMA, J0025-3-005907, June 19, 1946.

listed each person's name, age, and place of origin. He also repeatedly emphasized how unfair it was that these loyal refugees have been treated like this but when dealing with other refugees, they didn't even do a proper background check. Pressure for police and charity workers to separate the deserving poor and the undeserving poor came both from above and below as refugees attempted to make their own cases as to why they should be granted access to the limited resources available to refugees.¹⁶⁹

Although representing a comparatively small number of refugees, the mayor's office responded to Liu Shirong's letter by ordering the PJRRA to investigate and sent an attached copy of the order to Liu to show him that they were neither ignored nor neglected.¹⁷⁰ Some credit must be given that even in the presence of hundreds of thousands of refugees in the city and its suburbs, even relatively small groups of refugees could petition the government and expect some kind of response. In this instance, the response was sent after only about one week.

Tianjin was often a waypoint for refugees returning to their homes in Dongbei after escaping to the south. The Tianjin Police Department assisted these people by supplying small cash sums, arranging their free transportation, and organizing temporary shelter as they waited for transportation to become available.¹⁷¹ The police also occasionally appropriated privately owned homes to house refugees. However, they did pay the owners for their use and took responsibility for any damages caused by the refugees.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁹ TMA, J0002-2-000513-021, March 5, 1947.

¹⁷⁰ TMA, J0002-2-000513-022, March 12, 1947.

¹⁷¹ TMA, J0002-2-000513-015, December 18, 1946.

¹⁷² TMA, J0002-2-000513-019, December 27, 1946.

In the year after the end of the war, temporary aid took many forms. The police working with the PJRRA came up with rules for dealing with the refugees. These rules would be repeatedly re-emphasized and become increasingly complex as the refugee problem grew. Aid was to be temporary; the police distributed 5000 franks to each refugee which was supposed to provide enough money for 10 days of meals. Regardless of their age, they were issued one set of clothing. Disabled refugees were sent to the *jiujiyuan* and the injured were first sent to the hospital and then relocated. Rather than force people to go back to their homes, which many refused, the PJRRA was tasked with finding them employment, and the police were charged with maintaining order and arresting troublemakers.¹⁷³

As the civil war escalated and the GMD position in North China became increasingly tenuous greater attention was paid to maintaining security among refugee camps which became a type of native place concentration camps. The central government ordered non-Tianjin refugees to be organized by native place and kept out of the city. Even in the context of heightened security, the local municipal government relied on private business leaders to facilitate, plan, and fund these shelters.¹⁷⁴ Besides businesses and religious charities another important association in citizen-led-funding were the Native Place Associations, *Tongxianghui* (TXH), in Tianjin.

TXH raised money and conducted charity relief for people from the same hometown. They also built their own shelters both in and outside of the city, some of which were built on city property.¹⁷⁵ However, this of course meant that certain

¹⁷³ TMA, J0002-2-000513-027, May 8, 1946.

¹⁷⁴ TMA, J0002-2-000513-033, October 11, 1946.

associations were more effective than others and that individuals who came from a prosperous native place were more likely to receive assistance. The social bureau required these associations to register with them before conducting any fund raising or distributing relief supplies. For example, the Taiwanese Association started converting wartime bomb shelters into refugee shelters.¹⁷⁶ Almost every TXH was operating its own refugee shelters in the postwar period with supplies like water purifiers provided by the social bureau.¹⁷⁷ Tianjin Native Place Associations also filled an important and sensitive government role in designing and issuing refugees identification papers.¹⁷⁸

While for the most part, these organizations provided useful leverage for meeting the needs of individual refugees, they too could be the source of exploitation and corruption. For example, a representative from Dongguang County, Ma Minxuan, contacted the head of the Tianjin Social Bureau to report how leaders in the Dongguang TXH had cheated refugees by running away with their supplies. Since these refugees were supposed to obtain their supplies from the TXH, it became very hard for them to obtain help anywhere else.¹⁷⁹

Directives sent down from the central government to the local city administrators were almost always vague, empty, repetitive, and meaningless, leaving the Tianjin mayor's office to figure out the details. While there was little specific useful advice contained in such directives, those sent from Song Ziwen (T. V. Soong), the Premier of

¹⁷⁵ TMA, J0025-3-004231-001, September 22, 1947.

¹⁷⁶ TMA, J0002-3-001445, August 1946.

¹⁷⁷ TMA, J0025-3-000785-001, July 23, 1947.

¹⁷⁸ TMA, J0002-2-000614-083, September 4, 1947.

¹⁷⁹ TMA, J0025-3-005054-004, 1946.

the ROC and other similar communiqué, contained certain issues that repeatedly emphasized the enduring and crippling problems the GMD faced. One such remark instructed that anyone who could work, should. In his eleven-point letter points six through nine all emphasize that people with special skills or strong healthy bodies need to be put to work. For all his talk about cooperation and coordination between local and central government, Song places the responsibility for raising funds, organizing civilian groups, and providing relief to refugees squarely on local government, although the central government did supply significant funds to the city.¹⁸⁰

One of these priorities was the need for central government offices to work together with local government offices on their refugee policies. As we have seen with the directives of the PJRRA, the central government could accomplish little without relying on local infrastructure to carry out its directives. In his letter to the Tianjin Mayor, Song Ziwen also emphasized the need to think not just about the short-term need of refugees, but also their long-term settlement. There seems to be a palpable sense of frustration in his letter which repeatedly asks everyone to do their job and everyone should be taking responsibility. Besides the obvious elements of emergency relief such as setting up shelters and building soup kitchens, Song also points out the need to set up secure storage, loans to revitalize the countryside, and educational assistance.

As supplies for refugees diminished the social bureau issued commands designed to hinder refugees from accessing aid multiple times. All charity food distribution was to be done at the same time each day throughout the city at different locations.¹⁸¹ The

¹⁸⁰ TMA, J0002-2-000513-039, September 22, 1946.

¹⁸¹ TMA, J0025-3-006187-033, November 24, 1946.

Tianjin Municipal Government also sought to alleviate some of the resource burden by having refugee camps cultivate their own crops. The social bureau provided seeds for these cooperative farms.¹⁸² Although the social bureau often distributed cash along with food to refugees, sometimes it distributed food stamps. These food stamps proved much more valuable for securing aid than cash as hyperinflation meant that cash was effectively worthless.¹⁸³

While aid was meant to be temporary, the reality of the situation meant that the shelters set up for refugees often began to resemble more traditional institutions for relieving poverty. Refugees were issued work permits and shelters began installing medical facilities, not just for immunization but also for long-term care.¹⁸⁴ The Tianjin Social Bureau also relied on the China Red Cross to maintain soup kitchens inside refugee camps and around the city.¹⁸⁵ The Red Swastika Society was very active building refugee shelters and negotiated with the municipal government to provide free electricity for cooking at their locations.¹⁸⁶ In fact, a Tianjin utility company set up a specific committee for charity work, building and improving infrastructure to the shelters set up around the city. Local Catholic and Protestant churches remained important local sources for volunteers to distribute relief goods to refugees like the Holy House of Mercy,

Rencitang (仁慈堂).¹⁸⁷

¹⁸² TMA, J0025-2-002919-010, December 5, 1947.

¹⁸³ Specific amounts of money set aside for relief as donations to a single individual could range between several thousand to several hundred thousand yuan, TMA, J0025-3-006210-020, May 12, 1947.

¹⁸⁴ TMA, J0025-3-006238, April 20, 1946.

¹⁸⁵ TMA, J0025-3-006321, December 13, 1946.

¹⁸⁶ TMA, J0025-3-006266-004, December 27, 1947.

From the breakdown of the armistice in March 1946 to the city's communist takeover, Tianjin faced sustained instability and martial law. Besides having to develop temporary relief for tens of thousands of refugees fleeing contested areas, each city district was required to keep 50 stretchers ready in case of enemy attack in shelters specifically for local residents who might be effected by the fighting. The city was divided into ten districts and local police were assisted by military police.¹⁸⁸

When Cangxian County was attacked suddenly in July 1947, government clerks and school faculty had to flee to the city with almost nothing including their identification papers. This represented a problem that would repeat time and again before the end of the war. How to identify loyal refugees from communist infiltrators? Numerous plans were concocted to issue IDs to refugees, however, this was largely ineffective. Often the IDs expired only a few days after they were issued.¹⁸⁹ IDs represented so much more than just information about a refugee's place of origin, affiliations and vital statistics. They were a stamp of moral approval and declaration of loyalty, a means for separating the good people from the bad people.¹⁹⁰ In the identification document below, the processing agent would list the date the refugee was oppressed by the Communist Party and became a refugee, if the individual is loyal to the Guomindang, the ID also verified that they were not a spy and provided a list of the refugee's sponsors who would take full responsibility if you were actually a communist agent.

¹⁸⁷ TMA, J0025-3-006215-013, August 11, 1947.

¹⁸⁸ TMA, J0002-2-000613-100, October 24, 1947.

¹⁸⁹ TMA, J0002-2-000614-060, July 16, 1947.

¹⁹⁰ TMA, J0002-2-000614-062, July 11, 1947.

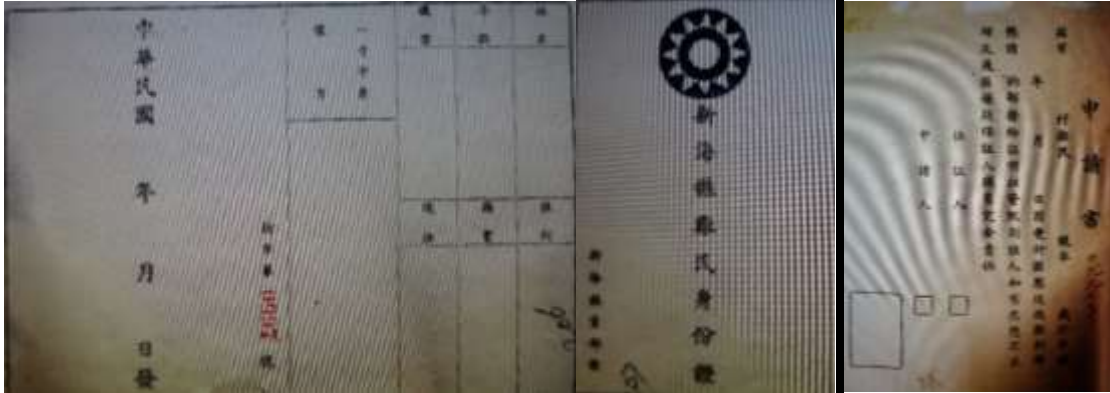


Figure 4.9: (Left, Middle, and Right) Guomintang ID Program.¹⁹¹

Fear that communist spies might infiltrate refugee groups was not misplaced, especially as county government officials reported whole boxes of unissued IDs disappearing.¹⁹²

Many of the refugees who came to Tianjin in the fall of 1947 were fleeing communist land reform policies that put whole families to public humiliation and death.¹⁹³

Sometimes the explanations given by the police to the mayor's office were quite explicit, describing how blood was everywhere in the countryside and young men were kidnapped and forced to do terrible things until they escaped to Tianjin and began wandering around.¹⁹⁴

At times, the pressure of dealing with refugees and the treatment of communist take-over seemed to have pushed the municipal government towards the ludicrous. Desperate requests to all non-government charity organizations to help identify strategies for not just assisting the influx of refugees coming from communist occupied areas, but

¹⁹¹ TMA, J0002-2-000614-064, July 7, 1947.

¹⁹² TMA, J0002-2-000614-069, July 24, 1947.

¹⁹³ TMA, J0002-2-000614-082, August 25, 1947.

¹⁹⁴ TMA, J0002-2-000614-098, November 8, 1947.

demonstrating to them the government's love for her people.¹⁹⁵ The only major change that was put into effect was that all refugees were required to go through processing before they could come to the city, even those with family members already living in Tianjin. However, this idea of spreading the government's love becomes increasingly apparent in the document record as the Nationalist hold on the city became progressively perilous.

In a request from the Tianjin mayor's office to the central government, the author exclaims: "if we don't find some way to help the refugees, how can we say the government cares for them?"¹⁹⁶ Yet, at the same time, the city was becoming less open to those fleeing the perils of land reform and class struggle. By July 1947 all registration was moved to the city gate to keep refugees out of the city until they were processed. Non-Tianjin residents, if they were not immediately sent back, they were ushered to camps located outside of the city limits.¹⁹⁷ By January 1948, Tianjin's refugee provisions reached new heights of inadequacy. While they were providing daily assistance for some 30,000 refugees, there were an estimated 80,000 refugees in the city and several hundred thousand additional refugees from Dongbei in settlements around the city.¹⁹⁸ When the Chinese communists liberated the city on a frigid January day in 1949, they assumed control over what had been the economic heart of Northern China since the Xinhua Revolution, but it was also a city of displaced refugees seeking economic shelter.

¹⁹⁵ TMA, J0002-2-000671-001, February 19, 1947.

¹⁹⁶ TMA, J0002-2-000671-004, March 15, 1947.

¹⁹⁷ TMA, J0026-2-000079-003, July 7, 1947.

¹⁹⁸ TMA, J0002-2-000211-015, 1948.

Conclusion.

Three decades of Maoist rule in China sought to eliminate the multiple, conflicting motivations for private philanthropy. The mantra of, “Follow the examples of Comrade Lei Feng” (向雷锋同志学习) meant that self-sacrifice was valuable as long as it fit within the narrative of service to the state and its ideology. What’s more, under communism, private philanthropy was regarded as suspect, because it both suggested the presence of inequality and the government’s failure to address it. After 1949, the language describing those displaced by poverty also fundamentally changed. There were no more refugees, nanmin, only wandering people that needed to be settled.¹⁹⁹ The recently published work of several well-respected scholars including Frank Dikötter, Felix Wemheuer, and Kimberley Ens Manning among others have begun to decipher the political context of the tragic death of some 30 to 45 million people during the Three Years of Great Famine (三年大饥荒) from 1959-1961.²⁰⁰ Their emphasis on government culpability, and Mao’s primary role in the historical narrative is reflected in such titles as *Mao’s Great Famine*, and *Famine Politics in Maoist China*. More contextual building is needed as information about this period has long been suppressed and only recently, government documents have become available illuminating the policy history of this period.

¹⁹⁹ After 1949 the term refugee, nanmin, almost completely disappears from the Tianjin archival record.

²⁰⁰ For discussion of this famine see: Frank Dikötter, *Mao’s Great Famine: The History of China’s Most Devastating Catastrophe, 1958-1962* (New York: Walker & Co., 2010), also, see: Felix Wemheuer and Kimberley Ens Manning, *Eating Bitterness: New Perspectives on China’s Great Leap Forward and Famine* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2011), and Felix Wemheuer, *Famine Politics in Maoist China and the Soviet Union* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2014).

Other scholars, like Jeremy Brown, while acknowledging the centrality of Mao's policy directives, have taken a decidedly different approach by directing their focus on how local officials interpreted and acted out Beijing mandates.²⁰¹ Much more research that emphasizes individual identity and experience is still needed as little is yet known about how motivations for social responsibility and values such as mercy, generosity, and public giving changed during this period. While post-reform China, has brought unprecedented levels of wealth, and lifted many from the desperation of abject poverty, the continued suppression of scholarly criticism and journalistic investigation of modern catastrophes, protection of government exploitation of the poor, and weariness over the formation of any autonomously organized civilian groups, means that philanthropy remains a contested space in contemporary China.

Police harassment of Ai Weiwei after he drew attention to the students killed by poorly constructed schools; the continual prosecution of activists protesting the demolition of poor urban housing; the low percentage of registered charities in China that meet basic international standards for transparency and disclosure; the recent arrests of some 270 human rights lawyers in August 2015, all confirm that the Beijing government recognizes and fears the latent power of civil society.²⁰² However, government attempts to downplay human suffering and the languid growth of contemporary philanthropy among China's new elite have been mirrored by diverse, vocal, and energetic responses

²⁰¹ Jeremy Brown, "Crossing the Rural-Urban Divide in Twentieth-Century China" (PhD diss., University of California, San Diego, 2008).

²⁰² Huang Yanzhong, "Why Has Philanthropy Failed to Take off in China?" *Forbes Asia*, May 30, 2014, <http://www.forbes.com/sites/yanzhonghuang/2014/05/30/why-has-philanthropy-failed-to-take-off-in-china/>.

from the broader society, particularly within Chinese social media. This divergence has inspired great interest in China's social welfare, both past and present.

My study advances current scholarship in several critical ways. First, it shows that within some of the most militant forms of modernization, from the displacement of traditional guilds by the chamber of commerce to the replacement of the Qing Bannermen by a nationalized police force, traditional concepts of benevolence and social responsibility remained relevant and continued to inform institutional responses to disaster and relief. Secondly, the dissertation diverges sharply from scholarship that sees Chinese nationalism as primarily the product of failed Japanese colonialism by emphasizing how the influence of international shaming and expectations for social welfare provision was both stimulated and unmet by modern Nationalist discourse. While we cannot separate the development of Chinese nationalism from international political conflict, we must likewise acknowledge that it derives from sources that are multiple and often conflicting, and that these varied origins functioned to produce divergences within national identity. By arguing for a nationalism that is multiple, simultaneous, and fragmented, this study parallels Prasenjit Duara's charge to resist viewing the past as imagined or construed.²⁰³ The dissertation also challenges the interpretation of nationalist urban reformers as uniformly following Western models of modernization by emphasizing some of the conflicts that emerged between Chinese and Western philanthropists.²⁰⁴

²⁰³ Prasenjit Duara, *Rescuing History from the Nation: Questioning Narratives of Modern China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

By identifying and examining several of the primary motivations that supported philanthropic giving throughout the Republican Period, I conclude that by conveying a sense of public rectitude, philanthropy provided a powerful source of legitimacy to both state and non-state actors. While the ethical values of self-sacrifice and the promotion and maintenance of social stability have deep roots in both Chinese Confucian and Buddhist traditions, unprecedented levels of wealth inequality and competition among numerous would-be ruling authorities, meant the particular legitimacy conveyed through an altruistic identity was critical in the socio-political confusion of this period.²⁰⁵ This dissertation has argued that competition for moral credibility was a significant backdrop for individual attempts to define effective governance.

Furthermore, the dissertation argues that philanthropic work in Republican China provided an important institutional experience for training civil administrators. Not everyone, after all, could study at the Whampoa Military Academy in Guangzhou. United charity organizations and emergency relief meetings threw hard-nosed GMD officers together with municipal government officials, bright eyed foreign missionaries, gown-clad village gentry, local press barons, and nouveau riche compradors each with their own opinions on effective governance and motivations for promoting the social welfare. My research joins with the work of several recent urban histories of China, like that of Kristin Stapleton, that collectively argue political fragmentation gave rise to numerous factions exerting their influence to bring stability to the city in the absence of unified

²⁰⁴ The volume, *Remaking the Chinese City*, largely suggests that at least within the context of urban planning, urban leaders followed Western models, see: Joseph Esherick, *Remaking the Chinese City: Modernity and National Identity, 1900-1950* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2000), 7.

²⁰⁵ For an example of Chinese Buddhism's connection to philanthropy and moral credibility, see information on the sixteen kinds of almsgiving practiced by the wujinzang yuan sect (無盡藏院).

government administration. The careful analysis of internal municipal government communications in this study further invites trans-national comparative research on the importance of philanthropy in other modernizing societies as a context for emerging civil governance.

After 1949, how the individual related to society radically changed. Rather than alleviating inequality through the continual individually motivated redistribution of wealth, Maoist interpretation of Marxist ideology stressed the value of unified labor and state enforced economic equality. An ethics of collective interest and self-reliance claimed supremacy over narratives of suffering and criticism of state institutions was completely suppressed. While urban cooperatives did organize mutual aid provisions for those with a temporary disability, long-term assistance was seen as a threat to the socialist work ethic and primarily the responsibility of family networks.²⁰⁶ This internalization of welfare responsibility directed to the family unit has had incredible implications for contemporary Chinese society and deserves much greater attention.

In 1978, the Deng Xiaoping administration launched a program of economic reforms, *Gaige Kaifang* (改革开放), aimed at establishing a socialist market economy. Although its policies have undergone several stages of reform over the past three decades, its basic principles remain in effect today. Unlike other post-communist regimes where radical economic reforms followed the collapse of single party rule, the Chinese Communist Party has retained relative

²⁰⁶ For a discussion of Chinese welfare policy during the Mao period, see: John E. Dixon, *The Chinese Welfare System, 1949-1979* (New York, NY: Praeger, 1981).

political continuity, a continuity which, by and large, has sustained the state's position to define the acceptable limits of moral conscience and public virtue.

While the “seven elders” of the current Politburo Standing Committee may claim authority to define the borders of acceptable social relations, the growth of independent voluntary associations in contemporary China continues to diversify the motivations for responding to problems of inequality, vulnerability, and exploitation. Ultimately, this study has sought to demonstrate that philanthropy as a social responsibility conveys much more than the direct aid given to the suffering. Philanthropy represents an important locus for negotiating power and legitimacy, and has consequently been a territory of contention throughout Chinese history.

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