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Editor's Introduction

The USF Center for Asia Pacific Studies is pleased to announce the publication of the Fall/Winter 2015-16 issue of *Asia Pacific Perspectives*. This special issue focuses on advertising and marketing in East Asia as a lens for understanding cultural encounters and interaction between Asia and the West from the 19th century to the present. These articles offer insight and new perspectives on how culture has influenced the advertising and marketing of products in East Asia both historically and in the present and contribute more broadly to academic discussions on issues of modernity, cultural and racial identity, gender, stereotypes, and globalization. In every case, these papers reveal the importance of not just the text in advertisements but the “power of images.”

Examining “little things of great importance,” **Valentina Boretti** reveals how during the 1910s-1930s, children and their toys became part of the larger discourse on modernity and China’s efforts to remake itself and its future generations. As Chinese and foreign companies sought to market their products, children and their playthings became marketed as symbols of China’s progress and enlightenment.

Cecile Armand’s article reveals how Sun-Maid, an American global company, introduced itself and ultimately succeeded in the Chinese market. Through a case study of its raisin marketing strategies and practices employed in the making of the actual advertisements in the 1920s-1930s, Armand reveals how the company adapted to the Chinese market and succeeded in turning a luxury product into a very popular brand.

In the next article, **Kaori Want** examines contemporary Japanese advertisements featuring *haafu*. Want’s article aims to fill a void in *haafu* (multi-racial) studies in Japan by focusing attention on the presence of *haafu* in advertisements and reveals how idealized images of *haafu* promote stereotypes that stand in stark contrast to the real life experiences and diversity of *haafu* in Japan today.

Our graduate student paper for this issue highlights the work of **Tina Tan**, a second-year student in USF’s joint MA in Asia Pacific Studies/ MBA program. Exploring the buying practices of Chinese consumers in the luxury and fashion market, Tan notes the tension between ideas of Chinese nationalism and Chinese consumers’ growing desire for Western luxury brands, and the incorporation of “Chinese elements” by both sides as they strive to obtain their share of the market.

We end this issue with an informative survey by **Jing Chen** on the state of the archive in the study of advertising in China. Chen's examination of digital resources on advertising in China will be of great use to scholars seeking to enhance their research through the use of advertisements. In order for scholars to be able to fully utilize ads as a source for their research, Chen calls for the systematic collection of ad images with fully annotated metadata.

Many thanks to our new assistant managing editor, Leslie A. Woodhouse, for her hard work and efforts in ensuring a seamless transition to the team and that the high standards set for the journal are achieved. Thanks also to Tom Henke and the Web Services Team at USF for their contributions in bringing this issue to our readers.

~ Dr. Melissa S. Dale, Editor

Small Things of Great Importance: Toy Advertising in China, 1910s-1930s

by Valentina Boretti, *School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London*

Toys may be small things, but their relevance is great, argued a Chinese toy advertisement in 1931.¹ Indeed, from the turn of the century, playthings had acquired a very significant role within the Chinese childrearing discourse as tools to shape children, the prospective rescuers of the nation. As a possibly unintended result, both children and toys acquired a marketing value: advertising thus employed them as icons to publicize a wide array of products. At the same time, the nascent toy industry, and some foreign producers, “poached”² the new discourse to brand playthings as testimonials and catalysts of what is termed here cognizant modernity.

This term is introduced here to cover a flexibly normative construct that, it is contended, was both the suggested outcome of purchase and the assumed premise of promotional messages. Cognizantly modern personae were those who did not inanely yearn for the fashionable or novel *per se*, but judiciously pursued the *improved* and *improving*, with a view to elevating themselves and the nation concurrently – through children, in this case. Neither connoisseurship nor consumerism, their consumption revealed and confirmed awareness, which legitimated it. Consciousness likewise legitimated toy production or sale, whose purported main rationales were education, patriotism and competence, which should equally inform consumption. Cognizantly modern adults should appreciate the relevance of childhood and invest in it; children should be aware of the tasks that awaited them, and eager for instructive, state-of-the-art entertainment preparatory to achievement.

Remade playthings were among the tools for remaking China. Their re-manipulation was partly material, through new renditions of old items or replicas of modern objects (trains, planes), and chiefly immaterial since toys acquired new labels. These “biographies”³ construed them into makers and revealers of immaterial (cognizant) modernity, as much as of tangible progress – markers of lifestyle and attitude simultaneously. Improvement, in a word, underpinned the marketing of toys.

Drawing on advertisements placed in periodicals for children and adults, this study explores the promotion of playthings between the 1910s and the 1930s in China. After a brief overview of the child and toy

discourse, it looks at how children and playthings were used as marketing levers – since this, too, signals their symbolic role – to then map the contents of toy advertising as exemplified by several cases, so as to illustrate the pervasiveness and composition of the marketing approach.

Small things of great importance: Toys and children in discourse and advertising

In 1873, the foreign firm L. Moore & Co. advertised in the *Shanghai News* the sale of various mobile toys, including steamboats and puppets, all very “suitable as presents for children” for the coming “Western winter solstice.”⁴ Mechanical “toys,” namely leisure objects for adults, had been advertised before, but this was the first time children were mentioned as the final consumers of “toys.” From the late 1870s, the young seem to have become a promising market niche: “toy guns for youngsters” and “foreign little boys” appeared for sale;⁵ advertisements began to speak of “children’s playthings.”⁶ None of these toys were Chinese; neither did these short listings attempt to construe them as endowed with any particular capacity, bar ingenuity.

Yet, in the early 1900s, when foreign dolls were still among the exotic gadgets advertised as presents for the winter solstice,⁷ Chinese producers began to publicize their own toys by underscoring their alleged pedagogic, moral, and nation-building facets, which made them suitable gifts. Flashcards and blocks first, then vehicles, military toys, puppets, animals, kitchen sets, and balls all came to be presented as tools, rather than gadgets – namely, as more utilitarian than ludic.⁸ Playthings that were very similar had been donned entirely different significations, because Chinese entrepreneurs appropriated and commodified a new discourse: toys were instruments to mold children, the buds of the nation.

1. “New” children and their toys

By the time intellectuals and Momilk advertisements alike proclaimed in the mid 1920s that “in order to strengthen the nation, it is necessary to first strengthen the people; in order to strengthen the people, it is necessary to first strengthen the children,”⁹ the narrative of re-making China through children already had a history of about three decades.¹⁰

Its emergence is in fact to be situated against the backdrop of late nineteenth-century apprehension over the state and fate of China, when turmoil, increasing foreign pressure on the Qing empire, and military debacles accentuated the conviction that change was urgently required in order to save China from humiliation and annihilation. Reformers, such as the influential Liang Qichao,¹¹ identified the young – and children in particular – as a key cornerstone of national rejuvenation. Like women, children were symbols; like them, they had to be liberated. Once freed from the fetters of traditional upbringing and education – (mis)construed

as unaware of childhood's characteristics¹² and bound to generate inadequate subjects – and once properly cultivated, children would become the improved, “fit” new citizens who would rescue the nation from its alleged decline.

The concern with children had, therefore, little to do with them, and plenty with adults. This “public meaning”¹³ and politically charged role of children and childhood was by no means unique to China,¹⁴ neither was the linkage between children and renewal unknown to the Chinese tradition; nor was this vision entirely new, despite claims to the contrary, since it did draw upon the time-honored prominence of education and early instruction. Yet, the sense of urgency was remarkable.

The spotlight placed on children as national rather than family assets spawned from the early 1900s the development of a discourse of childhood and childrearing, which by the 1910s had already become pervasive, since preoccupations over the fate of China did not diminish with the establishment of the Republic. Through media, events and schooling, intellectuals and pedagogues instructed parents, educators, and youngsters themselves on how to properly cultivate, or be, good citizens, aware of their present and prospective duty to reconstruct and protect the nation. Although the ideal child notion featured nuances, and many did criticize the imposition of adult concerns on youngsters, the main model consolidated by the late 1920s construed “new children,” often coded masculine but encompassing both genders, as robust, patriotic, ingeniously laborious, knowledgeable, science-oriented, militant, and – increasingly in the 1930s – committed to the collective.¹⁵

Fortified by references to education, science, psychology, and selectively appropriated foreign childrearing discourse, experts affirmed that parenthood, too, was to be reformed: old customs would not beget new citizens. Rational affection, closeness and appreciation of children's needs were to be the norm: “backward” families had to comprehend the relevance of play and toys, so far allegedly overlooked due to incognizance. Proper play with suitable toys, whose correctness was primarily for professionals to define, was repositioned as a crucial instrument for instructing and improving. No longer gadgets seldom associated with learning,¹⁶ playthings were proclaimed more influential than books, or even the most important thing in children's life.

Since toys were essential, they had to be used, chosen and produced judiciously. Consistent with the long-standing belief in the shaping power of the environment,¹⁷ the power of the material was repeatedly emphasized.¹⁸ Proper toys, in the opinion of most, ought to be educational, scientific, enjoyable, safe, attractive, well-manufactured but not over-ingenuous, made in China, and true to life – artist Feng Zikai being among the few to argue that realistic toys left no room to imagination and implied “adultification” of children. Unqualified amusement was not the purpose of a

good plaything,¹⁹ that should instead stimulate the intellect, nurture the character, or train the body. With some notable exceptions, Chinese toys old and new were, apparently, not up to the task.

Many “traditional” toys like glass trumpets, clay and sugar figurines, or masks, were deplored as pointless, crudely made, hazardous, non-educational, superstitious, and conservative. Unbefitting for new children, they should be replaced by “modern” playthings – many of which (animals, boats, balls) had in fact been current in China for centuries, albeit without “educational” tags.²⁰ Condemnation was accompanied by pleas for the improvement of toy-making, fundamental also for reducing the consumption of foreign toys which were, as we shall see, a spiritual and monetary threat. Mechanization and rationalization of toy-making would produce the much-needed intelligent national tools for instructing children: state-of-the-art materiality was construed as the marker, and producer, of superior immateriality. Yet, according to experts, most entrepreneurs failed to rise to the occasion.

Whilst this criticism was not encouraging, other components of the discourse of toys were even more critical for producers. For theorists, consumption should be regulated, and primarily serve the moral interests of the nation rather than the business interests of the industry: hence they condemned the purchase of too many playthings, lest children become superficial. Even more fatal was the strand that devalued industrial toys as dull and pricey items that youngsters did not really like, and should possess only as a stimulus to create their own – home-making toys being a much-advocated activity.²¹ Toy advertising, however, devised ways to utilize the most marketable discursive claims and sidestep inconvenient ones. For indeed – as has long been pointed out²² – the spotlight placed on children by nation-strengthening agendas attracted commercial interests.

2. Children and toys as marketing levers

Advertising does not mirror reality. Nonetheless, being conceived to persuade, it shows situations that are thought intriguing, or desirable in terms of aspiration or identification. In the pseudo-reality staged in 1920s-1930s Chinese periodicals targeting an adult readership, children and playthings occupied a prominent place – though not as much as women – as marketed concepts and marketing levers.²³

As time-honored symbols of propitiousness and renewal, and now also icons of modernity, well-groomed children were likely to attract attention. Hence native and foreign companies included them in their advertisements, to substantiate claims ranging from the solidity of banks to the benefits of toothpaste.²⁴ The young personified the prospect of a bright future: yet such possibility, by its very nature, entailed the risk of not materializing. The preoccupation over children’s present and prospective nation-rescuing endeavors was indeed capitalized upon in

advertisements, playing the card of physico-spiritual strength, apparently marketable for domestic and imported commodities alike, despite the National Goods Campaigns that urged Chinese nationals to consume only domestic products.²⁵ Thus, for instance, the “future society leaders,” nourished with oats to ensure that their brains and body were up to the task, should be given the right clothes that, allowing movement and play and deterring weakness, would permit them to accomplish their duties as the “future masters” of China – as they were called, appropriating theorists’ parlance.²⁶

In the company of children, or occasionally on their own, playthings were also part of the promotional paraphernalia deployed in advertisements. Depictions of children at play in paintings, prints, wares or textiles had long been part of pre-modern visual imagery. Not unlike twentieth-century representations, their focus was not on children but rather on the metaphors they stood for. Youngsters, and often also the toys they were portrayed with, were auspicious symbols of harmony, happiness, fertility, wealth and success.²⁷ Building on children’s role as emblems, as well as on the iconography of play and toys as attributes of propitious children, modern advertising appropriated and developed the motif, inserting playthings even when there was no depiction of play, and when the promoted products had no relation with children.²⁸

Toys that accompanied children were mostly those recommended by the childrearing discourse: balls, pull-along toys, dolls, animals, blocks. Aspirational items like luxury toy cars and rocking horses also appeared, as did occasionally pistols and some objects classified as “traditional,” like whipping tops, rattles or old-style puppets. Far from cannibalizing the commodity publicized, playthings became its testimonials and helped create an attractive setting for it, in basic compound advertisements that used illustrations to convey a “total impression” and enhance the persuasive power of copy.²⁹ Rather than purely providing product information, this advertising aimed at letting viewers taste a dream of comfort, modernity, novelty, health and success – peddling an ideal lifestyle in which toys were now relevant icons.

Goods as diverse as heating outfits, grape juice, children’s garments, rubber shoes, medicines for women and cigarettes could all be promoted by literally “toying” with the feel of serenity, health or affluence conveyed by the presence of plaything-equipped children, that included boys holding cute dolls.³⁰ Dolls also helped relay significations of “civilized” hygienic domesticity, with a slight touch of gender essentialization: girls who washed dolls’ clothes endorsed soap, while mothers and old dolls equally looked younger with a touch of powder.³¹ Advertising popularized the idea that a toyless child was not complete or, conversely, that healthy and fit youngsters would use toys. Time and again, in adverts for medicines or foodstuffs, nourished and healed children appeared in the

company of attractive, often upmarket playthings. Ill health, parents were told, was indeed the only possible explanation for lack of interest in play.³²

The plaything hence became a *commercial* attribute, or addendum, of the child, and both were used to elicit interest, so much so that they could be deployed by evocation, namely without necessarily appearing. Materiality thus became quasi-immaterial, as shown by the usages of the “gift” concept. The notion of “gift” (*enwu* 恩物), which had become current – via Japan – at the turn of the century to indicate Froebelian kindergarten toys,³³ was pressed into service to advertise Chinese and foreign commodities that had little to do with its factual meaning. These included apricot toffee, “the gift for modern children;”³⁴ talcum powder, a “summer gift for children;”³⁵ and even the phonograph, a “gift” for the new household.³⁶ Apparently the concept of “gift” functioned to convey the notion of uplifting, modern items, conducive to a “civilized,” genteel new lifestyle and family leisure that was, incidentally, much advocated in advice manuals.³⁷

Children’s leisure, too, was supposed to be uplifting. An advertisement for Kodak Brownie cameras, duly labeled as a “children’s gift,” claimed that youngsters “wish[ed] for beneficial games” that could increase intelligence and develop thought.³⁸ Kodak cameras could be given by fathers to sons as an inspiring, meaningful game, possibly to be shared with other boys.³⁹ This was precisely the predominant vision of normative play construed by the childrearing discourse. And the notion of cognizant “beneficial” play with “appropriate” toys lay at the heart of the promotion of playthings *per se*.

Play – but not childish: The messages of toy advertising

Commercial forces quickly capitalized on discourse. From the 1910s, a number of industrial companies appeared – some short-lived, others lasting well into the 1940s – that manufactured “new” playthings as a side or core product. Implicitly or explicitly, they often claimed their primary goal to reside in educating children and helping China decrease the economic losses caused by imports.⁴⁰ The largest of them had to compete with posh foreign goods, but also against artisan toy-makers who, besides updating their traditional creations, produced cheap imitations of “modern” playthings.

These (rarely) big–and medium-scale companies, active mostly in Shanghai, engaged actively in promotion, deploying different strategies: the less affluent were reached by means of displays and events, while advertising targeted better-off customers, those who could buy and read magazines. Advertisements were placed in children’s periodicals, and more frequently in media that catered to an adult readership: newspapers; magazines for women, educators and parents; general interest periodicals; and trade journals. Most of these publications, incidentally, were also disseminating the discourse of toys. Consistently, print advertising positioned

playthings as instructive, scientifically conceived and affordable objects, testimonials of a made-in-China cognizant material/immaterial modernity, thus seeking to convince the affluent to reject things foreign, and to attract those who wished, through consumption, to participate in an enlightened “imagined community.”

1. A non-child-centered approach

The branding⁴¹ of playthings drew on several facets of the recently developed discourse of toys and childrearing, which advertisements exploited without exerting much apparent influence on it.⁴² Producers and advertisers deployed significations⁴³ that encompassed education and modernity, nationalism and performance of citizenship, affectionate and competent parenthood, intelligence, and style. These associations were made explicit by appealing mainly to the mind of readers, using a language that repackaged pedagogical and political speech. “Appropriate,” “beneficial,” “instructive,” “new,” “patriotic,” and “scientific” were key terms, paired with verbs like “develop,” “enlighten,” “cultivate,” “facilitate,” “nurture,” “arouse” the intellectual, moral and physical growth of children. Concern with quality was strong: toys were claimed to be solid, ingeniously (and industrially) manufactured, vivacious, and safe (probably as a reaction to criticism against domestic goods). Aesthetic appeal and reasonable price did count: the new plaything was to be attractive and affordable.

Advertisements were largely of the simple or basic compound genre, featuring an image of one or several toys with children, habitually coupled with a copy that provided a modicum of product information, and a lot of persuasion through descriptions of benefits or lifestyle. Rarely were playthings shown unaccompanied or in detail, and at times they did not appear at all. Despite the purported maieutic power of well-made objects, they acquired meaning chiefly through association: with words, and with people whom they validated in turn.

Illustrations occasionally portrayed slightly foreign-looking children, perhaps as providers of cosmopolitan standing, or possibly because advertisers drew inspiration from overseas models.⁴⁴ Typically, however, the protagonists were “modern” Chinese boys and girls, often holding a toy – for viewers to appreciate both commodities – but seldom engaging with it passionately: pleased enjoyment featured more than animated romping. Except for toy kitchens and airguns, both genders were depicted as the target market for most playthings including dolls (see figures 1-2), probably because these signified up-to-dateness, especially if made of celluloid.⁴⁵

Rarely did images alone attempt to convey a total impression. Exceptions include a few atypical 1910s Commercial Press copy-less adverts in *Children’s Educational Pictorial*: one publicizes flashcards by relaying

affectionate and educated motherhood; the other one (see figure 3) promotes “toddlers’ toys” showing an elegant yet quite static play scene, with children as if awed by the classy toy vehicles. Some 1930s Great China Celluloid adverts were almost copy-less, too, showing stills of stylish and tranquil family or play life. One such advert, placed in *Children’s World*, features children surrounded by a multitude of toys (see figure 4). Captioned with references to the attractive novelty and solidity of the commodities, the scene also includes a sketch of the factory, and even a mention of the company’s tax facilitations, whose appeal to young viewers may be debatable.⁴⁶

Text was paramount – understandably, given the intended audience.⁴⁷ Many advertisements, especially up to the late 1920s, read like miniature treatises. This was particularly – though not exclusively – true for Commercial Press adverts which, with some relevant exceptions,⁴⁸ tended to contain seriously didactic copy, or even mere price lists preceded only by a claim. As possibly the earliest Chinese advertiser of industrial playthings, and controller of much media, the Press was perhaps little interested in entertaining its construed target of adult and child cognoscenti.⁴⁹ Albeit not immune from the copy-as-treatise inclination, entrepreneurs with slighter pretense to illuminate minds more frequently adopted a less grave approach. Though appearing in publications for adults, and often conveying un-childish messages, their advertisements did use parables, slogans, dialogues, and pseudo-children’s songs, such as the one about an ever-smiling celluloid doll that needed no food.⁵⁰

Children’s curiosity, imagination or interests, extolled in theory, had little room in toy adverts; neither were the tropes of childhood magic or innocence exploited. Seldom do we find references to sheer fun. Some exceptions, many of which appeared in periodicals for adults, include the delight of two brothers in building things out of their blocks and picture cubes;⁵¹ the joys of ball-playing (see figure 5);⁵² the role of celluloid toys and baby-dolls as harbingers of daily bliss for toddlers who would cry or not sleep without them.⁵³

Toy advertising was to please chiefly the grown-ups. Letters or essays published in periodicals do mention children’s requests or interest for specific toys and, according to discourse, their peculiarities were to be considered when choosing playthings. Yet most of that very same discourse adultified youngsters. Likewise, promotion focused on adult concerns and ambitions. For the most part, content was not diversified according to age and target. Thus the relatively few toy advertisements in children’s magazines frequently reproduced claims and copy used for adults, or read like instruction manuals: possibly because they were to be shown a parent who supposedly held the power of decision and purchase, but in practice assuming children to be eager for edutainment or highly concerned with rescuing China. Although youngsters were occasionally

addressed directly, and childishly, in both claim and copy (“Boys! Girls! Do you want toys?” or: “You are welcome to choose, children!”),⁵⁴ the majority of advertisements spoke to parents who by means of (play)things would or should convey messages to their children, their social milieu, or themselves.

2. Competent parenthood and stylish modernity

The main target audience of advertising were the relatively affluent and “modernized” who could consume ideas by means of goods. They were not only Shanghai urbanites, for periodicals were received and read throughout China, as shown by letters and photos sent by readers, and several companies practiced long distance sale or had branch shops in various localities. Toys were to reveal, or construe, parents’ affectionate yet progressive competence – and shape youngsters into achievers: prospective rescuers of the nation, or debonair children like those portrayed in many magazines driving their toy car or clutching a dernier cri doll.⁵⁵

In order to belong to the “civilized” community, families were urged to provide “new” playthings, which were presented not as a luxury but as a key step on the ladder toward a modern (made-in-China) lifestyle. The plaything was marketed as an aspirational symbol and catalyst: of style, or acculturation, or social advancement, or patriotism, depending on the promotional choices of producers – but always it was positioned as a transformational (and confirmatory) tool. Implicitly, moreover, it did function as a tool to socialize children to a life of consumption, in the face of recommendations for thrift that were part and parcel of the discourse of toys.

Already in 1920, visitors to “civilized Shanghai” were advised to keep up with sophisticated modernity by choosing the right presents to bring back home. Rather than crude and perishable food gifts, they should select “civilized items,” including “educational toys” which would delight children and please their parents.⁵⁶ The “social” value of playthings thus came full circle.⁵⁷ Expanding on the earlier tendency to commercialize holidays, which itself built on the time-honored tradition of festive toy purchase,⁵⁸ Chinese and Western festivities were from the 1910s advertised by the Commercial Press as especially opportune moments to give toys, namely “presents for children” that “must” be made available – showing occasionally a Santa Claus, perhaps to garnish the message with an exotic veneer.⁵⁹ Other entrepreneurs soon followed suit, expanding, especially in the 1930s, on notions of affection and cognizant sophistication.

(National) toys, it was repeatedly claimed, were bound to be a success with children, as “the most welcome” gift, or – in a less superlative mode – “very suitable” presents.⁶⁰ Tricycles were “a gift that modern children really can not lack.”⁶¹ “New-style households” would be accessorized and adorned by celluloid toys manufactured to “suit modern children’s needs.”⁶² A girl who wanted to be “stylish” would (should?) patronize

celluloid products, discarding wooden and clay toys (see figure 1). The latter, indeed, belonged to “backward times,” and they were claimed to exert no attraction on children, who would on the contrary vie with each other for celluloid dolls and animals that ostensibly embodied “progress” in the toy scene.⁶³ Allegedly, 99 children out of 100 loved celluloid playthings.⁶⁴ In passing, this dismissive advertising involuntarily suggests that “backward” playthings still enjoyed a good measure of popularity, even among the relatively prosperous.

Toys were promoted also as markers of sentiments, for “those who love children.”⁶⁵ Advertisements declared that if all children liked dolls, and if all parents loved children, then as a parent one “must” acquire a doll for their child.⁶⁶ (Discerning) love was thus to be demonstrated by giving (proper) things material, construed as symbols of the non-material. Exploiting the new discourse of playthings while ignoring the anti-industrial toy strand that often pervaded it, producers made *their* playthings into a primary need, a legitimate necessity. Toy-less children were thus compared to famine victims, and children without good toys to students without a teacher.⁶⁷ Appropriating pedagogues’ parlance, playthings were defined as “children’s unique close friends and most ideal teachers,”⁶⁸ whose very presence would immediately liven up youngsters, but in a wholesome way, causing good behavior.⁶⁹

Toy-giving was construed as the way to show style, care, and awareness of the fact that children had rights and personality – but it must be reformed in compliance with the new toy culture. Advertisements in adult publications hinted, or obliquely threatened, that children were in the know: textbooks and periodicals had alerted them that exercise was necessary, and that the ball was the best sport tool.⁷⁰ (Infantilized) parents ought therefore to be guided: not only had they to display patriotism in their purchases, as we shall see below, but also they could not simply pick any play-thing, for toys were no trinkets. “What child does not like toys?” they were asked, to be then informed that their role required choosing carefully⁷¹ – and they should keep in mind that playthings influenced children’s character.⁷² Most of all, ever since the early 1910s, parents (and children) were urged to ensure that their presents be instructive: proper New Year and summer gifts should enable one to cultivate character and intellect while playing.⁷³

3. Learn to play, play to learn

Given the discursive connections created between toys and education, and the long-standing respect that education enjoyed in Chinese culture, “educational” was the ultimate publicity catchword – possibly the most legitimating one. Parents were prompted to stimulate learning through children’s “natural” desire to play, aided by instructive toys; youngsters, too, should become aware of correct leisure.

This kind of promotion was initiated in the late 1900s by the Commercial Press, and it referred to “educational play items” that were in fact aids to home or school education: most notably flashcards for learning to read, write and count, advertised in adult and children’s magazines as suitable for children’s inclinations, and able to attract their interest.⁷⁴ From the early 1910s, Commercial Press picture cards and board games (“games for citizens”) began to be promoted to adults and youngsters as “beneficial play items” that prevented children from spending idle summer vacations or engaging in “harmful” pastimes such as “gambling” – which may have hinted at traditional games, since Press games were eventually advertised as entirely different from promotion games. These entertaining yet instructive “toys and games,” instead, ostensibly allowed prospective citizens to enhance their civic awareness, learning while playing.⁷⁵ Indeed, a 1920 advertorial urged readers of the *Youth’s Magazine* to be judicious with their leisure: indulging in “pernicious” amusements was “shameful.” Rather, “new citizens” should engage only in “beneficial” new year recreation with the “reformed” toys and games created by the Press, which increased “new knowledge” and prepared one for great undertakings.⁷⁶ Up to the late 1910s, the very same products – including flashcards, puzzles, charts, board games, blocks, vehicles and soldiers – could be promoted by the Commercial Press as “school prizes” or “toys for students,” and “family playthings” or “children’s toys,” with a mere variation of the accompanying claim/copy or illustration to signal the distinction.⁷⁷ Seldom did the Press advertise playthings without connecting them to education or “beneficial” gift-giving, one significant exception being the unusual advert shown in figure 3, that does however brand its pull-along toy trams and cars (elsewhere called “school prizes”) as “toddlers’ toys,” employing the word *youzhi* (幼稚), then usually associated with preschool children.⁷⁸

Play was thus positioned and legitimized as edifying edutainment, with toys peddled as tools for learning. The usage of education as a marketing claim soon led to applying the “educational” label to items that one would hardly classify as such. Throughout the decades, building blocks and flashcards, picture cubes, puppets, animals, musical toys, trains, cars, as well as soldiers, tanks and armored vehicles, would be advertised by the Press to adults and children under the “educational playthings” heading (see figures 6-8). Allegedly endowed with instructive and scientific content, these extraordinary toys were claimed to suit children’s inclinations, and possess the ability to enlighten their intellect, strengthen their body, and increase their intelligence. Youngsters, or parents perusing their magazines, should look forward to owning vivacious, solid playthings that could expand their knowledge and liven up their mood, preventing “all bad habits.”⁷⁹

Commercial Press building blocks may have nurtured industrial

knowledge,⁸⁰ while its trains, trams and motor cars could ostensibly “broaden children’s experience,”⁸¹ but they were not alone. Because the Press’ early publicity messages, and above all the discourse of toys, made it hardly affordable – ever since the 1910s⁸² and increasingly from the 1920s – for other producers to avoid the momentous “educational” buzzword in their advertising campaigns.

Just like buildings that required solid foundations, future talents ought to be nurtured by means of education, for which toys were key: hence, claimed the Zhenyi Educational Children’s Toy Factory, its ingenious and instructive tinfoil warships, cars, locomotives, trumpets and dinner sets.⁸³ Proclaiming playthings to be internationally recognized as “efficient tools to arouse children’s knowledge,” the Patriotic Toy Company proceeded to praise the “educational value,” “scientific interest,” cleverness and attractiveness of its vehicles, dolls and animals, a real must for parents who wished to educate their offspring.⁸⁴ Toy trains and cars sold by the upscale Sincere department store were certainly “pleasing to the eye and spirit” but also, again, “efficient tools to enhance children’s knowledge.”⁸⁵

Great China Celluloid baby-dolls, animals and puppets, with their bright colors and clever designs, were devised fully in accordance with (unspecified) educational principles, as children were told,⁸⁶ while parents learned that images of first president of the Republic Sun Yatsen, panharmonicons, dolls and grape fairies were “educational gifts.”⁸⁷ Likewise, Zhongxing Celluloid “new and original toys,” namely quite mature movable figurines, dolls and animals, were claimed to cultivate children’s good character and enhance their thinking abilities, therefore “modern schools and new-style families must provide them.”⁸⁸ Some toys were said to be more beneficial than others: while dolls were merely ornamental, ball-playing could train the body and please the spirit – as unsurprisingly claimed by the rubber ball producer Yonghe Industrial Company, who also informed adults that the “ideal child” indulged in no strenuous exercise after school, but would rather bounce her ball and read a book.⁸⁹

Even time-honored edible playthings – despised by theorists on the grounds that toys should be for playing and not for eating⁹⁰ – became educational, perhaps in a bid for modern respectability. Produced by the Guanshengyuan Food Company, they consisted of candy and biscuits in shapes that included car, carriage, pistol, and tank. These “gifts” were advertised from the late 1920s as accessories to children’s education, able to “instill culture” and combine education with play and nourishment. Parents were informed that tank shaped candy could raise children to be militant citizens; on eating it, one would “not forget national crisis” (see figure 9).⁹¹

While some of these items may not fit the standard notion of educational toy, they do dovetail with a vision of education as conducive to any knowledge, skill or attitude that can be useful for nation and society. Education as deployed in toy adverts could indeed have a wide gamut of

components, including patriotic mobilization.

4. Protect the nation

Toys were marketed also as weapons to defend China: spiritually, through the patriotic activism that they would instill; and commercially, by means of patriotic consumption.

“China is about to become a strong nation! China has hope!” announced a 1920 advertisement for the American Daisy Air Rifle, motivating such claims with the rationale that Chinese children, too, could use the Daisy. Showing a boy holding the rifle, the advert appeared with identical copy in periodicals for children and adults. While on the American market the Daisy was presented as conducive to learning “the manly art of shooting”⁹² and to developing robust self-reliance, the Chinese were told that “a martial spirit is indispensable, and it must be cultivated from childhood.”⁹³ A few years later the Daisy was again promoted, still without age-differentiation and still showing boys, occasionally in the company of fathers. Besides safety and verisimilitude, its virtues included (as in the United States) the capacity to train sight and arm strength, thus nurturing “robust citizens.”⁹⁴ Copy wavered between stating that the Daisy could not be considered a plaything, but rather an essential item for education,⁹⁵ and defining it instead a “beneficial toy,”⁹⁶ or even “the most valuable children’s toy.”⁹⁷

With their localization, these adverts highlight the strategies used in China to peddle playthings to adults and adultified children. They also underscore the blurred contours of the “toy” concept; the breadth of the “educational” tag; and the selling power of child/toy-propelled nation-strengthening. Fostering robustness and a martial spirit had been put forward since the early 1900s by intellectuals as an urgent matter, related to national “survival.”⁹⁸ Although opinions on military toys were ambivalent until the late 1920s,⁹⁹ producers were from the 1910s quick to exploit mobilization in order to sell, appealing to military toys’ alleged nation-strengthening and educational capacities.

Commercial Press military-themed picture cards and board games were thus marketed to youngsters and adults as “games for citizens” capable of cultivating a martial spirit,¹⁰⁰ while wooden airguns were among the “school prizes.”¹⁰¹ Military toys, the Press claimed, nurtured “the habit of militant citizenship” and gave children some knowledge of the military;¹⁰² they were indeed labeled “educational,” by the Press and other producers, throughout the 1920s.

This branding intensified in the 1930s, in conjunction with growing prominence of militant nationalism – and looming conflict, with the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1931 and the outbreak of war against Japan in 1937. The inspiringly named China Educational Toy Factory chose metal cars and equally “educational” cannon to promote itself

in 1933,¹⁰³ while the Chung Hwa Book Company and China Educational Tools Manufacture, purveyors of toys that “combined education with play,”¹⁰⁴ marketed in 1937 wooden model airplanes to children as “emergency educational toys.”¹⁰⁵ The China Can, on its part, advertised in 1939 its mechanical toys by portraying a boy with an elephant and a tank, which ostensibly could “inspire children’s scientific thought; arouse children’s national (*minzu* 民族) consciousness.”¹⁰⁶

Patriotism was a catchword, so much so that it was appropriated to market even foreign products. Yet, in China as in other countries, consuming foreign playthings was not deemed patriotic. The fear was widespread among intellectuals and pedagogues that the foreign toy could corrupt the national child and disrupt the national economy, thus weakening the country in all respects. From the early 1910s, a connection was made between toys and power: strong countries would produce superior toys, striving moreover to export them. Incidentally, China’s own toy exports, albeit limited, were tendentially overlooked, perhaps because their existence did not suit the construct of failure. Playthings being attributed the capacity to nurture children in ways that would never be forgotten, the influence of wrong toys could be fatal to the spirit of the rescuers of the nation, obliterating – from the start – their ability to accomplish their duty. The core issue did not concern quality, but rather the possibility that foreign playthings beget foreignness, relaying alien attributes and knowledge. Though some conceded that the supposedly low value of Chinese toys explained the consumption of imports, the general opinion was that foreign items should not be acquired.¹⁰⁷

Unsurprisingly, local producers seized the opportunity. An array of advertising claims, deploying quality, affordability, nationalism and fear, were thus devised to convince consumers to reject foreign toys – or to cultivate children’s patriotism by means of toys sometimes marketed as specifically suitable for Chinese children,¹⁰⁸ yet showing no evident difference from their imported counterparts. Beginning in the late 1910s, advertising consistently attempted to instill in consumers a sense of urgency, related to “national salvation.” If until the late 1920s concern pertained chiefly to undermined Chinese-ness and economic losses caused by imported toys in general, a noticeable change took place in the 1930s, when even the physical wellbeing of children was claimed to be threatened by foreign toys, most notably by “enemy” ones – namely Japanese, as Japan had been the ultimate enemy since the invasion of Manchuria in 1931.

The Commercial Press, that often urged customers to “use national goods,” repeatedly claimed its playthings to be fully national products, manufactured so well that they could perfectly keep pace with imported goods, albeit at a cheaper price (some parents found them expensive, however).¹⁰⁹ Until the early 1920s, the company was also selling foreign items,¹¹⁰ but this was construed as a temporary necessity, or an expedient

means to cultivate competent characters/bodies.¹¹¹ The Zhenyi explained how it had entered the business to provide necessary commodities – toys – that had been thus far imported: recovery of China’s economic rights and support for education, through clever yet affordable playthings, were ostensibly its *raison d’être*.¹¹² The Patriotic Toy Co. claimed that its inexpensive toys’ very brand nurtured patriotism, whose name and concept would be impressed in children’s minds during play. “Patriotic compatriots” should buy national playthings: alien toys, or “foreign poison,” produced foreign children, and parents who purchased them did not cherish the life of their offspring.¹¹³

Recasting baby-dolls or ping pong balls as potent producers of patriotism, both the Zhongxing Celluloid and the Great China Celluloid alerted parents that providing native toys would foster patriotism from infancy. In particular, the Great China explained that the truly “permanent method” to rescue the nation consisted in cultivating children’s habit to use Chinese goods, starting from (its own cheap and ingenious) playthings.¹¹⁴ Pragmatically, the China Can suggested that children should inform their parents that the price of its clever yet robust mechanical toys was only a third of foreign playthings.¹¹⁵ “Enemy” balls could provoke tuberculosis, thundered the Yonghe: if parents loved their offspring, they should purchase a safe “national” ball, since conscience-less consumers of foreign or, worse, “enemy goods” were bound to regret their negligence.¹¹⁶

None of these levers appear to have proved very persuasive. Despite campaigns to be and buy patriotic, imports seemingly continued to soar until at least the mid 1930s.¹¹⁷ Parents, especially mothers, could well be berated for their superficial attitude, but foreign toys had enduring appeal. Cheap Japanese items were widely purchased well into the 1930s;¹¹⁸ and upmarket European playthings had the allure of novelty, exoticism, quality, fashion, and status.¹¹⁹ In fact, they could be a promotional lever. In 1930, for instance, a complimentary gift of “exquisite Western toys” awaited Chinese customers of the Tianjin branch of White-away Laidlaw who bought enough children’s goods.¹²⁰ Likewise, in 1931 Colgate Palmolive publicized a limited-time premium: “rare and beautiful children’s toys,” namely American airship-shaped balloons.¹²¹

Consumers, in sum, chose actively and pragmatically, although the image discursively disseminated was one of China passively enduring economic and cultural invasion. On the other hand, if toys were transformational tools, and one’s improvement was also the nation’s, then perhaps it mattered little to some whether a plaything was domestic or foreign.

Conclusion

When toys were still gadgets, they were advertised as such; their acquired role of tools caused them to attain more labels. Ingenuity

remained, albeit dolled up as state-of-the-art manufacture: celluloid and mechanical items in particular, but also colorful, attractive and bouncing playthings – no matter if their shapes were actually age-old – embodied a mobile, enhanced China, as opposed to a motionless one. Ingenuity, or material modernity, was accompanied and bolstered by other immaterial tags: affection, patriotism, intelligent style, broadly understood education – that promised and simultaneously confirmed improvement. Tangibility was relevant, but what toys purported to represent and deliver was the real marketing lever.

The same, *mutatis mutandis*, was true to a significant extent for children. Comfortably clothed youngsters, free to move beside toys that bounced or sped along, nourished enough – perhaps with candy tanks – to grasp the educational and scientific principles that patriotic playthings conveyed to them, improved themselves and China prospectively. Thereby they corroborated their own cognizant modernity and that of their parents, relatives or educators, whose informed awareness had provided them with such genial tools.

Toy promotion developed out of negotiated appropriation and deployment of a “frame of reference,”¹²² whose shared understanding or acceptance reinforced the message. Honing a martial spirit, for one, may not have been a major selling point in the 1870s, whereas by the 1910s modified discourses of citizenship had turned it into a desirable asset.¹²³ Education, patriotism, science, were all very intelligible notions – and indeed they were inherent in the new toy discourse, itself part of the “frame of reference.” Advertising exploited its most marketable tenets (that toys be necessary, educational, modern and national), while counteracting the less convenient strands of parsimony and scorn for industrial toys precisely through the construct of cognizant modernity. Instead of superfluous luxuries, toys were marketed – as in Germany¹²⁴ – as indispensable tools for nation-building, learning and parenting. Purchasing many “educational,” “patriotic,” “ingenious” toys was therefore not un-thrifty self-centeredness, but rather a judicious and legitimate venture (as was producing them), since playthings were efficacious instruments for building talents that could be shared and employed for strengthening China.

Toy consumption, however, may have been more leisure and pleasure than reason. Namely, adults and children were probably concerned with education or China’s fate, but equally they may have been interested in the novel, fashionable and ingenious *per se*. Or they may have purchased playthings out of impulse, curiosity, status, fun, love, and desire to please. None of these factors fit the cognizant fabrication, but some were exploited. Advertisements recast curiosity and status-seeking as educated, sophisticated pursuit of style and beneficial modernity, against backwardness; love became competent affection, entailing careful selection rather than indiscriminate acquisition; fun was legitimated by instructive

outcomes. The cognizantly modern did not spend: they invested. They did not indulge in “harmful” or casual recreation: they played to improve.

While playthings were conveyed as agents, children and adults – ostensibly the cognizant protagonists – came across as rather subordinate subjects, lectured in a fairly didactic fashion. In most advertising as within discourse, play reflected adult concerns and children’s leisure was “domesticated.”¹²⁵ Childishness was quite remote – the oft-cited children’s rights seldom including, it seems, the right to be pointlessly puerile.

Figures



Figure 1. Da Zhonghua sailuluo advertisement, *Jilian huikan* no. 14 (1930): 25.

中興賽璐珞廠

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電話：二四八

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分廠：上海南京路一百號
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中興牌，各種賽璐珞，精良
式樣新穎，花色繁多。
用作推廣贈品，用作餽送
經濟美觀，人人歡迎。

中興牌，各種賽璐珞，新穎
能養成兒童之優良個性，
能增進兒童之天賦思想。
現代學校，新式家庭，
必須購備。

中興牌，標準兵兵，
品質精良，重量均勻
是現代國民之強身運動。
是新式家庭之高尙娛樂，
家備一具，闔第康樂

中興牌，各種賽璐珞，裝飾
式樣新穎，花色繁多
是新式家庭之常備物，
是現代仕女之日用品。

Figure 2. Zhongxing sailuluo advertisement, *Jilian huikan* no. 94 (1934): 44.



Figure 3. Shangwu yinshuguan advertisement, *Ertong jiaoyu hua* no. 80 (1917): n.p.

Downloaded from <http://www.usfca.edu/center-asia-pacific/perspectives/>



Figure 4. Da Zhonghua sailuluo advertisement, *Ertong shijie* 30, no. 7 (1933): n.p.

永字牌
橡皮球
彈力足
質地好
拍得高
小弟弟
小妹妹
白相相
樂陶陶

永和實業公司出品
發行所 上海老北門
門市部 江西路五馬路口

各處均有售

江粉

The advertisement is a black and white illustration. At the top right, the title '永字牌' (Ever Character Brand) is written in large, bold characters. Below it, the product '橡皮球' (Rubber Ball) is listed, followed by several descriptive phrases: '彈力足' (Good elasticity), '質地好' (Good quality), '拍得高' (Can be hit high), '小弟弟' (Little brother), '小妹妹' (Little sister), '白相相' (Playful), and '樂陶陶' (Happy). In the center, two children, a boy and a girl, are depicted sitting on a bench or mat, playing with a ball. The boy is on the left, wearing a dark shirt and shorts, and the girl is on the right, wearing a light-colored dress. Below the children, the company name '永和實業公司出品' (Produced by Yonghe Shiye Company) is written, along with their address: '發行所 上海老北門' (Distribution office: Old North Gate, Shanghai) and '門市部 江西路五馬路口' (Retail office: Wumalu, Jiangxi Road). At the bottom right, it says '各處均有售' (Available everywhere). A small signature '江粉' is visible near the children's feet.

Figure 5. Yonghe shiye gongsi advertisement, *Shenbao* 18.05.1933: 14.

Downloaded from <http://www.usfca.edu/center-asia-pacific/perspectives/>

商 務 印 書 館 精 製





中 西 年 節 贈 給 兒 童 最 為 有 益

本館自製各種玩具均備兒童之心理本館教育之原則精心製成顏色鮮明物料堅固趣味深且無不含有粗淺之學理兒童玩弄日久足以發其心思強健身體中西風俗每節必購備值良辰佳節物給與兒童今若以此等玩具購給兒童自必備受歡迎大有裨益為略列於下

- ① 建築類 分積木及構造木料兩種各有甲乙丙丁數具皆附建築模型圖俾兒童按圖逐一構造把玩既久即可自由應用變化百出矣
- ② 交通類 若電車火車摩托車等示以單節之模型足廣兒童之見識
- ③ 軍事類 將軍中砲隊步隊馬隊艦隊等製成各種玩具約有十餘種足以養成軍國民之風尚
- ④ 數學類 此種玩具於娛樂之外更可練習算術若九九數盤數字遊戲答數遊戲等共五六種
- ⑤ 英文類 此種玩具於遊戲之外復可練習英文有英文總字練習片英文字每種數種
- ⑥ 動物類 約有二十餘種非僅摹動物之狀態更能使其動作若活動犬活動虎活動馬活動雞活動兔等均能做出種種動作百玩不厭
- ⑦ 體操遊戲類 共有十餘種若單槓運動雙槓運動打鐵遊戲三人說走等兒童玩之尚武精神當能勃發又若棋板投球投球用器械板上投球跳繩等則能練習目力活潑體體
- ⑧ 手工類 若手工木料十色排板五色線球等皆足以增進兒童對於手工之興趣
- ⑨ 雜類 共有數十種之多若有興趣者意味足能強身啓蒙

共 百 餘 種 另 印 詳 細 目 錄 奉 贈

A (1643)

Figure 6. Shangwu yinshuguan advertisement, *Funü zazhi* 4, no. 11 (1918): n.p.

教育的玩具

上海商務印書館
自製發售



玩具為兒童的恩物，活潑兒童的情思，增進兒童的知識。
兒童有了玩具，就可免除一切壞的習慣了。

本館所製各種玩具，都寓有幼稚教育之意。各種式樣，
上海棋盤街本館發行所均有陳列，另印目錄，承索即寄。

Figure 7. Shangwu yinshuguan advertisement, *Shaonian zazhi* 12, no. 9 (1922): n.p.

商務印書館發售

啟蒙玩具



名目繁多
 不及備載
 另印詳細價目單贈閱

本館發售適合兒童心理含有教育意味的
 各種玩具如積木、六面畫、賽路、珞製人物、動
 物、玩具車、中四、弈棋、動物模印、手工遊戲、及
 各色實心皮球、乒乓球、響球等百數十種、製作
 精瓦、售價低廉、頗受兒童歡迎、茲將名目略
 舉如左、敬請選購。

乒乓球	洋囡囡	坦克車	動物模印	英文彩色方木	足球戰棋	六面畫	構造木材
每個六分至 一角三分	每個一元四分 至三元五角	每個一元四角	每盒八角三分	每盒各六角	每盒四角	每盒各六角 大號每盒七角	每盒七角至 一元五角

Figure 8. Shangwu yinshuguan advertisement, *Ertong shijie* 30, no. 9 (1933): n.p.

坦 克 車 糖 果

養 成 兒 童 為 軍 國 民

每輛四角半
冠生園公司啓



食坦克車糖：毋忘國難。

坦克車為歐洲大戰中之新式兵器，乃英國所創製
 • 坦克 TANK 本為水櫃之名，特假用之以欺敵
 人，其制為一武裝大摩托車，外包抵禦彈藥之金
 屬，內分雌雄
 二部；雌性部
 置小快砲數門
 • 附屬於機關
 砲，發射小彈
 ；雌性部裝機
 關砲數門性極
 猛烈。步哨交
 戰時，以此為
 全隊之中心，
 猛力進攻，雖
 砲火叢集，不
 至受傷，保護
 步兵，效用甚
 大，一二八之
 役，日軍曾用
 坦克車攻吾忠
 勇衛國之十九
 路軍於上海，
 江灣，廟行等
 處，本公司製造此坦克車糖果，意在給子全國兒
 童，對軍事教育，有真確之認識，食此糖者，應
 毋忘國難！（此稿係本公司請汪仲賢先生所撰）

Figure 9. Guanshengyuan gongsi advertisement, *Xiandai fumu* 1, no. 1 (1933): n.p.

Notes

1. Aiguo wanju zhiguanchang advertisement in *Jilian huikan* no. 34 (1931): 23.
2. See Cochran 2006, 62-63.
3. See Kopytoff 1986, 67-68; Baudrillard 1970, 77.
4. *Shenbao* 20.11.1873: 5.
5. Xin'an tai advertisements in *Shenbao* 07.03.1878: 7, *Shenbao* 15.03.1878: 6. *Yang xiaonan* (洋小男) were apparently the precursors to baby dolls (*yang nannan* 洋囡囡).
6. Wilson & Company advertisement in *Shenbao* 11.01.1880: 6.
7. Funder & Company advertisements in *Shenbao* 15.12.1907: 7, and 11.12.1908: 7.
8. See Baudrillard 1970, 113.
9. Song 1925, 51; Momilk advertisement in *Liangyou* no. 10 (1926): n.p.; discussed in Lee 1999, 71.
10. See Saari 1990; Farquhar 1999; Bai 2001 and 2008; Borevskaya 2001; Rabut 2003; Culp 2007; Jones 2011.
11. Liang 1897, 1900.
12. On childhood in premodern China, see Lee 1984; Dardess 1991; Kinney 1995; Kinney 2004; Bai 2005; Hsiung 2005.
13. Wartella 1990, 174.
14. See Cunningham 2005, chaps. 6, 7; Kelly 2007; Jones 2010.
15. On the discourse of childhood, see Jing 1905; Zhao 1911; Zong 1916; Xie 1917, 179-199; Lu 1919; Chen Heqin 1921; Xian 1922; Chiang 1924; Song 1925; Feng 1927; Lin 1930; Mai 1930, 375-377; Shen 1932; Qiu 1933; Lu 1934; Qin 1934; Sun 1934; Ge 1935; Zhang 1935.
16. For early associations of toys with learning, see Hsiung 2005, 228; Leung 1994, 393 and n. 64, 412.
17. Consider the concept of fetal education: see Despeux 2003, 90-93.
18. Concern with the material environment's influence on children was not unique to China: see Forty 1986, 71-72.
19. Elsewhere, too, misgivings existed on merely amusing toys: see Miller 1987, 153; Cross 1997, 9, 33-34, and chap. 5; Chudacoff 2007, chaps. 2-3.
20. As shown by paintings and artifacts: see Guoli gugong bowuyuan 1991; Wicks 2002; Wang 2004.
21. On the discourse of toys, see Gu 1907; Jia 1912; Li 1912; Shen 1912; Xu Fuyuan 1913; Bao 1915; Wei 1917; Yu 1917; Li Wenquan 1918; Li Jinzao 1918; Jia 1919; Ding 1920; Guo Yiquan 1920; Ye 1920; Jiaoyu bu 1922; Xiao 1922; Xie 1922; "Ertong wanju" 1923; Chen Heqin 1924 and 1925; Zhang 1924; Chen Hua 1926; Chen Pinjuan 1927; Feng 1927; Sun 1927; Wang Muqing 1927; Feng 1929; Wang Huaiqi 1929; Xu Yasheng 1929; Chen Yongsheng 1931; Chen Jiyun 1933; Qing 1933; Wang Guoyuan 1933; Yang Su 1933; Yu Jifan 1933; Li De 1934; Lü 1934; Qian 1935; Yang Chenru 1935; Su 1935; Zhong 1935; Sun 1936. See also Fernsebner 2003. On debates about consumption and frugality, see Zanasi 2015.
22. On intersections between discourse and commercial interests, see Lee 1999, 55, 67-76; and Jones 2002: 717-723, who also discusses toy advertising.
23. On the history of advertising in China, see Cochran 1999; Yang 2006; Pan 2008, chap. 5. On newspaper advertising at the turn of the twentieth century, see Mittler 2013. For contemporary accounts of Republican era advertising, see Crow 1937; Billings-Yun, 121-154. On children on product labels, see Cahan 2006, 100-108.
24. Sihang chuxu hui advertisement in *Funü zazhi* 9, no. 12 (1923): n.p.; Colgate advertisement in *Funü zazhi* 11, no. 1 (1925): n.p.
25. See Pan 1998; Cochran 1999b; Gerth 2003; Zanasi 2006; Tsai 2010.
26. Quaker Oats advertisement in *Funü zazhi* 10, no. 10 (1924): n.p.; Sanyou shiye she advertisements in *Shenghuo zhoukan* 6, no. 30 (1931): 649, *Shenghuo zhoukan* 7, no. 25 (1932): 404.

27. See Guoli gugong bowuyuan 1991; Wang Lianhai 2004; Wang Shucun 1988, figs. 32 and 52; Wang Shucun 1991, 1: fig. 271, and 2: fig. 668; Wei 1987, 1-6; Barrott Wicks 2002.
28. For a similar process with the representation of women, see Dal Lago 2000.
29. On simple, compound and complex advertisements, see Dyer 1982, 89, 91.
30. Arcola advertisement in *Dongfang zazhi* 21, no. 19 (1924): n.p.; Welch's advertisement in *Dongfang zazhi* 22, no. 9 (1925): n.p.; Zhongguo neiyi gongsi advertisement in *Xiandai fumu* 2, no. 1 (1934): 25; Yisheng xiangpi zhiwu gongchang advertisement in *Jilian huikan* no. 78 (1933): 19; Wuzhou advertisement in *Jilian huikan* no. 111 (1935): 44. For cigarettes, see advertisements for Qiulin and Fengtian Taiyang cigarettes reproduced in Yi 1995, 69, and Pang 2007, 116-117; see also the posters reproduced in Bai 2003, 166 and Laing 2004, plate 36.
31. Wuzhou da yaofang advertisement in *Jilian huikan* no. 54 (1932): 11; Yonghe shiye gongsi advertisement in *Jilian huikan* no. 64 (1933): 27.
32. Quaker Oats advertisement in *Dongfang zazhi* 23, no. 7 (1926): n.p.; Lactogen advertisement in *Xiandai fumu* 1, no. 2 (1933): n.p.; Allenburys Milk Powder advertisement in *Dongfang zazhi* 34, no. 15 (1937): n.p.; Dr. Williams' advertisements in *Funü zazhi* 8, no. 2 (1922): n.p.; *Funü zazhi* 10, no. 2 (1924): n.p.; *Funü zazhi* 11, no. 11 (1925): n.p.; *Funü zazhi* 13, no. 5 (1927): n.p.; *Dongfang zazhi* 25, no. 24 (1928): n.p.; *Liangyou* no. 61 (1931): 48; *Dongfang zazhi* 32, no. 19 (1935): n.p. On the Dr. Williams' Medicine Company and its China marketing strategies, see Baum 2013.
33. See Seki 1903; Jing 1905: 39-41.
34. Guanshengyuan shipin gongsi advertisement in *Xiandai fumu* 2, no. 1 (1934): 41.
35. Jiating gongye she advertisement in *Jilian huikan* no. 14 (1930): 13.
36. Victrola advertisement in *Funü zazhi* 16, no. 10 (1930): 52.
37. See Xu 1926; Lu 1935; Ma and Zhang 1936; Shanghai chubanshe 1939.
38. Kodak advertisement in *Funü zazhi* 12, no. 11 (1926): n.p.
39. Kodak advertisements in *Dongfang zazhi* 23, no. 20 (1926): n.p.; *Dongfang zazhi* 24, no. 10 (1927): n.p. A sample of American advertisements shows that the Brownie was called an appropriate present, though not a "gift;" while 1900s ads peddled it as "more than a toy," or as a provider of "wholesome fun," from the 1910s the selling point was fun: see Vintage Ad Browser, <http://www.vintageadbrowser.com>, last accessed 10.09.2015.
40. On "moral" construction of business in America, see Cook 2004, 54-63.
41. See Davidson 1992, 10, 26, 28.
42. On the more dialogical relationship between advertising and childrearing discourse in the United States up to the 1940s, see Jacobson 1997: 590; Cross 2004: 185.
43. See Baudrillard 1970, 88.
44. Shangwu yinshuguan advertisement in *Funü zazhi* 9, no. 12 (1923): n.p.; Da Zhonghua advertisements in *Jilian huikan* no. 12 (1930): 47, *Jilian huikan* no. 15 (1930): 15; Aiguo advertisements in *Jilian huikan* no. 13 (1930): 39, *Jilian huikan* no. 18 (1930): 11. On Western appearance in adverts, see Ho 2005, 72-74.
45. Aiguo advertisement in *Jilian huikan* no. 21 (1930): 22; Zhongxing sailuluo chang advertisement in *Jilian huikan* no. 94 (1934): 44.
46. Shangwu yinshuguan advertisements in *Ertong jiaoyu hua* no. 17 (1914): n.p.; *Ertong jiaoyu hua* no. 80 (1917): n.p.; Da Zhonghua sailuluo advertisements in *Shenghuo zhoukan* 5, no. 28 (1930): 465, *Shenghuo zhoukan* 5, no. 34 (1930): 577, *Ertong shijie* 30, no. 7 (1933): n.p.
47. On text prominence in advertising, see Wu and Lien 2013; Tsai 2010, 27.
48. See figure 3 and note 51.
49. Established in Shanghai in 1897, the Shangwu Yinshuguan began with school primers, extending its output to encompass books, periodicals, stationery, musical instruments, sport equipment, and toys: see Drège 1978, Lee 1999, 47-64; Reed 2004, chaps. 4 and 5.

50. Da Zhonghua advertisement in *Jilian huikan* no. 16 (1930): 40; Yonghe advertisement in *Jilian huikan* no. 12 (1930): 25; Aiguo advertisement in *Jilian huikan* no. 26 (1931): 42.
51. Shangwu yinshuguan advertisements in *Ertong shijie* 17, no. 5 (1926): n.p.; and *Funü zazhi* 12, no. 10 (1926): n.p. These ads are quite unusual in claim and copy, which is a sort of children's rhyme.
52. Yonghe advertisements in *Shenbao* 18.05.1933: 14, *Jilian huikan* no. 80 (1933): 14.
53. Da Zhonghua advertisements in *Jilian huikan* no. 9 (1930): 26, *Jilian huikan* no. 10 (1930): 27.
54. Kangyuan zhiguanchang advertisement in *Guohuo shiye* 1935, n.p.; Zhonghua shuju advertisement in *Xiao pengyou huabao* no. 66 (1937): back cover.
55. See "Tongnian quwei" 1927; "Bangjia zhi ji" 1935.
56. Shangwu yinshuguan advertisement in *Dongfang zazhi* 17, no. 16 (1920): n.p.
57. On the social and cultural role of goods and consumption, see Appadurai 1986, 31; Money 2007, 356.
58. See Yi 2005, 17-24; Hang 1987, 238.
59. Shangwu yinshuguan advertisements in *Funü zazhi* 4, no. 2 (1918): n.p.; *Funü zazhi* 4, no. 11 (1918): n.p.; *Shaonian zazhi* 8, no. 12 (1918): n.p.; *Jiaoyu zazhi* 12, no. 1 (1920): n.p.; *Dongfang zazhi* 17, no. 2 (1920): n.p.; *Funü zazhi* 7, no. 12 (1921): n.p.; *Funü zazhi* 8, no. 1 (1922): n.p.; *Funü zazhi* 14, no. 9 (1928): n.p.; *Dongfang zazhi* 29, no. 8 (1932): n.p.
60. Aiguo advertisement in *Jilian huikan* no. 18 (1930): 11; Da Zhonghua advertisement in *Jilian huikan* no. 9 (1930): 26; Shangwu yinshuguan advertisements in *Funü zazhi* 4, no. 11 (1918): n.p.; *Jiaoyu zazhi* 13, no. 12 (1921): n.p.; *Funü zazhi* 11, no. 9 (1925): n.p.; *Dongfang zazhi* 24, no. 22 (1927): n.p.; *Ertong shijie* 27, no. 21 (1931): n.p.; *Ertong jiaoyu* 6, no. 6 (1934): 40.
61. Yangqi gongsi advertisement in *Guangzhou shi* 1932, n.p.
62. Zhongxing advertisement in *Shanghai jizhi* 1935, 70; Da Zhonghua advertisement reproduced in *Quanguo tushuguan* 2003, 7: 854.
63. Da Zhonghua advertisements in *Jilian huikan* no. 11 (1930): 8, *Jilian huikan* no. 13 (1930): 13, *Jilian huikan* no. 14 (1930): 25.
64. Da Zhonghua advertisement in *Jilian huikan* no. 15 (1930): 15.
65. Shangwu yinshuguan advertisement in *Funü zazhi* 5, no. 10 (1919): n.p.
66. Da Zhonghua advertisement in *Jilian huikan* no. 12 (1930): 47.
67. Aiguo advertisement in *Jilian huikan* no. 64 (1933): 11.
68. Da Zhonghua advertisement in *Quanguo tushuguan* 2003, 7: 854.
69. Shangwu yinshuguan advertisement in *Funü zazhi* 9, no. 12 (1923): n.p.; Aiguo advertisement in *Jilian huikan* no. 24 (1930): 9; Da Zhonghua advertisement in *Jilian huikan* no. 7 (1930): 13.
70. Yonghe advertisement in *Jilian huikan* no. 78 (1933): 52.
71. Da Zhonghua advertisement in *Jilian huikan* no. 7 (1930): 13.
72. Daisy Manufacturing Co. advertisement in *Funü zazhi* 10, no. 11 (1924): n.p.
73. Shangwu yinshuguan advertisements in *Jiaoyu zazhi* 4, no. 10 (1912): n.p.; *Xuesheng zazhi* 1, no. 5 (1914): n.p.; *Dongfang zazhi* 12, no. 7 (1915): n.p.
74. Shangwu yinshuguan advertisements in *Dongfang zazhi* 5, no. 6 (1908): n.p.; reprinted with updated illustration in *Ertong jiaoyu hua* no. 52 (1915): n.p.; *Jiaoyu zazhi* 1, no. 1 (1909): n.p.; *Xuesheng zazhi* 1, no. 1 (1914): n.p.; and the unusual ad in *Ertong jiaoyu hua* no. 17 (1914): n.p.
75. Shangwu yinshuguan advertisements in *Jiaoyu zazhi* 3, no. 5 (1911): n.p.; *Ertong jiaoyu hua* no. 48 (1914): n.p.; *Xuesheng zazhi* 1, no. 6 (1914): n.p.; and *Dongfang zazhi* 17, no. 1 (1920): n.p. on games as different from traditional ones. On promotion games, see Lo 2004.
76. Shangwu yinshuguan advertorial "Shuo xin nian youxi" in *Shaonian zazhi* 10, no. 2 (1920): n.p.
77. Shangwu yinshuguan advertisements in *Funü zazhi* 3, no. 5 (1917): n.p.; *Jiaoyu zazhi*

- 9, no. 6 (1917): n.p.; *Xuesheng zazhi* 4, no. 7 (1917): n.p.; *Funü zazhi* 4, no. 2 (1918): n.p.; *Funü zazhi* 5, no. 10 (1919): n.p.
78. Shangwu yinshuguan advertisements in *Ertong jiaoyu hua* no. 80 (1917): n.p.; *Jiaoyu zazhi* 10, no. 6 (1918): n.p.
79. Shangwu yinshuguan advertisements in *Jiaoyu zazhi* 10, no. 12 (1918): n.p.; *Funü zazhi* 4, no. 11 (1918), *Dongfang zazhi* 16, no. 7 (1919): n.p.; *Shaonian zazhi* 9, no. 11 (1919): n.p.; *Dongfang zazhi* 17, no. 2 (1920): n.p.; *Jiaoyu zazhi* 13, no. 12 (1921): n.p.; *Shaonian zazhi* 12, no. 9 (1922): n.p.; *Funü zazhi* 9, no. 9 (1923): n.p.; *Ertong shijie* 16, no. 2 (1925): n.p.; *Funü zazhi* 12, no. 10 (1926): n.p.; *Funü zazhi* 13, no. 5 (1927): n.p.; *Dongfang zazhi* 26, no. 20 (1929): n.p.; *Ertong shijie* 29, no. 5 (1932): n.p.; *Dongfang zazhi* 29, no. 7 (1932): n.p.; *Ertong shijie* 30, no. 9 (1933): n.p.; *Dongfang zazhi* 32, no. 21 (1935): n.p.
80. Shangwu yinshuguan advertisement in *Jiaoyu zazhi* 9, no. 9 (1917): n.p.
81. Shangwu yinshuguan advertisement in *Funü zazhi* 4, no. 11 (1918): n.p.
82. Already in 1915, the Zhonghua shuju advertised its games and charts as “educational” and able to stimulate the intellect: see *Zhonghua xuesheng jie* 1, no. 12 (1915): n.p. On the Zhonghua shuju, established in 1912, see Yu and Liu 2002; Reed 2004, chap. 5.
83. Zhenyi advertisements in *Guohuo yuebao* 1, no. 1 (1924): n.p.; *Guohuo yuebao* 1, no. 2 (1924): n.p. First established in 1916 in Shanghai, the Zhenyi jiaoyu ertong wanju chang resumed operations in the early 1920s and manufactured tinfoil toys: see Shanghai shi dang’anguan 1933-1942; Bureau 1933, 772.
84. Aiguo advertisements in *Guohuo yuebao* 1, no. 1 (1924): n.p.; *Jilian huikan* no. 13 (1930): 39. On the Aiguo wanju zhiguanchang, a Shanghai medium-scale toy manufacture established in 1919, see Shanghai shi dang’anguan 1933-1942; “Toy Manufacturers” 1926.
85. Advertisement for the Toy Department in Xianshi gongsi 1925, n.p. On the Sincere company, see Chan 1996; Lien 2009.
86. Da Zhonghua advertisement in *Ertong shijie* 31, no. 8 (1933): n.p. On the Da Zhonghua sailuluo zhizaochang, large-scale producer of celluloid goods and toys established in Shanghai in 1928, see Bureau 773; *Guohuo shiye* 1935b, 196-198.
87. Da Zhonghua advertisement in *Jilian huikan* no. 5 (1930): 17.
88. Zhongxing advertisement in *Jilian huikan* no. 92 (1934): 54. On the Zhongxing sailuluo chang, producer of celluloid goods and toys, established in 1933-34 in Shanghai, see Shanghai jizhi 1935, 65-69; *Guohuo shiye* 1935, part E: 34-35.
89. Yonghe advertisements in *Jilian huikan* no. 55 (1932): 41, *Jilian huikan* no. 69 (1933): 12. Established in 1918, the Yonghe shiye gongsi manufactured, inter alia, rubber toys: see Hebei sheng 1934, 462-463; Shanghai jizhi 1947, 46-48.
90. See Guo 1920, 12; Yang 1935: 26.
91. Guanshengyuan advertisements in *Funü zazhi* 14, no. 12 (1928): n.p.; *Funü zazhi* 17, no. 11 (1931): n.p.; *Xiandai fumu* 1, no. 1 (1933): n.p. See also their 1931 advert in *Shenbao* declaring opposition to “Japanese imperialism” and suggesting pistol candy as a “training to shoot”: quoted in Li 2013: 12.
92. Cross 1997, 111; see also 24, 112, and the reproduction of an American Daisy advert.
93. Daisy Manufacturing advertisements in *Shaonian zazhi* 10, no. 12 (1920): n.p.; *Dongfang zazhi* 17, no. 18 (1920): n.p. The airgun had been already advertised earlier (as a toy), focusing on its features and renown on the American market: see *Dongfang zazhi* 16, no. 9 (1919): n.p.
94. Daisy advertisements in *Funü zazhi* 11, no. 1 (1925): n.p.; *Ertong shijie* 12, no. 10 (1924): n.p. This promotion was quite akin to American claims that the rifle provided “lessons of manliness, self reliance, keenness of eye, and steadiness of hand and nerve that will reinforce [the boy] for the battle of life in later years”: quoted in Cross 1997, 111-112.
95. Daisy advertisements in *Funü zazhi* 10, no. 10 (1924): n.p.; *Ertong shijie* 11, no. 12 (1924): n.p.

96. Daisy advertisements in *Funü zazhi* 10, no. 12 (1924): n.p.; *Ertong shijie* 14, no. 1 (1925): n.p.
97. Daisy advertisements in *Funü zazhi* 10, no. 11 (1924): n.p.; *Ertong shijie* 15, no. 1 (1925): n.p.
98. For the most well-known view on this, see Liang 1903, 1: 615-621. On attitudes to the military, see Green 2011, 155-157.
99. See Bao 1915; Jia 1919; Jiaoyu bu 1922; Jing 1923; Chen Heqin 1924 and 1925; Boyou 1925.
100. Shangwu yinshuguan advertisements in *Jiaoyu zazhi* 3, no. 5 (1911): n.p.; *Ertong jiaoyu hua* no. 48 (1914): n.p.
101. Shangwu yinshuguan advertisement in *Jiaoyu zazhi* 10, no. 6 (1918): n.p. Toy rifles and swords were also promoted as “sport apparatuses”, since they could be used as props for school drills: see *Dongfang zazhi* 16, no. 8 (1919): n.p.; the *Zhonghua shuju* did likewise: see *Zhonghua jiaoyu jie* 3, no. 18 (1914): n.p.
102. Shangwu yinshuguan advertisements in *Funü zazhi* 4, no. 11 (1918): n.p.; *Shaonian zazhi* 8, no. 12 (1918): n.p.; *Dongfang zazhi* 16, no. 7 (1919): n.p.
103. *Zhongguo jiaoyu wanju chang* advertisement in *Jilian huikan* no. 75 (1933): 57. On the *Zhongguo jiaoyu wanju chang*, re-established in 1932 in Shanghai, see Shanghai shi dang’anguan 1933-1942.
104. *Zhonghua jiaoyu yongju zhizaochang/Zhonghua shuju* advertisement in *Xiao pengyou* no. 687 (1935): n.p. These toys were manufactured by the *Zhonghua jiaoyu yongju zhizaochang*, set up by the *Zhonghua shuju*: see Shanghai shi tongzhiguan 1936, section N, 35.
105. *Zhonghua jiaoyu yongju/Zhonghua shuju* advertisement in *Xiao pengyou* no. 758 (1937): n.p.
106. Kangyuan advertisement in *Yong’an yuekan* no. 1 (1939): n.p. The well-established Kangyuan zhiguanchang entered toy production in 1934, setting up a large-scale manufacture of mechanical playthings in Shanghai: see Shanghai jizhi 1935, 52-58; Guohuo shiye 1935b, 75-76; Chen 1957: 1, 615-617.
107. See Li 1912: 15-16; Li 1918: 3; Yang 1925; Zhang 1926: 2; Tao 1928, 108-110; Xu 1929: 16; He 1933; Huang 1933; Nai 1936. On toys and Chinese-ness, see Fernsebner 2003: 282-285; Jones 2011, chap. 4. On nationalism and advertising, see Cochran 1999b, 2000, 2006. On toy consumption and patriotism in America and Europe, see Margerum 1994, 340; Formanek-Brunell 1998, chap. 6; McGovern 1998; Manson 2001, 323-324.
108. Shangwu yinshuguan advertisements in *Dongfang zazhi* 25, no. 20 (1928): n.p.; *Dongfang zazhi* 26, no. 18 (1929): n.p.
109. Cheng 1920: 17; and Shangwu yinshuguan advertisements in *Dongfang zazhi* 16, no. 7 (1919): n.p.; *Funü zazhi* 5, no. 12 (1919): n.p.; *Jiaoyu zazhi* 11, no. 12 (1919): n.p.; *Jiaoyu zazhi* 12, no. 9 (1920): 8; *Funü zazhi* 6, no. 5 (1920): 14; *Dongfang zazhi* 18, no. 3 (1921): n.p.; *Funü zazhi* 11, no. 9 (1925): n.p.; *Funü zazhi* 14, no. 9 (1928): n.p.; *Dongfang zazhi* 26, no. 20 (1929): n.p.; *Dongfang zazhi* 29, no. 8 (1932): n.p.
110. Shangwu yinshuguan advertisement in *Funü zazhi* 9, no. 12 (1923): n.p.
111. “Not strong, then perish” was the Darwinist slogan used to promote sport equipment imported from America for strengthening Chinese students’ bodies: see advertisement in *Funü zazhi* 4, no. 5 (1918): n.p. The Press claimed that only the products that it still could not manufacture would be ordered from abroad: see advertisement for school equipment in *Jiaoyu zazhi* 11, no. 9 (1919): n.p.
112. Zhenyi advertisements in *Zhonghua guohuo weichihui* 1923, n.p.; *Guohuo yuebao* 1, no. 1 (1924): n.p.; *Guohuo yuebao* 1, no. 2 (1924): n.p.
113. Aiguo advertisements in *Guohuo yuebao* 1, no. 1 (1924): n.p.; *Jilian huikan* no. 21 (1930): 22, *Jilian huikan* no. 34 (1931): 23, *Jilian huikan* no. 64 (1933): 11.
114. *Zhongxing* advertisement in *Jilian huikan* no. 100 (1934): 65; Da *Zhonghua* advertisements in *Quanguo tushuguan* 2003, 7: 854, *Shenghuo zhoukan* 5, no. 40 (1930):

- 674, *Shenghuo zhoukan* 7, no. 3 (1932): 60, *Dongfang zazhi* 30, no. 7 (1933): n.p.
115. Kangyuan advertisement in *Guohuo shiye* 1935, n.p.
116. Yonghe advertisements in *Jilian huikan* no. 75 (1933): 6, *Jilian huikan* no. 79 (1933): 23.
117. As late as 1936, children were still alerted to the soaring of toy imports: see Nai 1936. Although customs statistics are problematic (see Hamilton 1977: 879), China's net imports of toys and games are reported to have increased remarkably from the 1900s to 1931, beginning to drop only after the mid 1930s: see Bell, Woodhead 1912, 128-129; China. The Maritime Customs 1932, I: 154-155; China. The Maritime Customs 1939, II: 610-611.
118. See "Tuzhi ertong" 1935; "Qunian de wanju" 1937.
119. This mood is well captured in Beiyang 1929, 3; Hosie 1929, 161; Ding 1933, 185; Lao 1934, 15; Qian 1947, 382.
120. Huiluo baihuo gongsi advertisement in *Beiyang huabao* 03.04.1930: 2-3.
121. Colgate Palmolive advertisement in *Funü zazhi* 17, no. 2 (1931): 6.
122. Dyer 1982, 13.
123. On literary (*wen*) and military (*wu*) values within Chinese notions of masculinity, see Louie 2002.
124. See Hamlin 2007, 34-36, 127, 143-146.
125. On the domestication of recreation, see Sutton-Smith 1986, 99, 127, 225.

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The Grapes of Happiness: Selling Sun-Maid Raisins to the Chinese in the 1920s-1930s

by Cecile Armand, *Lions Institute for East Asian Studies*

Prologue

In China yesterday some tiny tot became the possessor of a cash, just a fraction of our penny, and he spent it yesterday as thousands of Chinese children did – for eight Sun-Maid raisins in an envelope.¹

These lines are not quoted from a fairy tale, nor from a guidebook for tourists in China. Unexpectedly, they come from an advertisement for Sun-Maid Raisins published in the Saturday Evening Post in 1927 (see figures 1 and 2). This narrative-style advertisement addressed to Western consumers aimed to narrate the mythical origins of raisins in China. Capitalizing on the powerful attraction of the East in Western countries since the 18th century, it was also designed to romanticize the global success story of Sun-Maid Raisins throughout the world, especially in China. This commercial story offers a perfect prologue for this paper, ideally bringing together the three main strands of the argument.

The first strand draws case studies from among the American global companies active in China since the beginning of the twentieth century to observe the actual “manufacturing” of commercial representations and practices, their circulation throughout the world and their local appropriations by various consumers as in China, which eventually gave birth to a global consumer culture. Why examine Sun-Maid Raisin in particular? Of the many American companies that tried to penetrate the Chinese market in the 1920s, Sun-Maid proved to be one of the most successful. The California Associated Raisin Company launched the Sun-Maid brand in California in 1915, rapidly expanding throughout the world soon after.²

Sun-Maid raisins were introduced in China in the early 1920s and immediately became a very popular brand. How do we explain their success, when so many other Western companies failed to seduce Chinese consumers? What kind of marketing strategies did the company develop to adapt to this specific market? Did they simply export the marketing techniques invented in the United States or did they adapt to the local conditions and Chinese culture? How did Sun-Maid’s efforts figure into the emergence of a transcultural consumer culture in China, especially in Shanghai?

Why examine modern Shanghai in particular? As a major commercial

hub, a foreign-dominated and multicultural city, Shanghai presents an appropriate ground for this case study. From the Opium Wars in the mid-nineteenth century until the Republican period (1912-49), various communities (mostly Chinese, American, British, Japanese and French) interacted and intermingled in Shanghai. The city became a fertile laboratory for inventing hybrid representations and practices in the economic and cultural fields. Although China had never been colonized by a Western power, Shanghai harbored colonial regimes in the form of the International and French Settlements. The juxtaposition of these two distinctly foreign entities in Chinese territory makes Shanghai relevant to the making of transcultural discourses and experiences, and their appropriation by the Chinese population.

The second strand argues for the elevation of advertisements and visual sources in general to valuable sources for documenting the history of modern societies – especially Republican Shanghai. As the most widely consumed and circulated images in Shanghai's visual culture, advertisements are a rich set of source materials for discussions of major historical issues, such as modern/urban life, women and gender, family and childhood, health and the body, consumption and business history, nationalism/imperialism. What did (commercial) images communicate to their viewers? To what extent and under what conditions can historians make efficient use of such sources? Which tools and methodology can they develop to capitalize on their potentials and counteract their limitations? The ambition of this research is to go beyond the surface of images, in order to reveal the making of commercial discourse. For that purpose, there is no alternative but to delve into the archives of the companies that designed advertisements and actively participated in their "engineering" process – not only the business materials produced by companies (here, the Sun-Maid Raisin Company), but also those emanating from advertising agencies (the Carl Crow, Inc. company in Shanghai or the J. Walter Thompson Company in America), other companies, institutions (Shanghai Municipal Council, French Administration), or individual actors (Carl Crow, the American commercial attaché Julean Arnold) who worked in connection with Sun-Maid Raisin.

The third and last strand focuses on the concepts of children and childhood to rethink broader social and major historical debates in recent scholarship. In tandem with the increasing importance of childhood and youth in modern societies, both in the Western and non-Western worlds, children became ubiquitous in consumer culture in the 1920s. As such, they offer ideal lenses for a connective approach to commercial visual culture in Republican Shanghai. What representations and experiences of childhood percolated through Sun-Maid Raisin advertisements? What social roles did Sun-Maid and other American companies assign to American and Chinese children? What visions and practices of health/hygiene, imperialism/

nationalism, women/gender were coded within the images of children?

After analyzing the universal/particular aspects of consumers and raisins market conditions in the United States and China, this paper will also examine the specific organization of Sun-Maid in Republican China in order to better understand how and why it proved so successful. A close reading of a Sun-Maid advertisement published in 1928 in the Chinese newspaper *Shenbao*³ will serve as a starting point to probe into Chinese and American commercial images. Using historical lenses to analyze and model their main visual and textual elements, the last section will examine how Chinese advertisements merged the local/global features of visual culture to invent their own versions of the “sex/women appeal” and the “health appeal” that gained worldwide popularity at the time.

1. Global/local aspects of raisins consumption in Republican China

Western advertisers and advertising professionals who operated in Shanghai in the 1920s-1930s expressed much empathy towards the Chinese people. Shanghai advertising executive Carl Crow⁴ for instance, posited that Americans and Chinese shared much more in common – in terms of food, clothing, and to a certain extent, customs and mental habits – than did Chinese and other Asian cultures. He further believed that the differences were mostly in details – for instance, in the color of the cloth, not the texture, the design of the jewel, not the materials.⁵ To discuss the gap between Chinese and American consumers at the time, three salient features will be examined: socio-economical conditions and market opportunities, cultural practices, and visual literacy.

Socio-economical conditions and raisins market opportunities

While raisins were considered to be commonly available foodstuffs by Americans, they were viewed as luxury goods in Shanghai because of the comparatively low purchasing power of the Chinese consumer. Were raisins absolutely unknown to the average Chinese in the 1920s? Although raisins had been traded in China for about two thousands years, they remained merchandising goods restricted to a tiny part of the population and were not advertised as consumer products until the 1920s:

We did go far towards making the Chinese a nation of raisin eaters. Fifteen years ago raisins were practically unknown in China, but now the little red box which forms the packet of the world's most famous raisin is a familiar sight on the shop shelves of almost every city. (...) When we promoted the sale of raisins we were not introducing any new food product to the Chinese. Arabian traders brought raisins to China about the time of Christ, and later, grapes were grown and dried in North China. These Chinese raisins were not produced in any quantity and did not become a household article until the California raisin played a part.⁶

In this brief narrative, Crow credits the Sun-Maid Raisin Company with transforming raisins from merchandising goods into products for mass consumption, thereby popularizing raisins in China. However, such assertions should be taken with caution, as Crow was himself in charge of Sun-Maid's advertising campaigns in China. However, many other contemporary sources testify to the fact that the Chinese raisin market offered unexpected opportunities at the time. The Sun-Maid Company Far East Division reported that exports to China more than doubled in a single year in the mid-1920s: from 108,165 tons in the first eight months of 1923 to 222,588 tons in the first eight months of 1924.⁷

In the interwar years (1919-1937), the consumption of Sun-Maid Raisins was not limited to the elites, but also reached the lower classes of Shanghai, and extended to cities throughout China's interior.⁸ How do we explain such widespread popularity among Chinese consumers, while raisins remained luxury goods for most of them? First, the Chinese standard of living was not as low as it was generally thought in American and Western business circles at the time:

The principal details of several recent successful merchandising campaigns in China by American advertisers indicate that purchasing power of that vast market is much higher than is generally supposed.⁹

Not only was the overall level of Chinese purchasing power not as low as expected, advertisers assumed it would greatly increase: As more and more people could afford to buy new commodities, the raisin market would naturally, if not indefinitely, expand.¹⁰ Yet in the mind of most Western advertisers, this process of increasing wealth flowed from the "miracle factor" that explained any economic success in China: the numerous and ever-growing Chinese population. Such a powerful demographic trend was supposed to balance the relatively high level of poverty in China at the time:

The fact was recognized that the value of the market was due to its multiplicity of purchasers. Although it was recognized that the purchasing power of the average Chinamen is comparatively low, the Raisin Growers were convinced that an attractive unit of sale, though small, would result in a satisfactory volume.¹¹

According to American journalist C.A. Bacon in 1927, the success of California raisins eventually resulted from the perfect match between raisin supply and local demand: the taste of the Chinese for raisins on the one hand, and the absence of local raisin production in China, on the other.¹² However, the improvement of social and economic conditions was not the only reason for such success. New consumption habits, the development of modern entertainment and lifestyles in the modern city also contributed to the raisin craving in Shanghai:

*Very few kinds of eating - from packages - can be classed as luxury. But even certain kinds of food luxuries sell well in China. Shark's fin and birds' nests of Borneo are imported at great cost. Now China likes recreation and modern improvements quite as well as she likes to eat.*¹³

Cultural Practices of Raisin Consumption

Advertisers capitalized both on traditional Chinese food habits and on new patterns of consumption, derived from the process of urbanization and modernization in China. As for traditions, raisin sellers relied on the global taste for sweet combined with the Chinese special taste for (sweet) meat.¹⁴ Regarding new habits of consumption, the Sun-Maid Far Eastern Division reported in its market surveys that since the company's arrival in China, the Chinese had adopted the custom of serving raisins between courses at their feasts, and that raisins were often used by the Chinese in their celebrated custom of presenting gifts.¹⁵ Although there is no evidence that Sun-Maid created special gift boxes for Chinese New Year or any other national/local festivals, the company carefully designed colorful packages for local ordinary and daily consumption (see figure 3, 4).

While the Chinese consumed plain dried raisins, American consumers preferred more sophisticated products,¹⁶ such as raisin breads¹⁷ or cakes. In the early twentieth century, cake-baking contests were launched by American advertisers as a new sales method that proved incredibly popular in China as well. Carl Crow employed the cake-baking contest idea to first introduce raisins to the Chinese, offering cash prizes to those who would send the best cakes in which raisins formed a part of the recipe. That marketing strategy proved extremely successful among Chinese consumers, though perhaps not in the sense first intended by advertisers. Crow reported that the day the contest closed, he found his client overwhelmed by more than 500 cakes, forcing them to use rickshaw coolies as tasters in order to select a winner.¹⁸

Building consumers' visual literacy through advertising and packaging

Contemporary advertising agents observed differences in conditions of perception, such as local tastes for colors. Colors are a fascinating issue for historians engaged in the field of visual culture¹⁹ and in the most recent scholarship on the history of perceptions and emotions.²⁰ Chinese consumers' literacy, especially their *visual* literacy, i.e. their ability to "read" images rather than texts on advertisements, was vividly discussed among professionals at the time. By "visual literacy," I refer here to a range of visual markers: logotypes, colored packages, or typographical patterns that were used to educate Chinese people to the rising consumer culture. Consumers' visual habits greatly differed in the United States and China. Crow, who noted the careful attention of the Chinese to details and colors in commercial images, frequently advised his colleagues to integrate these

anthropological facts into the process of making advertisements.²¹ Chinese specific visual habits further led Crow to claim that the ideal Chinese advertisement would be entirely visual – without a word of text.²²

Crow was not the only one to call for a “visual turn” in modern advertising. In his report published in 1927, C.A. Bacon presented visual advertisement as the best way to reach Chinese people and the most efficient remedy against consumers’ illiteracy.²³

The concern for visibility – the potential visual attraction of advertisement – became ubiquitous in the 1920s, not only in the mediasphere,²⁴ but also and above all in the streets of Shanghai, where the innumerable illiterate consumers would experience various forms of outdoor advertising:

Then again all these and a vast number more can be reached by hoardings or billboards, since signs are intelligible to all who read and to all who cannot read - and the latter make up 90 percent of the population.²⁵

... A proper site had to be selected and the poster itself had to be such as would attract the eye of the Chinese coolie customer... By the same token the art department of an agency must devise pictures for the posters that will attract attention and show the product so plainly that a coolie who cannot read will recognize it in the picture and on the shelf.²⁶

Visual devices included the use of vivid colors, especially the color red, which was and still is very popular in China. Although red had a distinct cultural significance in China and the United States, it nonetheless exemplified positive values in both countries. In the United States, the red color was chosen to match the red sunbonnet worn by the original “Sun-Maid,” model Lorraine Collett, because it was thought to better reflect the color of the sun. However, due to the aforementioned cultural differences, local colors had to be used with much caution. Crow warned against the misuse of colors due to foreign advertisers’ ignorance or misunderstanding of Chinese visual codes and color regimes:

Local color is valuable, but don’t try to use it, unless you are absolutely certain you are right. If you have to depend on an encyclopedia for hints as to local color, better leave it alone, for you are likely to make your advertising ridiculous (recent example in a poster advertising of a well-known American tooth paste featuring an acceptable picture of a Siamese temple in the background and a technically correct elephant in the foreground – but why put a picture of an elephant on a tooth paste advertisement. That doesn’t prove anything except that the picture of an elephant would just as effectively decorate an American advertisement as one designed for the Orient.²⁷

Bacon further reports in 1927 that another major advertising agent,

Millington, Limited, also “calls attention to ‘China’s Colour Sense’, showing that modern advertising success is built upon the skillful use of art work.”²⁸

In the 1920s, the Chinese were probably as inexperienced as foreign-born consumers (Black, Latino or European communities) in the United States. This cultural gap among consumers of various nationalities is well described in an investigation on raisin consumption conducted by the U.S. Government in 1926, which reported that the average immigrant in most industrial centers was not accustomed to packaged goods and brand labels.²⁹

According to the same report, although a gradual conversion to the package habit was under way among American consumers, in many cases consumers would still deny that advertising had anything to do with their choice of product purchase, as though susceptibility to advertising were something to be ashamed of.³⁰

Colors were not the only source of trouble for foreign advertising agents in China. Many other representations, such as animals, natural objects or human figures, had to be carefully designed to meet with anthropological habits. Because visual art in advertising required not only technical skills, but also a special knowledge of local culture and conditions of perception, most professionals recommended having the artistic work made by Chinese artists and local agents.³¹

Advertising agents eventually faced two opposite challenges in China and the United States. In China, the main question surrounding raisin consumption remained: “How to make a luxury product accessible to the average Chinese?” On the other side of the Pacific, American advertisers struggled to render an ordinary food product exceptional to the average Americans by inventing rituals of consumption *or* rewriting famous fairy tales and myths, such as Cinderella or Robinson Crusoe, in order to endow raisins with magic powers. Therefore, the opportunities offered by the Chinese raisin market made it necessary to carefully plan the advertising campaign. Although the data is absent from Sun-Maid’s own business archives, historians can look to other narrative testimonies to trace the process of making Sun-Maid advertisements. Such reports reveal that Sun-Maid agents in China were well aware that they needed to carefully study the market and adapt their selling methods to conform to the particular demands and customs of the Chinese.³²

2. The key to success: imported products and locally made advertising

The Sun-Maid Company imported raisins directly from California, and it relied on its own organization to introduce its goods and to maintain their distribution in China.³³

For advertising, we are still uncertain of who was locally in charge of Sun-Maid marketing strategies in Shanghai. There are three possibilities: 1) Sun-Maid’s own in-house advertising department, as for their import and distribution system; 2) The J. Walter Thompson Company,

whose London office managed foreign advertising in Europe and Asia;³⁴ 3) The Carl Crow, Inc. company – the most likely option. Crow mentions Sun-Maid Raisin in his personal writings several times, in a way that suggests that he was personally in charge of Sun-Maid's advertising campaigns.⁶ Furthermore, a 1930 confidential report by the Tokyo Koshinjo, Limited Company explicitly includes Sun-Maid Raisin in the list of Crow's direct clients.³⁵

Although there is no certainty, it is very likely that the Sun-Maid Raisins company hired Chinese artists or local advertising professionals who were familiar with Chinese culture, as it was recommended at the time. Crow for instance advised that after the advertising had all been planned, the copy written and the illustrations decided on, the most important thing remained to submit the whole plan to the company's representative in the country where the advertising was to appear.³⁶ He further recommended that the preparation of the advertising copy should only be undertaken by someone who was familiar with Chinese "psychology," i.e., with the tastes and habits of the Chinese people. He finally warned that advertising campaigns worked up in detail in America were nearly always failures. According to him and other contemporary professionals, the most successful campaigns were those worked out by experienced foreigners residing in China, with the help of trained and educated Chinese.³⁷

3. Adapting Sun-Maid Raisins to Chinese consuming habits

In order to re-embody the general considerations exposed above and to better visualize Sun-Maid advertising strategies, this section proposes to analyze an advertisement published in 1928 in the *Shenbao* (see figures 5, 6).³⁸ This visual analysis will not only serve as an example of the efforts made by the Sun-Maid company to adapt its products and marketing strategies to the Chinese, but also as a starting point for developing a special methodology for analyzing visual materials from a historical perspective. The advertisements shown in figures 5 & 6 can be broken down into various textual and visual elements. Each one will be closely examined in connection to other parts and to the whole, as well as to other images participating in the emergence of a global-local visual culture in modern Shanghai.

1. Textual elements

Translating the brand name: the challenge of the Chinese language

The brand name (see figure 6: red section 1), strategically placed in the upper right corner of the advertisement should be read from right to left: 美奴牌葡萄幹 (*meinüpai putaoogan*). A close inspection of Sun-Maid's brand name will serve as a case study to discuss the difficulties that every foreign company faced in China.

In his writings, Crow always warned advertisers on the difficulties that

Western companies encountered when translating their brand names into Chinese. Most of the time, advertisers could not satisfy themselves with literal translations and the original brand names had to be completely rechristened, so to speak, to ward off any risk of imitation, confusion or parody:

Every time we take on the advertising of a new brand our first task is to select a suitable Chinese name, and it is not an easy one. But no client ever understands either its importance or its difficulties. In fact we usually have a troublesome time explaining to him that his brand, which is well known in many countries, has to be rechristened in China. The Chinese brand name must be simple, easily read and yet so distinctive that it cannot be easily imitated or confused with other names. When we get a name which meets these requirements we have to make a test for ribaldry. China is the paradise of punsters, and the most sedate phrase may, by a simple change in tone, be turned into a ribald quip which will make the vulgar roar. This is something we have to guard against as we would the plague. We have almost slipped one or twice, but so far have escaped.³⁹

Apart from praising simplicity,⁴⁰ Crow strongly recommended having the translation done by a native speaker familiar with the local culture, following the same method used for the visual work:

The best advertisements are not translated but written in the native language by someone who has had an opportunity to familiarize himself with the product, and with your advertising policies. But that is not often possible and a clear translation is the next best thing. Better have the translation done in the country in which the advertising is to appear. The work should be, and usually is, done by men who think in the language in which the advertisement is to appear and whose knowledge of English may require some reference to the dictionary.⁴¹

While every Western company faced the challenge of translation, some sectors, such as automobiles or games (poker) were more especially concerned, since no words yet existed in the Chinese language to designate such new novelties from the West. According to Crow, it was only through a deep, patient acculturation process to the Chinese language that advertisers managed to overcome these difficulties by combining existing Chinese words or putting old words into new uses.⁴² For motorcars, advertisers turned to the slang used by the Shanghai chauffeurs and marine engineers, whose complex terminology offered a rich source of inspiration for inventing appropriate words. The translation work eventually resulted in the printing of a glossary containing a wide selection of terms related to automobile that were then integrated in Chinese technical dictionaries.⁴³ To put it another way, translating foreign brand names into Chinese consisted of creating new words rather than choosing terms from pre-existing linguistic repositories. Therefore, advertising actively participated

in the broader dynamic of cultural creation, through a complex process of borrowing and hybridizing various glossaries and languages.

Sun-Maid's translation problems are perfectly exemplified in one advertisement published in the Saturday Evening Post in 1927 (see figure 1). The image displayed the various names used for Sun-Maid Raisins throughout the world (see figure 7). The original brand name in English was purposely maintained on the package in order to address a multi-lingual message to Western consumers, thus invited to open their mind to the world and to join Sun-Maid's efforts to build a global commercial culture. The English letters arising from the page covered with Chinese were designed as visual hooks to attract consumers' attention as well as teaching aids for helping to identify the original brand and avoid confusion with possible competitors. According to literary historian Shu-mei Shih,⁴⁴ English letters also served to demonstrate the modern nature of Sun-Maid Raisin. Companies that advertised themselves as modern often printed English words on their packaging, and Sun-Maid may have applied the same strategy. Although in the 1927 Saturday Evening Post advertisement (see figures 1, 8), China is just one among the many markets targeted by the global company, the challenge of translation was even more complicated due to the great variety of dialects in spoken Chinese, and because each province had its ways of pronouncing the Mandarin language:

Even in China the preparation of copy is by no means easy. That which is to appear in all parts of the country needs careful checking by natives of the different Provinces. While the written language is the same all over China, and while three-fifths of the population speak what is known as the Mandarin tongue, yet with the remainder [of] the spoken language and the pronunciation of the written characters vary so greatly that natives of neighboring Provinces, sometimes even of neighboring counties, cannot understand one another.⁴⁵

2. Adapting the the company name to consumers' geographical knowledge

The Chinese name of the company (美奴牌葡萄幹公司 *Meinüpai putao-gan gongsi*, literally "American Raisin Company") should be read in a top-down direction (see figure 6: red section 2). According to the company's official narrative, the name "Sun-Maid" was created in 1914 by the American advertising man E.A. Berg. Besides referring to the fact that raisins were made by the California sun, the words suggested the personality of a pretty maid gathering the harvest and making the raisins.⁴⁶

In contrast to advertisements specifically addressed to the American consumers, the Chinese name of the company skipped California and highlighted instead America. In Chinese advertisements, the West was often called upon as a symbol of modernity and other positive values,

such as health, wealth or family happiness. This slight yet important difference reveals the judgment advertising men made in the process of designing their advertisements: while the American audience was supposed to be familiar with the geography of their own country, the Chinese were not expected to have ever heard of California.

3. The slogan: an appeal to health and taste

In China as well as in the United States, the slogans for Sun-Maid Raisins often hybridized appeals to health (補血 *buxue*, lit. “To enrich the blood”) and appetite (香甜 *xiangtian*, lit. “Sweet and fragrant”). Crow states that it was easy to convince Chinese consumers that in raisins they could find sugar in its purest and most economical form, and that the iron contained in raisins was actually conducive to health.⁴⁷ Yet each market had their own specific combinations of these appeals and their distinct marketing histories. While the appetite appeal was strengthened by the “still-life” artistic genre frequently used in American advertisements, the health appeal predominated over the taste appeal in China. The 1928 Shenbao advertisement did not hesitate to recycle the original “iron appeal” invented by Lord & Thomas in 1921:

Early in 1921, Lord & Thomas crystallized the ‘health’ idea they had been featuring in the slogan ‘Had Your Iron Today?’ and almost simultaneously the five-cent package was developed. The ‘iron’ slogan took well, and undoubtedly helped the ‘nickel seller’ along... But there was no continued increase... Iron in raisins provoked universal comment, but like most slogans and health-food pleas produced more talks than sales. People did not seem to be driven to the grocery store over concern for their need of a tonic. Raisins were medicine like sulphur or molasses.⁴⁸

In the United States, the J. Walter Thompson Company soon abandoned the old “iron appeal” and replaced it with a “modern” appeal more suited to the transformations of American consumer culture, while advertising appeals in China remained focused on health.⁴⁹

4. The values of raisins: Chinese medicine, body culture and the global obsession for enriching children’s blood

In the 1928 Shenbao advertisement (see figure 6: 3b & 4), the Chinese characters 活泼 (*huopo*, lively, vivacious) and 身强 (*shenqiang*, strong body/life) implicitly appealed to Chinese medicine and body culture. The advertisement employed the same marketing strategies used for most medical products at the time, such as the famous and worldwide Dr. Williams’ Pills for Pale People. Both Sun-Maid and Dr. William’s advertisements expressed the coexistence of the old and the new by mingling Western science together with Chinese “traditional” physiology and cosmology, in order to facilitate the importation of Western goods and discourses and

their acceptance by Chinese consumers.⁵⁰

On the 1928 Sun-Maid advertisement, local references were then consciously merged with the global obsession for enriching the blood (血氣強健怒 *xuekeqiangjiannu*, “To enrich the blood”), which also appeared in many contemporary advertisements in the United States.⁵¹

Both Chinese and American societies were more particularly concerned with their children’s blood as an indicator of physical health and, beyond individuals, of the health of the nation. By placing a little girl at the center of the advertising image, the 1928 *Shenbao* ad may have intended to mirror the general anxiety about the health of youth. For 1920s Chinese consumers especially, the careful attention paid to children may have echoed the concerns of the National government and its social reform projects that aimed to cure the so-called “sick man of Asia,” to strengthen the nation and to resist foreign imperialist powers.⁵²

Sun-Maid Raisin was not the only case of an appeal to children’s health. From August 1926 to March 1927, the *Young Companion* (*Liangyou* 良友), one of the most important popular magazines in Republican Shanghai, organized a “Healthy Baby Contest.” Its slogan “Strong babies promise strong people, strong people guarantee a strong nation,” clearly expressed a fervent nationalistic spirit. The sponsorship of the Baohua Company, the company that produced the famous milk brand *Momilk* (Baohua Powdered Milk), participated in the intermingling of nationalistic concerns and business interests. It further reveals a blurring of political propaganda and commercial discourse that occurred more often than expected in advertising. The Baohua Company established a triangular relationship between milk as a product of mass consumption, health and hygiene as a major social concern in the interwar years, finally linking it with nation building/modernization as the top priority of the National government under Chiang-Kai Shek from 1927 to 1937. Women – as the primary buyers of commercial products and managers of their homes and children as future model citizens – were purposely placed at the center of that complex triangulation.

Such a triangulation was neither restricted to foodstuffs advertising nor to Chinese commercial culture. Because they were supposed to participate in the moral education of citizens-to-be, advertisements for toys⁵³ and handbooks for toys making and using employed the same kinds of arguments.⁵⁴

II. Visual elements

A. Resizing and redesigning the package (see figure 6: blue section A)

In modern China, raisins packages were made smaller and cheaper deliberately to meet the purchasing power of the average Chinese. While each package cost one penny in China and was the same size as a cigarette package, in the United States a package sold for five cents and was as large as a box of breakfast cereal, as depicted on an advertisement for “Sun-Maid Puffed Raisin” published in the Ladies’ Home Journal in 1927 (see figures 3, 4).

One of the first problems to be solved was that of the package. Although it was recognized that the purchasing power of the average Chinamen is comparatively low, the Raisin Growers were convinced that an attractive unit of sale, though small, would result in a satisfactory volume. Obviously, a large number of sales at five or ten cents a package would be impossible, since the coolie could not be expected to spend a day’s wages for food product that he considered a luxury. So the Sun-Maid Raisin Growers reduced their exporting costs to a minimum. They are shipping their product to China in bulk and the raisins are finally retailed in small, attractive, very inexpensive package that are sold for a penny.⁵⁵

It remains difficult to document the actual weight of packages sold in each country. Based on the contemporary figures provided by Sun-Maid, we may safely presume that the packages in the 1920s-30s offered sizes between 15 to 500 grams.⁵⁶ At the lowest end of the scale, the Chinese cigarette-style package was probably no heavier than 50 grams. Nevertheless, beyond quantitative data, the most important thing to consider is that packages were carefully adapted to specific market conditions. As the packages were much smaller in China, they were supposed to be lighter and thus more portable, in order to encourage the Chinese habit of eating raisins as snacks, any time and anywhere, even in the street, while going to or from work. The heavier breakfast-size package better fit the domestic uses of raisins in the United States where American housewives used raisins as cooking ingredients for their homemade breads or cakes.⁵⁷

The closer attention of the Chinese to details makes the graphic work even more sensible/delicate in China compared to the United States, where advertisers/artists would satisfy themselves with rough pictures and sketch-like drawings:

It is very important that the picture of the package or article be correct in every detail. The Oriental may be a romancer and hold truth to be a troublesome personal idiosyncrasy, but he is a stickler for accuracy of details when it comes to merchandise. A great many of the advertising illustrations used in America would not pass a critical test in the Orient because the pictures of the merchandise are too sketchy.⁵⁸

To have a chance to seduce Chinese consumers, Crow advised that advertisements should observe several rules. First of all, the illustration had to show the package open and the raisins spilling out, to help Chinese consumers to identify the product and the package's contents:

The illustration should show the package or article and show how it is used. If it is a packaged article it is not enough to show the package itself; the contents must also be depicted, if you wish to avoid any misunderstandings as to what you are advertising.⁵⁹

That visual device was not restricted to raisins, but extended to every product – such as cigarettes or pills – to meet with Chinese consumers' general concern for quantity:

The color of the package, the size, and the material of which it is made are of interest and help the consumer to visualize the article. Whatever it is, he will be interested in the quantity.⁶⁰

Realistic and detailed descriptions further aimed at countering the more general Chinese suspicion towards the advertising profession, which had continuously been associated with charlatans and quack doctors:

After generations of sharp trading with the principle of caveat emptor guiding every transaction, it is not enough to assure him that the package is of generous size. He has been fooled before by generalities like that. He wants to know how many pods, cannies, or tubes it contains. If it is a package of pills, how many pills and how you take the pills.⁶¹

The practice of representing the package open had not always been used, but resulted from a process of learning/acclulturation, in reaction to previous marketing errors. It was primarily designed to avoid confusion with similar products – especially cigarettes:

When Sun-Maid Raisins were first advertised in the Orient, copy was used showing the sealed package as in American advertising. After some months of this advertising it was learned that many thought Sun-Maid was a new brand of cigarettes. Since then all pictures showed the package open and the raisins spilling out.⁶²

The latter point helps to explain the visual similarity between cigarettes and raisins advertisements, which is all the more striking when an advertising sample of each product is juxtaposed side by side (see figure 9). Far from being fortuitous, this resemblance had been observed and theorized by advertising professionals:

In cigarette advertising in China and most other Oriental countries the picture always shows the package open and the ends of the cigarettes protruding so that the customer may count the number of cigarettes in the

*package. It is very important that the picture of the package or article be correct in every detail.*⁶³

Visual mimicry among different products may have derived from several factors. First, the use of mechanical techniques of printing and reproducing images resulted in the recycling of images and visual patterns. Second, there was the collaboration and circulation of artists and other advertising professionals within Shanghai commercial and artistic circles. It was not uncommon for a given artist to design advertisements for various products and brands for several companies. He thus may have reemployed the images or visual patterns used in previous work.

B. The iconic maid as universal logotype: local adaptations of the global woman/sex appeal (see figure 6: blue section B)

The Sun-Maid trademark image, along with its Chinese brand name (美奴牌葡萄乾 *meiniupai putao gan*) which directly referred to the logotype, exemplifies the ambiguous significance of female representations in commercial culture and to discuss the wide use of woman/sex appeal to attract consumers.

In contrast with most Sun-Maid advertisements in America and commercial culture in general, the 1928 *Shenbao* advertisement stands out in two ways. While American advertisements for Sun-Maid usually – if not always – featured women as modern housewives and mothers and major protagonists in family life scenes (see figure 3), and while women were ubiquitous and ostensibly put on display to sell commercial products everywhere in the world,⁶⁴ in the 1928 *Shenbao* advertisement the female presence is confined to the iconic maid used as a universal logotype since 1916. How can this difference be explained? Unfortunately and rather intriguingly, no other advertisement for Sun-Maid could be found in the overwhelming Chinese press. There is no way to compare the 1928 *Shenbao* advertisement with advertising samples for the same brand. However, it is still possible to contrast this discrete female appearance to the usually conspicuous female figures and to locate it in the broader visual culture of China and the United States.

Three main figures of women coexisted and partially overlapped in Republican Shanghai visual culture: the sexy Modern Girl, the enlightened New Woman and the perfect housewife/mother.⁶⁵ The Modern Girl was usually represented as an attractive pleasure-seeking woman, with distinctive physical attributes, such as bobbed hair and high heels, identifiable by her “sometimes flashy, always fashionable appearance,” her “use of specific commodities and her explicit eroticism,” and her pursuit of romantic love in disregard of the roles of dutiful daughter, wife and mother.⁶⁶ That Modern Girl was symmetrically opposed to the perfect housewife and mother. As a docile yet smart manager of the house and

wise mother of strong children, the latter was presented as the cornerstone of the rejuvenated Chinese nation.⁶⁷ Last, the New Woman offered a sort of visual compromise between the threatening Modern Girl and the potentially repulsive model of “confined motherhood.” Situated at the crossroads of the Modern Girl and the model housewife, the New Woman presented the most ambivalent figure. On the one hand, she challenged female “traditional” roles and threatened nationalistic projects to build a strong nation through her search for independence, personal achievement, free love and marriage choice. Yet on the other hand, male intellectuals and reformers praised her as a symbol of a progressive nation, as a model citizen, a potentially ideal housewife and mother-to-be of virtuous citizens.

Where should the Sun-Maid representations of women be located in this complex commercial landscape? In the 1928 Shenbao advertisement, the iconic maid used as a logotype presented an ambiguous figure, intermingling the Modern Girl’s sex appeal with a hint of childish ingenuity and the hardworking nature of a female peasant, which recalled the perfect housewife/mother’s wholehearted dedication to domestic work and maternal duties. As the logotype was exactly identical in China and the United States, the same observations also apply to its American incarnations. According to the company’s official history, the trademark was created in 1915 after a real person – Miss Lorraine Collett – was asked by Sun-Maid executive L.R. Payne to pose for a painting, wearing the red sunbonnet which was part of women’s fashion in California at the time.⁶⁸ The J. Walter Thompson attributed the unchallenged popularity of the iconic female figure in the United States to its ubiquity on packages and other marketing devices. The company further interpreted the consumer enthusiasm as “a tribute to the strategy that has displayed this pictorial character on every box of raisins as well as in every advertisement of the Sun-Maid Growers.”⁶⁹

Commercial culture in the United States shared many commonalities with the triadic portrait of Chinese women. Recent scholarship has demonstrated that the Modern Girl, the New Woman and the modern housewife/mother were global phenomena, not only in China and America, but in many other metropolises in the world.⁷⁰ Similar to the Chinese archetypes mentioned above, three main female archetypes of women coexisted in American visual culture and roughly reproduced the same associations with specific products. However, national and local incarnations of the female figures differed according to the sociopolitical and cultural background of the various geographical locations.

Leaving aside Modern Girls and New Women who almost never appeared on Sun-Maid advertisements, differences in Chinese and American representations of housewives/mothers were two-fold. In the United States, advertisers introduced a distinctive female figure, namely the

elderly woman or grandmother. They were represented, for instance, in Norman Rockwell painting “A Wonderful Bargain Bag” in 1927 (see figure 8). Did such advertisements reflect the emergence of seniority under way in the interwar years and to the increasing attention that the American society paid to the increasing number of men and women who reached their fifties?⁷¹ From a marketing point of view, such advertisements probably expressed Sun-Maid’s concern to target every age and category of people, to encourage transmission of knowledge and practices from mothers to daughters and solidarity through multiple generations.⁷²

While figures of mature and old men often appeared in press advertisements, for instance on one advertisement for the “Rat Cigarettes” in the *Xinwenbao* in 1933 (see figure 9), old women were comparatively much less visible – if not totally absent from (visual) commercial culture.

Commercial portraits of Chinese and American housewives further diverged through the slight yet significant variations in the vision of the small modern family, based on the specific triangulation between the individual, the family and the nation developed in each country.⁷³ While Western ideals supported individualism and private life, relatively independent from the state, the Chinese model viewed family as the basic social organization of the state and a kind of microcosm of the nation. In China appeals to emancipation were part of the nationalistic program to strengthen the nation, rather than individualistic projects promoting women’s personal achievement. Such subtle differences are betrayed by the tension between images/visual discourses championing an educated manager of a small family and rather conservative slogans/texts encouraging the same to become mothers of numerous children in order to sustain the nation.⁷⁴ In contrast, on wartime advertisements for the Life Insurance Companies of America which depicts a model family contributing to the national renewal after the war through rebuilding their own house, the personal pronoun “your” used in the slogan “Your personal post-war world” suggests that individual and family achievement are placed before the fate of the nation.

C. An unusual fatherly scene: probing into visual language

In contrast to Sun-Maid advertisements produced for the American market, which systematically depicted housewives and mothers, the 1928 *Shenbao* advertisement chose to replace the ubiquitous female protagonist by a male figure (probably a father) carefully feeding a little girl Sun-Maid seedless raisins. (See figure 6: c)

In the 1928 *Shenbao* advertisement, the product and the consumers were equally represented. Though unusual at the time, this picture of a child and her tender father was not an isolated case in the visual culture of Republican Shanghai. A sketch entitled “Past and present China” published in *Liangyou* magazine in 1932 contrasted in a satirical way an

old and a modern couple, the latter operating the reversal of gender roles by placing the baby into his father's arms, instead of his mother's. An even more intriguing caricature published in another issue of *Liangyou* published in 1933 depicted a father at loss after his wife left him with their newborn baby to rear and a messy home to manage. Therefore, we may suppose that actual consumers in 1928 may not have viewed this Sun-Maid advertisement as surprising as we first assumed.

Linking visual discourse with graphic techniques, it should be observed that the black & white drawing may be either a passive response to the medium constraints or an active visual strategy aimed at selling the product. Although the crude materials used for printing newspapers prevented artists from employing various colors and tones and resulted in comparatively less vivid and eye-catching advertisements than those found in magazines, the sketchy appearance of the image eventually conveyed a naive atmosphere which perfectly fit that kind of intimate scene, purposely designed to stir consumers' emotions:

Advertisers who plan to use the Chinese newspapers should realize the mechanical and other limitations of the publication... It follows that all Chinese papers are crudely printed and that only coarse line drawings can be used. Halftones are out of the question except in the large Shanghai papers.⁷⁵

Who were the actual consumers of Sun-Maid commercial products and discourses in both China and the United States? Were Chinese women as illiterate as they were said to be?

Although it is almost impossible to identify the actual demographics of the *Shenbao's* readers and to know their level of literacy, we may cast doubt on the simplistic view of a gendered readership often assumed by advertising men at the time. According to them, readers could be separated in two main groups: on one side, illiterate women (sometimes joined by workers and the lowest social classes) were viewed as purely "visual readers" of advertisements and commercial discourses; on the other side, educated men from the elite and the middle-classes would have dedicated their reading time to political news and other more "serious" content:

There are even more wives of prosperous men who cannot read, because female education has only recently become a popular fad. The Chinese wife who spends the money in the family cannot read the paper her husband subscribes for, but she will look at the pictures and, if our advertising shows a good picture of the package with an illustration showing what the article is used for, we feel that it has probably accomplished something, has presented a message to the reader who cannot read.⁷⁶

In the minds of foreign advertisers and advertising men, the fact that women would be the primary target of commercial products and "visual

reader” of advertisements, altogether with their assumed illiteracy, rendered the use of visual devices in advertising all the more necessary:

In no country of the Orient is the rate of literacy very high. It might be argued that those who subscribe for newspapers must be able to read them. Quite right, but the women folks do most of the money spending; as a rule they can't read but do like to look at the pictures. The illustration should show the package or article and show how it is used. If it is a packaged article it is not enough to show the package itself; the contents must also be depicted, if you wish to avoid any misunderstandings as to what you are advertising.⁷⁷

However, illiteracy rates in Republican Shanghai were among the lowest in East Asia, and lower than it is generally thought.⁷⁸ As female education was encouraged by male intellectuals and reformers – in part to produce the smart housewives and mothers called to play an important role in the process of building a strong nation – more and more women actually became educated. By 1936, the number of Chinese attending high schools was six times that of 1912 and modern high schools allowed more individuals, including women, to gain education.⁷⁹ In Shanghai, the rates of Chinese girls attending schools were particularly high in the 1930s.⁸⁰ Therefore, we can surmise that Chinese women were not (exclusively) the emotional readers intended by foreign advertisers and suggested by the 1928 Sun-Maid advertisement through its naive drawing of a fatherly scene. While the Sun-Maid Company aimed to reach both sexes and every age and social class in America, modern middle-class housewives certainly remained the primary actual consumers of raisins and the main target of their advertising campaigns.

Epilogue

Through a connective case study of Sun-Maid’s marketing strategies in the United States and China, this paper has shown how the Sun-Maid Raisin Company managed to seduce the Chinese consumers in the 1920-1930s. By relying on their own distribution system, combining raisins imports and locally-made advertising, the company succeeded to convert a luxury product into very popular brand in China. Advertising and merchandising were carefully used to bridge Chinese and American consumer cultures, less by reducing the gap than by adapting to Chinese consuming habits and purchasing power. The company eventually reshaped Chinese visual culture by offering hybrid versions of the “sex/women appeal” and of the “health appeal,” which both enjoyed a worldwide popularity at the time.

This case study of the Sun-Maid Raisin Company contributes to our understanding of the commercial strategies developed by a global company to adapt to the local peculiarities of a distant market like Shanghai. As a single case study, it has no pretention to representativeness. Such

method is more valuable when connected to other case studies, related to either competing companies, similar products in different contexts, or different products in the same or similar contexts. This paper has also aimed to show the value of analyzing a visual advertisement with a view to enrich or even revise our knowledge of the company, the historical background and the markets to which it appealed.

Nevertheless, our approach is liable to the following conditions. First, visual analysis shall in turn be enlightened by other historical materials, especially commercial reports, professional handbooks and advertisers' testimonials. Most cultural approaches tend to consider advertisements as mere representations, systems of signs or «mirrors» of society, restricting them to their semiotic dimensions, ignoring their material features, and confining them to two main media (newspapers or magazines, and calendar posters) and two prominent types of products (medicines and cigarette). In order to deepen cultural studies, we suggest documenting the commercial strategies that laid beneath the surface of images. By scrutinizing the actual making of advertisements, we shall unmask the new breed of advertising men who were responsible for their production. The knowledge of their institutions, and hics, theories and practices in the 1920-1930s, as well as their relationships with other institutions and society as a whole, shall give a fresh life to past images, beyond the usual assumptions on virtual consumers and commercial culture.

Moreover, we shall not satisfy ourselves with a close reading of a single image. To broaden cultural approaches one step further would consist in placing the isolated advertisement within the whole series and campaign in which it was included at the time. Another step would endeavor to graft Sun-Maid advertisements onto the wider network of images within the city of Shanghai: not only the conventional forms of printed advertisements (newspapers, magazines or calendar posters), but also posters and billboards, painted walls and neon lights, street cars and the protean faces of outdoor advertising. Through the careful observation of street photographs and municipal archives, we finally suggest that an effort be made to better understand the ways through which *visual* culture was not only *read* or *seen*, but actually experienced by ordinary Shanghaiese in their everyday lives.

Figures

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Figure 1. “Only Raisins supremely fine could win such world-wide favor.” Advertisement for Sun-Maid Raisins, *Saturday Evening Post*, August 6, 1927. Source: J. Walter Thompson Company. 35mm Microfilm Proofs, 1906-1960 and undated. Reel 36.



Figure 2. Detail drawn from “Only Raisins supremely fine could win such world-wide favor.” Advertisement for Sun-Maid Raisins, *Saturday Evening Post*, August 6, 1927. Source: J. Walter Thompson Company. 35mm Microfilm Proofs, 1906-1960 and undated. Reel 36.

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LADIES' HOME JOURNAL December, 1927

For your *Holiday Cakes and Puddings*


SUN-MAID PUFFED
More of that fine old muscat flavor in seeded raisins that pour!
SUN-MAID NECTARS
 The vineyard freshness of ripe grapes
 in raisins that are seedless!

TWO types of raisins, you know, are needed in holiday baking—in your dark, rich fruit cakes, your steaming plum puddings, your pies and Christmas cookies.

What you may not know, however, is that both kinds now are wonderfully improved.

Instead of the old kind of seeded raisins that came all massed together, now you may have Sun-Maid Puffed, seeded raisins that pour! Their seeds removed without crushing the raisins or causing the juice to run, they bring you all of that rich muscat flavor for which you buy the seeded kind.

And Sun-Maid Nectars are like no other seedless raisins you have ever seen. Tender, glistening, fresh! They seem more like the seedless grapes themselves, picked full ripe from the vine. Even the fragrance of the fruit is held for you in Sun-Maid Nectars.

Ask your grocer today for Sun-Maid Puffed and Sun-Maid Nectars. Use them in this season's baking and you will discover how to give your foods a sparkling holiday touch the year around.



SUN-MAID NECTARS



Catch the fragrance of these Sun-Maid Nectars; it is the fragrance of full ripe grapes themselves. Put one to your lips. How ready for a toast—as if the juice of the grape had suddenly oiled. But their flavor means you more—a grape-like freshness you never before tasted in seedless raisins.

SUN-MAID PUFFED

Sun-Maid Puffed pour from the carton, a remarkable improvement over the old sticky kind of seeded raisins that you have had to separate one by one. And Sun-Maid Puffed, you find, are plump; are filled with all the muscat richness of the grape. Infinitely better to cook with, these muscats with their seeds removed will also make more tempting your Yuletide bowl of fruits and nuts.



SUN-MAID NECTARS IN THE RED CARTON •• SUN-MAID PUFFED IN THE BLUE CARTON

Robertson-Like

Figure 3. “More of That Fine Old Muscat Flavor in the Seeded Raisin That Pour!” Advertisement for Sun-Maid Puffed and Sun-Maid Nectars. *Ladies' Home Journal*. December 1927. Source: J. Walter Thompson Company. 35mm Microfilm Proofs, 1906-1960 and undated. Reel 36.



Figure 4. Advertisement for Sun-Maid Puffed and Sun-Maid Nectars. *Ladies' Home Journal*, December 1927 (detail).



Figure 5. Original Chinese advertisement for Sun-Maid Raisins published in the *Shenbao*, Shanghai, 1928. Source: <http://commonpeople.vcea.net/Image.php?ID=25415>.

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3a 1 乾 萄 葡 牌 女 美

第一補血妙品

3b 香 甜 滋 補

C

A B

SEEDLESS SUN-MAID RAISINS

美國葡萄乾公司

2

4 兒 童 食 美 女 牌 葡 萄 乾 能 使 血 氣 強 健 終 日 活 潑 含 鐵 質 最 補 血 食 之 血 足 身 強

Figure 6. Analyzing a Chinese advertisement for Sun-Maid Raisins published in the *Shenbao*, Shanghai, 1928. Source: <http://commonpeople.vcea.net/Image.php?ID=25415>.

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Figure 7. Sun-Maid Raisin's brand name translated into various languages throughout the world. Detail drawn from the Sun-Maid Raisin advertisement "Only Raisins supremely fine could win such world-wide favor," *Saturday Evening Post*, August 6, 1927. Source: J. Walter Thompson Company. 35mm Microfilm Proofs, 1906-1960 and undated. Reel 36.

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Lucky the sack's so big!
— and such a bargain! for youngsters, too, can tell fine raisins

Plump, juicy seedless raisins—so good the family enjoys eating them right from the bag.
And 4 lbs. of them—for 1 lb.—at a genuine bargain price!

Are your guests for the "Market Day Special"—the blue bag with the Sun-Maid girl on it. Be sure you get it, for only Sun-Maid can offer this value in raisins. It is a result of exclusive Sun-Maid methods of selecting for size.

pick only the finest raisins in the crop—of perfecting those raisins for your use in cooking—and of profitably disposing of raisins that do not meet its standards.

In your pies, cakes, puddings and cookies you will find a host of ways to use these raisins. But children know one more way. They eat them by the handful, and there's conclusive proof of goodness.

Marked by the

SUN-MAID Raisin Growers
OF CALIFORNIA
a cooperative association of 17,000 individual growers

And (near size) 2 lbs.

CONSIDER this what they call a Wick and Mince Christmas, but every woman who feeds a family has to be an expert. Wicks and Mince Christmas all by herself.

I wish I could quote all of Mrs. G. C. L.'s letter—but let me tell you how she uses the "Market Day Special" raisins—make her, easy and inexpensive treats.

She here's about what it takes to: Pies, puddings, apple pies, cakes, cookies, all are improved with good raisins. You just add raisins to everyday things and get surprise dishes without extra work. And good mixes and sugary little in the "Market Day Special" bag.

Well, thousands of women agree with Mrs. G. C. L. I'm helping some of them on the cooking part. Maybe I can help you. Write me in care of Sun-Maid, Fresno, Calif.

Mary Anne

Figure 8. Norman Rockwell, "A Wonderful Bargain Bag." Advertisement for Sun-Maid Raisin "Market Day Special" bag. 1927. Source: Sun-Maid, 2012: 62-63.

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Figure 9. Detail from the 1928 *Shenbao* advertisement (left) and advertisement for “The Rat Cigarettes,” *Xinwenbao*, 17 September, 1933 (right).

Notes

1. "Only Raisins supremely fine could win such world-wide favor." Advertisement for Sun-Maid Raisin, *Saturday Evening Post*, August 6, 1927. Source: J. Walter Thompson Company. 35mm Microfilm Proofs, 1906-1960 and undated. Reel 36.
2. <http://www.sunmaid.com/our-history/our-history.html>
3. The *Shenbao* was one of the most important Chinese daily papers in Shanghai. Published from 1872 to 1949, it claimed a circulation of more than 50,000 in the 1920s.
4. Carl Crow (1883-1945) was one of the first advertising men in Shanghai. After studying journalism at the University of Columbia, Missouri, he settled in Shanghai in 1911 where he lived for twenty-five years and founded one the most important American advertising agency at the time, the Carl Crow, Inc. in 1918. He was the author of several best sellers dealing with China during his lifetime. He remains a major source for the history of advertising and consumption in Republican China.
5. Crow, Carl. 1927. "When You Advertise to Orientals." *Printers' Ink Monthly*, December, 39-40, 116-23. Source: Crow, Carl (1883-1945), Papers, 1913-1945. The State Historical Society of Missouri. Manuscript Collections, C41. Scrapbook Series, vol.2 (1916-1937).
6. Crow, 1937: 212-215
7. Despite China's civil war and Japan's economic depression resulting in the Japanese luxury tariff, Sun-Maid's Far Eastern Division did excellent business. The total sales in this Division have reached the fine total of 222,588 cases in the first eight months of 1924 as against 108,165 case in the first eight months of 1923. "Sun-Maid beats August Quota by 3,557 tons – Sales Set New Record for Eighth Consecutive Month." JWT Newsletter, no.54, November 20, 1924 (p.5). Source: J. Walter Thompson Company. Newsletter Collection, 1910-2005. Box MN6 (1923-1925).
8. "A Smaller Selling Unit Gets Chinese Market for Sun-Maid." *J.W.T. Newsletter*, no.47, October 2, 1924 (p.7). Source: J. Walter Thompson Company. Newsletter Collection, 1910-2005. Box MN6 (1923-1925).
9. In order to adapt to those specific social conditions, raisins importers chose to sell small yet attractive units of sale, which by cumulative addition were said to result in satisfactory sales volumes. Source: "A Smaller Selling Unit Gets Chinese Market for Sun-Maid." *Ibid.* Crow, 1927: 39.
10. "A Smaller Selling Unit Gets Chinese Market for Sun-Maid." *J.W.T. Newsletter*, no. 47, October 2, 1924 (p.7). Source: J. Walter Thompson Company. Newsletter Collection, 1910-2005. Box MN6 (1923-1925).
11. Bacon, 1927: 763.
12. *Ibid.*
13. Crow, 1937: 214-215.
14. "Since establishing our Oriental offices we have received reports that the Chinese have adopted the custom of serving raisins between courses at their feasts and that raisins are often used by the Chinese in their celebrated custom of presenting gifts." Chicago Office – Sun-Maid Raisin Gets Record Order from Orient," *J.W.T. Newsletter*, no.20, March 27, 1924 (p.3). Source: Record Order from Orient," that the Chinese have adopted the custom of serving raisins
15. "Your American audience is sophisticated; your Orientals audience is not; and that, to my mind, is the principal reason American copy does not pull as it should in the Orient." Source: Crow, 1927, p.116.
16. "Bread as a food of universal daily consumption, was the greatest single carrier of raisins to be found and the ultimate objective of the plan was no less than this: to put raisins into the bread of the nation one day out of seven." Source: "The Story of Sun-Maid." *J.W.T. Newsletter*, no.31, June 12, 1924, p.8. J. Walter Thompson Company. Newsletter Collection, 1910-2005. Box MN6 (1923-1925).
17. "When we started promoting the consumption of raisins I suggested that we should conduct

a cake-baking contest, offering cash prizes to those who would send the best cakes in which raisins formed a part of the ingredients. It was my first experience with anything of this sort, and it wasn't until the entries began piling in that I realized how strong the gambling instinct is with the Chinese and how eagerly they will size on opportunity to get something for nothing. The day the contest closed I went to see my client and found him completely surrounded by a sea of cakes (p.212) (...) With these thrown out there were still more than 500 cakes to be judged, and the only sensible way to judge them was by tasting them (...). Under the most favourable of circumstances the merits of a cake cannot be determined with scientific accuracy, and my system worked as well as any other." (Crow 1937: 214).

18. Henriot 2014; Kuo, 2007, Laing 2004; Pastoureau, 2000.
19. Demartini, Kalifa, 2005; Matt, Stearns 2014. *"The Chinese are most discriminating buyers, paying a great deal more attention to all the details of an article than do other peoples."* (Crow, 1926: 192).
20. Crow, 1927: 119.
21. Bacon, 1927: 763-764
22. Des Forges, 2007.
23. Bacon, 1927: 763-764
24. Bacon, 1927: 756-757.
25. Crow, 1927
26. Bacon, 1927: 758.
27. "Government Investigation of Consumer Demand for Raisins," March 15, 1926 (p.14). Source: J. Walter Thompson Company. Account Files, 1885-2008 and undated, bulk 1920-1995. Box 41.
28. "Government Investigation of Consumer Demand for Raisins," March 15, 1926 (p.14). Source: J. Walter Thompson Company. Account Files, 1885-2008 and undated, bulk 1920-1995. Box 41.
29. Bacon, 1927: 758-759.
30. Bacon, 1927: 758-759.
31. "A Smaller Selling Unit Gets Chinese Market for Sun-Maid." *J.W.T. Newsletter*, no. 47, October 2, 1924 (p. 7). Source: J. Walter Thompson Company. Newsletter Collection, 1910-2005. Box MN6 (1923-1925).
32. "Sun-Maid Raisins Growers Association." March 15, 1926, p.1. J. Walter Thompson Company. Account Files, 1885-2008 and undated, bulk 1920-1995. Box 41.
33. Report by The Tokyo Koshinjo Limited (Information No. 27340). Shanghai, November 1930. Source: Shanghai Municipal Archives : Q275-1-1840-37 (1934).
34. Crow, 1927: 123.
35. Crow, 1926: 195
36. Established by a British merchant (Ernest Major, 1841-1908) and published from 1872 to 1949, the *Shenbao* was one of the longest-lived and most successful newspapers in Shanghai, with an estimated audience of 150,000 in 1931 (Mittler, 2004, Tsai, 2010).
37. Crow 1937: 192-193
38. *Be sure that your language is simple and avoid the fatal error of cleverness (...). Make the text simple and unequivocal.* (Crow, 1927: 116-117).
39. *Be sure that your language is simple and avoid the fatal error of cleverness (...). Make the text simple and unequivocal.* (Crow, 1927: 116-117).
40. *The translation of the rules of poker was the most difficult job of that sort we ever undertook, but when we began advertising motor-cars, we found plenty of trouble expressing motor-car terms in the Chinese language. Naturally there were no Chinese names for the parts of cars and, in order to define them, it was necessary to define some arbitrary combination of existing Chinese words or to put old words to new uses. This has had to be done with every new article introduced to China, and sometimes it has been very easy. For instance, a mortar is called 'frog gun' and an electric light is called 'bottled moonlight', two perfectly descriptive phrases.*

As between 'bottled moonlight' and 'incandescent bulb' I would choose the 'bottled moonlight' as one which at least has created advertising possibilities and would lend itself to romance and to poetic phrases. (Crow, 1937:185-186)

41. Crow, 1937: 185-189
42. Shu-mei Shih, "Shanghai Women of 1939: Visuality and the Limits of Feminine Modernity." in Jason C. Kuo (ed.), *Visual Culture in Shanghai 1950s-1930s*, New Academia Publishing, Washington D.C., 2007 (205-240) : 222.
43. Crow, 1926: 195.
44. Sun-Maid Company, *op. cit.*, 2012, p.10.
45. Crow, 1937: 214-215.
46. Lord & Thomas was the first advertising agency to handle the Sun-Maid account before J. Walter Thompson. Source: *Sun-Maid Raisins Growers Association*, 1926, *op. cit.* p.1. Source: J. Walter Thompson Company. Account Files, 1885-2008 and undated, bulk 1920-1995. Box 41.
47. *J.W.T. Newsletter no.31*, June 12, 1924 (p.8). Source: J. Walter Thompson Company. Newsletter Collection, 1910-2005. Box MN6 (1923-1925).
48. Lean, 1995: 76.
49. As it is the case in an advertisement for Foremost Milk made by J. Walter Thompson in 1929. Source: J. Walter Thompson Company. 35mm Microfilm Proofs, 1906-1960 and undated. Reel 9.
50. David Fraser, *Smoking out the enemy: the National Goods Movement and the advertising of nationalism in China, 1880-1937*, Thesis (Ph. D. in History), University of California, Berkeley, Fall 1999. Gerth, 2003. Glosser 2003.
51. Fernsebner, 2003.
52. In the United States too, advertisements helped the consumers thread health, childhood, family and the nation with one needle: healthy products, such as medicines, vitamins, dairy products or other foodstuffs. For instance, one advertisement for Freihofer's bread published in the magazine *Reading Eagle* in 1925, explicitly encouraged children to eat bread in order to strengthen their body and then contribute to the building of a healthy nation (see figure 23). However, anxieties towards children's health differed in both countries in their respective ways of prioritizing either family or the state (Glosser, 2003). While in China, national interests were placed before family happiness, in the United States family and individual achievement came first. For instance, on a advertisement for Foremost Milk published in 1929-1930 in various women's and parents' magazines, depicting a happy mother and her healthy newborn baby, the mother's emotions are clearly placed at the center of the slogan "Your well-born baby," through the use of the personal pronoun "your" (see figure 24).
53. "A Smaller Selling Unit Gets Chinese Market for Sun-Maid." *J.W.T. Newsletter*, no.47, October 2, 1924 (p.7). Source: J. Walter Thompson Company, Newsletter Collection, 1910-2005. Box MN6 (1923-1925).
54. Sun-Maid Company, 2012: 94.
55. "The Rural Campaign" *Sun-Maid Raisins Growers Association*, 1926 (p.9). Source: J. Walter Thompson Company. Account Files, 1885-2008 and undated, bulk 1920-1995. Box 41.
56. Crow, 1927: 117
57. *Ibid.*
58. Crow, 1927: 116.
59. *Ibid.*
60. Crow, 1927: 117
61. *Ibid.*
62. Wu, 2012.

63. *Ibid.*
64. The Modern Girl Around the World Research Group, 2008.
65. Glosser, 2003. Jung, 2013: 179-199. Schneider, 2011.
66. Sun-Maid Company, 2012: 10.
67. The female iconic figure is said to be...*a tribute to the strategy that has displayed this pictorial character on every bow of raisins as well as in every advertisement of the Sun-Maid Growers.* Government Investigation of Consumer, Demand for Raisins, March 15, 1926 (p.14-15). J. Walter Thompson Company. Account Files, 1885-2008 and undated, bulk 1920-1995. Box 41. For a history of the logotype, see <http://www.sunmaid.com/the-sun-maid-girl.html>
68. The Modern Girl Around the World Research Group, 2008. Schmid, 2014: 1-16. Schneider, 2011.
69. Laslett, 1989.
70. *We questioned every type of ultimate consumer: men, women, and children.* Source: *Sun-Maid Raisins Growers Association*, 1926 (p.11). Source: J. Walter Thompson Company. Account Files, 1885-2008 and undated, bulk 1920-1995. Box 41.
71. Glosser, 2003. Schneider, 2011. Tsai, 2010.
72. Jung, op.cit., 2013: 190
73. Crow, 1926: 197.
74. Crow, 1937: 170-171
75. Crow, 1927: 119.
76. Yan, 2008.
77. Schmidt, 2014: 4.
78. In 1933, Chinese girls represented more than 35% of the children attending school in the Chinese Municipality. Source: 上海市统计补充材料(1934年编), Table 9.

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Glossary of Terms

補血 *buxue*

活泼 *huopo*

美奴牌葡萄幹公司 *meiguo putaogan gongsi*

美奴牌葡萄幹 *meiniupai putaogan*

身强 *shenqiang*

香甜 *xiangtian*

血氣强健怒 *xuekeqiangjiannu*

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Haafu Identities Inside and Outside of Japanese Advertisements

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Scholars and *haafu* have recently undertaken research on *haafu*, a category denoting people of mixed-race or -ethnicity used in Japan, themselves. This research has included topics of *haafu* identity issues,¹ representations of *haafu* in the media,² the history of *haafu*,³ etc. On the topic of *haafu* in the media, Mika Ko examines the representations of *haafu* in films, Toko Tanaka focuses on *haafu* in comic books, while Sawako Horiguchi and Yuki Imoto research *haafu* in newspapers. To date, scholars have yet to examine why *haafu* are so popular in Japanese advertisements. In the world of Japanese advertising, *haafu* promote quite a wide range of consumer products such as food, cosmetics, clothing, cars, electric appliances, trips, weddings, and so on. Their presence in advertisements addresses many aspects of consumer culture in Japan, yet no research on the popularity of *haafu* in advertisements has been attempted.

While *haafu* are quite popular in advertisements, they inadvertently contribute to the creation of stereotypes of *haafu* as good-looking, multilingual, friendly, rich, cosmopolitan, and part-Japanese. Some ordinary *haafu* undergo difficult lives because of their not fitting into these stereotypes, and they are rendered not *haafu* enough in Japan despite the fact that they are *haafu*, too. A 2013 film entitled *HAFU*, directed by Megumi Nishikuara and Lala Perez Takagi, reveals how some *haafu* are seen as not *haafu* enough in Japanese society.

This article examines the advertisements of *haafu* and discusses the following questions: Why do *haafu* stimulate the Japanese desire of consumption? Why are *haafu* used for advertisements? How has the presence of *haafu* in advertisements contributed to the stereotypes of *haafu*? How have these stereotypes contributed to some *haafu* that they are “not *haafu* enough.” This article will show how the idealized homogeneous images of *haafu* in advertisements contrast starkly with the experiences of heterogeneous *haafu*. Finally, this article argues how *haafu* themselves can challenge *haafu* stereotypes, enable *haafu* to overcome the feeling of not *haafu* enough, and embrace their heritages.

Methodology

This article examines the representations of *haafu* in advertisements

in two ways. First, through an analysis of the representations of *haafu* in advertisement made by marketers, I develop Julie Matthews's theoretical framework of mixed-race models as the embodiment of simultaneous racial sameness and difference to consider why Japanese marketers use *haafu* to promote products and services in advertisements. We will also see how *haafu* in the media have contributed to reproduction of stereotypes of *haafu* as good-looking, part-Western, multilingual/cultural, rich, friendly, and part-Japanese. Second, I will examine the representations of *haafu* made by *haafu* themselves, and discuss how ordinary *haafu* are affected by the stereotypes representations of *haafu* in the media, and how the counter-narrative on *haafu* challenges these stereotypes and empower ordinary *haafu* outside of advertisements.

In order to compare the two competing representations of *haafu*, this article focuses on advertisements for foods, cosmetics, clothing, and wrist-watches which feature *haafu*. As a counter-narrative of *haafu* representations in advertisements, this article will also draw upon stories from the 2013 film, *HAFU*, made by *haafu* themselves. The film depicts the diverse lived experiences of five *haafu*, which are not consistent with the tropes and stereotypes expressed in advertisements. Thus, the article examines *haafu* representations both inside and outside of advertisements.

Haafu in Japan

Multiracial/ethnic people in Japan are called *haafu*. The word *haafu* is originated from the English word "half." Although *haafu* is transcribed both as *haafu*⁴ and *hafu*⁵, this article uses *haafu* since it is more faithful to the Japanese pronunciation of the term. Some have criticized the term *haafu* as obscuring its multicultural roots. For example, Itsuko Kamoto points out that the word "*haafu* is used with a nuance that *haafu* are cool, but at the same time the word has a negative connotation to the ears of native English speakers,"⁶ and she lists other expressions for multiracial/ethnic people such as "double," "Amerasian," "international children," "cross-cultural kids," "mixed-roots kids," etc.⁷

On the other hand, some *haafu* themselves support the term and identify with it. For example, Sandra Haefelin, a writer and an advocate of *haafu* issues, whose mother is Japanese and father is German, writes that "I think of myself as *haafu*, and usually use the word for myself. I therefore support the word *haafu*. Personally, I think the word is natural to call myself."⁸ *Haafu* is the most common term denoting mixed-race/ethnic individuals currently circulating in Japan, so this paper uses the word *haafu* while acknowledging the problematic nature of the word.

People who have half Japanese and half non-Japanese heritage are usually referred to as *haafu* in Japan. For example, Koichi Iwabuchi defines *haafu* as follows:

Haafu are a racialized group due to their phenotype. It is a discourse

*category for the mixed-race people who are born between the Japanese and non-Japanese race, ethnic, or foreigners, all of these categories are historically constructed.*⁹

Haafu have been considered attractive by the Japanese for their exotic appearance since the Taisho era (C.E. 1912-1926). A newspaper article in 1926 introducing new *haafu* actresses reads:

*National Cinema will shoot a movie, Missing the Father, whose protagonists are mixed-race Japanese living in Kamakura or Shanghai. In this movie, actors are mixed-race, too. Shizue Okamoto and Emiko Oshima are both mixed-race Japanese, and this is their first time to act. They are exotic beauties and they will enjoy their fame as new movie stars.*¹⁰

Haafu visibility became heightened in the postwar era when the Allied Forces came to occupy Japan in 1945. Approximately 400,000 Allied Forces servicemen, mainly American men, came to Japan in order to institute democracy. Some servicemen had physical relationships with Japanese women, resulting in the birth of *haafu* children. At the time, *haafu* were called *konketsuji* (mixed blood children), *ainoko* (mixed-race children), G.I. babies, etc. As they reached their teens and twenties in the 1960s, some *haafu* became popular in show business as singers, models, athletes, and actors. Among them, there was a girls' singing group called Golden Half whose name is said to be the origin of the word, *haafu*.¹¹ Since few *haafu* were visible in show business before the 1960s, the popularity of *haafu* in the 1960s is called the first *haafu* boom, when they began to receive greater social attention.¹²

Iwabuchi's definition of *haafu* could be read that *haafu* are people who have half Japanese and half non-Japanese racial/ethnic heritages. Yet, Japan is also home to *haafu* who are not legally Japanese or who are not racially/ethnically part-Japanese. For example, children born to non-Japanese persons in Japan do not have Japanese nationality, yet there are some who claim *haafu* identity. For example, Jonathan Sieger is a Japanese *haafu* model whose parents are American and Italian. Born in Taiwan, he and his family moved to Japan when he was three years old, where he has lived and worked ever since. He refers to himself as *haafu* in his Twitter posts.¹³ His case shows that the definition of *haafu* does not necessarily depend upon having Japanese nationality or Japanese parentage.

The definition of *haafu* is thus fluid: neither Japanese nationality or Japanese ancestry is essential for membership in the category. Any person in Japan of mixed racial, ethnic, or national background could define oneself as *haafu* or defined as *haafu* by others. Others may define a *haafu* as such even if they do not consider themselves *haafu*. The definition of the word *haafu* is not legally defined; for the purposes of this paper, *haafu* will be roughly defined as people having more than one nationality, race, or ethnicity.

Haafu are perceived to possess physical differences from the average Japanese, whose facial features are usually characterized as having a flat nose, small eyes, and being short in stature. On the other hand, many popular *haafu* have Western roots, and exhibit Western facial and physical features: light skin, a pointy nose, larger eyes, and taller stature. While their facial and physical characteristics are different from the average Japanese, *haafu* who are part-Asian give a sense of racial familiarity to the Japanese. *Haafu* embody both racial difference and sameness simultaneously, and that may be one of the reasons for *haafu*'s popularity. At present, the popularity of *haafu* in show business persists, and they are quite visible in advertisements. As stated before, some scholars examine how *haafu* are represented in the media, but they hardly argue the popularity of *haafu* in advertisements. In order to address the question of the popularity of *haafu* in advertisements, this article examines why marketers use *haafu* for advertisements, and what kinds of stereotypes *haafu* in advertisements have created.

Analysis of the Popularity of *Haafu* in Advertisements

Many *haafu* are used in advertisements to promote a wide range of products and services such as foods, cosmetics, clothing, cars, electric appliances, wedding services, and so on. It would not be an exaggeration to say that *haafu* permeate every corner of Japan's consumer culture. For this analysis of *haafu* in advertisements, this article will utilize Julie Matthews's theoretical framework of mixed-race as an embodiment of racial sameness and difference.¹⁴

In her article, "Eurasian Persuasions: Mixed Race, Performativity and Cosmopolitanism," Matthews discusses how the "mixed-race other is recoded as 'cosmo chic' – familiar, knowable, sophisticated and worldly."¹⁵ Mixed-race models do not function as an 'other' evoking fear in global consumers because they have diverse racial heritages with which any consumer can identify. Consumers can identify their own ethnicity in mixed-race models, and that is why these models are knowable and familiar to consumers. Consumers regard the multicultural heritage of mixed-race models – their cosmopolitanism, in Matthew's words – as sophisticated and worldly. Mixed-race models' racial similarity to consumers, and their racial difference as cosmopolitan individuals, make them attractive to global consumers and result in their success in the world of advertisements.

Matthews' article deals with the popularity of mixed-race models in countries where Westerners are the majority of the population. In that context, racial sameness means Westernness, while racial difference means non-Westernness. The situation is reversed in Japan because of the Japan's demography in which Japaneseness is the marker of racial sameness and non-Japaneseness constitutes racial difference. However, Matthews' analysis of the mixed-race models as the embodiment of racial sameness and

difference is useful in examining the popularity of *haafu* in advertisements because *haafu* also embody racial sameness and difference in the same manner as mixed-race models in Matthews' article.

While relying on Matthews' discussion of mixed-race models as the embodiment of simultaneous racial sameness and difference, this article furthers her discussion for the analysis of *haafu* in advertisements. *Haafu* are surely used for advertisements due to their racial sameness and difference, but some advertisements focus on only one aspect of a *haafu*'s racial heritage. For example, some advertisements emphasize the *haafu*'s racial difference, and their racial other-ness is evoked, unlike in Matthews' discussion. From an analysis of *haafu* roles in Japanese advertisements, we can see that their racial sameness and difference is conveniently exploited for marketing purposes. In order to illustrate the different usages of *haafu*'s racial sameness and difference in advertisements, we will examine three types of *haafu* advertisements in advertisements of foods, cosmetics, clothing, and wristwatches.

For our first example of the usage of the *haafu*'s simultaneous racial sameness and difference, we look at an advertisement of beauty products. Meisa Kuroki (see figure 1) is an actress whose mother is Okinawan Japanese and father is Western (American). She appears in advertisements for cosmetic products made by the cosmetic company Kanebo such as blush, eye shadows, lip creams, etc.

Figure 1: Meisa Kuroki

While Kuroki has Western facial features – meaning, big eyes, a pointy nose, and chiseled face lines – which Japanese consumers consider desirable, she would not be used in advertisements if she looked exactly like Western women. How and why has the *haafu* face become the desirable face for Japanese women?

According to Hiroshi Wagatsuma and Toshihiro Yoneyama, Japanese women started using whitening powder in the Nara period (C.E. 710-794) under the influence of Chinese culture, which valued light skin for women. Since then, having light skin has been a standard of female beauty in Japan. Wagatsuma and Yoneyama also argue that Anglicized facial features became desirable in the Taisho era when Western culture became popular.¹⁶ The Japanese regarded the West as a political, economic, and cultural ideal, and Japan attempted to Westernize the nation in the early twentieth century. In the same vein, Anglicized facial features have been idealized as a standard of female beauty since roughly the same time period. While it is impossible for Japanese women to have Anglicized facial features, it seems possible to emulate the *haafu* face, which has both Western and Japanese facial features. The Japanese mentality, which regards light skin and Western facial features as beautiful, has persisted into the present. Many *haafu* have both light skin and Western as well as

Asian facial features, embodying a standard of beauty which Japanese women find possible to copy. As Japanese women idealize the *haafu* standard of beauty, and desire to be a beauty like *haafu*, they consume the products *haafu* promote.

Another illustration of marketers' use of *haafu*'s racial sameness and difference in advertisements is found in advertising for the traditional Japanese kimono company, Saganokan. In this case, it is not only the model's racial sameness and difference that are utilized by marketers but also the model's bicultural heritage. Saganokan uses *haafu* model Naomi Trauden (see figure 2), whose mother is Japanese and father is German, for its advertisements.

Figure 2: German-Japanese *Haafu* model Naomi Trauden

Saganokan's kimono incorporates traditional Japanese style as well as Western elements, such as laces, to attract young Japanese female customers. Western elements have been considered modern in Japan since Western culture was introduced in the early twentieth century. To promote both the traditional Japanese and modern Western cultural aspects of Saganokan's products, their advertising models must embody both aspects simultaneously. As the advertisement's catch phrase, "Retro Modern Style" suggests, the company uses Trauden as a model because she embodies both "retro" – read "Japanese" – cultural heritage, as well as "modern," i.e., Western cultural heritage. As Trauden represents both Japanese and Western cultures, her *haafu* heritage is useful for the purpose of marketers. Neither an ethnic Japanese or Western model could satisfy Saganokan's marketing needs.

While *haafu*'s simultaneous racial/cultural sameness and difference is valued, some advertisements place more emphasis on their racial difference. Jay Kabira is a *haafu* actor with an American mother and Okinawan Japanese father. He is featured in an Ebara Foods Industry advertisement promoting a sauce used to make traditional Japanese pickles. Rola (see figure 3), a model whose mother is part-Japanese/part-Russian and father is Bangladeshi, is featured in advertisements for Yoshinoya, which sells beef bowls, a food product quite popular among the Japanese. Some transnational food companies' advertisements also use *haafu*, and it is easy to understand why *haafu*'s multicultural backgrounds would be useful in their advertisements. On the other hand, in the case of both Kabira and Rola's advertisements, their cultural roots as part-foreigners – in other words, their racial difference – seem to be exploited because the Japanese audience believes (falsely) that foreigners do not eat traditional Japanese foods.

Figure 3: Rola

Traditional Japanese foods such as tempura and sushi are popular among foreigners but foods such as the pickled vegetables and beef bowl

that Kabira and Rola promote in their advertisements are less known among foreigners. These foods are considered very local to Japan. The Japanese audience may therefore assume that *haafu* such as Kabira and Rola would not eat traditional Japanese foods because of their part-foreigner heritage. By using *haafu*, who presumably do not eat Japanese traditional foods, the advertisements confound viewers' assumptions, impacting the audience via surprise. The false assumption among the Japanese that *haafu* do not eat Japanese foods is not a fabrication in the media but does happen in the everyday lives of *haafu*. Haefelin recounts her experience of eating *soba* (buckwheat noodles) with her friend while living in Japan:

When I was eating soba noodle with my haafu friend, who is half-Japanese and half-Swedish, a middle-aged Japanese lady talked to us. She said to us that "you two use chopsticks very well! You speak Japanese well, too."¹⁷

The Japanese woman's remark could be read as her surprise on seeing two "foreigners" eating a Japanese traditional food with chopsticks. She was surprised because she falsely assumed that girls were foreigners, and thus did not eat *soba*. The same kind of false assumption seems to function in Kabira and Rola's advertisements. The Japanese audience forget the fact that Kabira and Rola are part-Japanese, and share the false assumption that *haafu*, who are part-foreigners, do not eat Japanese traditional foods. They are still read as foreigners by the Japanese. Kabira and Rola betray the false assumption that foreigners do not eat Japanese foods, surprising the audience, and increasing consumer interest in the products Kabira and Rola promote. This explains why Japanese traditional food companies frequently use *haafu* for their advertisements.

In beauty product advertisements, *haafu*'s racial sameness and difference are recognized simultaneously, but in Kabira and Rola's case, it is their racial difference which is emphasized more in advertisements. Japanese marketers' emphasis of *haafu*'s racial difference reveals an ambivalent attitude towards *haafu*. Many *haafu* have part-Japanese heritage, and that makes them familiar to a Japanese audience. Yet, the emphasis on their racial difference in some advertisements signals that *haafu* are still regarded as the racial "Other" in the mind of the Japanese. Stephen Murphy-Shigematsu explains the Other status of *haafu* as follows (he calls *haafu* Amerasians or American-Japanese).

The increased appearance in the Japanese media of Amerasians who have been raised bilingually and biculturally has added a much more positive, even fashionable, image to the popular stereotypes of *haafu*. But whether denigrated or exoticized, the American-Japanese are always depicted as the Other, making it difficult for them to be treated as individuals or as ordinary Japanese.¹⁸

No matter how popular *haafu* are in the media, they are still reduced to the status of the Other because of their racial difference. Their racial

sameness is not fully accepted by the Japanese. The emphasis upon the racial difference of Kabira and Rola in advertisements reveals the Other status of *haafu*.

While *haafu*'s racial difference is used in advertisements, some advertisements emphasize their racial sameness. We can see an example of this in Grand Seiko's ad utilizing sports figure Yu Darvish (see figure 4).

Figure 4: Yu Darvish

Darvish, the child of a Japanese mother and an Iranian father, is a successful major league baseball player who currently plays for the Texas Rangers in the United States. He appears in the advertisements of wristwatch maker Grand Seiko, where he is billed as "the pride of Japan." Grand Seiko is a very expensive wristwatch brand which appeals to Japanese consumers' desire to display their economic success.

This advertisement is different from other appearances of *haafu* in advertisements. As we have seen, many advertisements play upon *haafu*'s racial difference or their simultaneous racial difference and sameness, but the Grand Seiko advertisement primarily emphasizes Darvish's Japanese heritage. A successful *haafu* in an international setting is usually praised not for their multicultural heritage but for their Japanese heritage. Successful *haafu* are regarded as Japanese, while their racial difference is forgotten. Darvish is the pride of Japan, not the pride of Japan and Iran. This suggests that he is treated exclusively as a Japanese and his Iranian heritage is less acknowledged in Grand Seiko's advertisement.

Some multiracial athletic national stars have had a similar experience in the media. For example, Abdul Hakim Sani Brown, born in Japan to a Ghanaian father and a Japanese mother, is a track and field athlete who ran the 200 meters in the 2015 World Youth Championships in Athletics in a record 20.34 seconds, beating the record held by Usain Bolt in 2003. The media wrote of Brown as the representative of Japanese track and field¹⁹ and praised his achievement as the first of its kind made by a Japanese.²⁰ Another *haafu* athlete, Okoe Ruis is a promising professional baseball player, just 18 years old, who has a similar racial heritage as Sani Brown. Raised in Tokyo, his mother is Japanese and father is Nigerian. Ruis is hailed by Japan's media as the new star of professional baseball.²¹ Despite his popularity, Ruis is quite conscious of discrimination against both he and Sani Brown. He commented in an interview:

*It is normal that there are people with many skin colors overseas but not in Japan. In Japan, if your skin is dark like mine, you are discriminated against. That is why people like me and Sani Brown need to excel in sports or whatever, and have the Japanese recognize us.*²²

Ruis's interview exposes the fact that dark-skinned *haafu* are discriminated against in Japanese society. Unless they achieve something, they are

subjected to social prejudice. Yet, if *haafu* contribute to enhancing the international status of Japan through their achievements, their part-foreigner heritage is overlooked, and they are hailed as Japanese heroes. Like Ruis and Brown, Darvish would not be “the pride of Japan” in the advertisement if he was not a successful major league baseball player. The media aligns with the hypocritical attitude of Japanese society towards *haafu*, and advertisements use social sentiments to promote their products. From Darvish’s example, we can see that *haafu*’s multiracial identity is conveniently manipulated by marketers.

From the analysis of advertisements above, we can see that *haafu* are useful commodities for marketers because of their racial ambiguity. In some advertisements, *haafu* could be racially different Others. In others, they could be seen as Japanese. Their simultaneous racial sameness and difference satisfies Japanese consumers’ yearning for Western beauty, while the *haafu*’s Japanese facial features make such beauty accessible. *Haafu* promote products in either role.

Haafu serve the various purposes of marketers, and they are therefore popular in advertisements. However, the proliferation of *haafu* in advertisements inadvertently contributes to strengthening *haafu* stereotypes in general. Next, this article will examine how the presence of *haafu* in advertisements has created *haafu* stereotypes, and illustrate how the idealized homogeneous images of *haafu* in advertisements contrast starkly with the actual experiences of heterogeneous *haafu* in Japanese society.

Not *Haafu* Enough: Contradictory Desire and Repulsion towards *Haafu*

Haafu are everywhere in Japan’s consumer culture via their appearances in advertisements, promoting products that cover almost all aspect of Japanese life. Looking at their overwhelming presence in the media, some entertainment magazines explain why *haafu* are so popular. Critic Shoichi Inoue comments:

*In the world of entertainment, something unrealistic or exotic has been popular. In the current globalization era, haafu embody something unrealistic and exotic. With the continuation of globalization, the popularity of haafu may continue.*²³

According to Hideo Horikoshi, “Japan is an insular county and the Japanese have a yearning for foreign cultures. *Haafu* reflect the Japanese yearning for the abroad.”²⁴ Tomokazu Takashino writes that “*Haafu* are very popular in show business because they have beautiful face (sic), and outgoing personality (sic).”²⁵ Miruo Shima writes that “*haafu* are not aggressive like Westerners because they are part-Japanese.”²⁶ From these remarks, we can see that the Japanese perceive *haafu* as exotic, cosmopolitan, friendly, wealthy, good-looking and part-Japanese. *Haafu* in advertisements embody all of these qualities. However, actual *haafu* in general

do not necessarily share the qualities portrayed in these *haafu* stereotypes. In reality, *haafu* individuals are quite heterogeneous in appearance, class, cultural background, linguistic ability, family roots, personality, etc.

In order to illustrate the diversity of *haafu*, Haefelin categorizes *haafu* into four types: (i) Ideal *haafu*: they are good-looking, and have bilingual ability (ii) Beautiful *haafu*: they are good-looking but have no bilingual ability (iii) Bilingual *haafu*; not good-looking but having bilingual ability; (iv) Disappointing *haafu*: not good-looking and having no bilingual ability.²⁷ Haefelin contends that more than 80% of Japanese people believe the stereotype that *haafu* are “pretty like fashion models, speak English and Japanese, and are rich enough to travel back and forth between Japan and overseas.”²⁸ She explains that as some *haafu* are exposed to these stereotypes, they internalize them, and experience discomfort in their everyday lives because they do not fit in these stereotypes. *Haafu* who are categorized as “disappointing” have the most difficult time in Japan. Haefelin notes that “there are many *haafu* who are not beautiful, speak only Japanese, and [are] financially disadvantaged,”²⁹ emphasizing that while the actual lives of *haafu* are quite diverse, many Japanese people cannot see the diversity of *haafu* because of the stereotypes. To be seen as *haafu* in the eyes of the Japanese requires *haafu* to be good-looking, multi-lingual, friendly, rich, and part-Japanese. *Haafu* who do not possess these characteristics are rendered “not *haafu* enough.” *Haafu* stereotypes thus trouble some *haafu*, and give them a feeling of being not *haafu* enough.

We can see how stereotypes of *haafu* made in advertisements render some *haafu* not *haafu* enough in the film *HAFU*. This 2013 film directed by Nishikura and Takagi depicts the diverse and sometimes difficult lives of some *haafu*, which are invisible behind the smiles of *haafu* in advertisements. By explaining why and how the five *haafu* figures in the film do not feel not *haafu* enough, I will argue that the stereotypes created by advertisements have had negative influences on ordinary *haafu*.

The film introduces the diverse lives of five *haafu*. First is Sophia Fukunishi, the daughter of an Australian mother and a Japanese father. After living for a certain period of time in Japan, Sophia has grown a sense of not being *haafu* enough due to her lack of Japanese language ability. Born and raised in Australia, she desires to find her cultural roots, and decides to move to Japan. Although she tries to fit into Japanese society, she finds herself isolated from the Japanese due to her lack of Japanese language skills. Her lack of language ability makes her not *haafu* enough because of the Japanese belief in the stereotype of *haafu* as being bilingual. Without such skills, monolingual *haafu* are perceived and treated as foreigners.

The second *haafu* figure introduced in the film is David Yano, a Japan-born *haafu* whose mother is from Ghana and father is Japanese. He is seen as not *haafu* enough because of his dark skin in Japanese society. One of

the stereotypes of *haafu* circulating in advertisements is that *haafu* have light skin. Yano recounts negative experiences he went through as a child such as being bullied by Japanese children, and being stared at in public, which caused him to hate Japan. Stephen Murphy-Shigematsu explains the Japanese racial views towards *haafu* skin color (whom he refers to as Amerasians):

*The Japanese still have the prejudice that light skin is the standard of beauty, and Western culture and Caucasian racial features are better than other races. Dark skinned Amerasians [haafu] face harsher discrimination because of their skin color. Their skin color is associated with African and African-American culture, which the Japanese regard as inferior.*³⁰

The Japanese view of *haafu* is that they have light skin and Western facial features, and this belief is reflected in advertisements. Dark-skinned *haafu* are discriminated against in Japanese society, and because of that, Yano's dark skin disqualifies him from being considered "haafu enough" in Japan.

The film next introduces a pre-teen named Alex Oi, who is not *haafu* enough due to his shy personality which runs counter to stereotypes that *haafu* are sociable and friendly. Alex has a Mexican mother and Japanese father, and he uses three languages, Spanish, English, and Japanese at home. Due to his multilingual home environment, his Japanese language ability has developed slightly behind that of other Japanese students. Alex's teacher, unaware of his multilingual family environment, incorrectly concludes that he has a learning disability. He develops a stutter due to stress, which combined with his shyness prevents him from adjusting to the school environment. Alex's withdrawn attitude allows his classmates or teachers to see him as not *haafu* enough. While *haafu* in advertisements look very happy and friendly, real *haafu* who do not behave consistent with *haafu* stereotypes are regarded as not *haafu* enough. The resulting harsh reality experienced by some *haafu* in Japanese society is invisible to many Japanese.

The fourth person the film focuses on is Edward Yutaka Sumoto, child of a Japanese mother and a Venezuelan father. He was raised only by his mother in Japan but he carries a Venezuelan passport. As *haafu* in advertisements are mostly part-Japanese and have Japanese nationality, many Japanese assume that *haafu* are Japanese nationals. This assumption makes Sumoto not *haafu* enough because he does not have Japanese citizenship.

Sumoto was born before Japan revised the Nationality law in 1985. Until then, Japanese women marrying non-Japanese men could not legally pass down Japanese citizenship to their children. The law was challenged by parents of *haafu* children in the early 1980s. Although the parents lost the lawsuit, the Japanese government decided to revise the law anyway. The revision was made possible because Japan signed the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (hereafter

called CEDAW) in 1980. Article 9 of the CEDAW stated the equality of the sexes in acquiring, changing, or maintaining nationality, including the bestowal of nationality on children. To make the CEDAW effective in Japan, the government had to revise the Nationality law, which prohibited Japanese women from giving the right of nationality to their children. In addition, Japan has become a more globalized society where more Japanese women marry non-Japanese men. The Japanese are more aware of women's rights now. For these reasons, the Nationality law was revised to allow Japanese women to give Japanese nationality to their children regardless of father's nationality. Now all *haafu* who are born to either a Japanese mother or father can have Japanese nationality as an innate right. But as Sumoto's mother did not opt to gain him Japanese citizenship, he could not enjoy that right, which renders him not *haafu* enough.

The last *haafu* in the film is Fusae Miyako, child of a Japanese mother and a *Zainichi* (Korean resident of Japan) father. Her parents are both Asian, and physically she does not look *haafu*. One of stereotypes common to *haafu* that circulates in advertisements is that *haafu* have a part-Western heritage, and therefore they are physically different from Japanese. Since Miyako has no Western physical features, her appearance renders her not *haafu* enough. A biethnic *haafu*'s social position like Miyako's is complex. Since many of them physically look Japanese and their names usually do not reveal any ethnic difference, it is easy for them to pass as Japanese. Their mixed ethnic heritages are therefore usually not acknowledged by anyone. They are subsumed into the homogeneous Japanese ethnic landscape, and it is rare for them to be recognized as *haafu*. These Asian biethnic *haafu* are thus not *haafu* enough due to their physical similarity to the Japanese.

Kohei Kawabata problematizes the invisibility of biethnic Asian *haafu*, focusing on the case of Korean-Japanese *haafu*. He contends that since Korean-Japanese *haafu* are physically not different from the Japanese, their difference is unacknowledged, and they feel alienated from other *haafu*. Their issues are excluded from the discourse of *haafu* and *Zainichi*.³¹ Unlike part-Western or dark-skinned *haafu*, biethnic Asian *haafu* have no physical features that mark them as *haafu*. Their existence is therefore more invisible than other *haafu*.

The invisibility of biethnic Asian *haafu* is strange if we look at Japan's demographic statistics. Japan's Population and Social Security Research statistics reveal that the number of international marriages was 21,448 in 2013. The majority of these couples are non-Japanese Asians married to Japanese (e.g. 39.8 per cent were Japanese women married to Chinese or Korean men; 58.2 per cent were Japanese men married to Chinese or Korean women).³² In other words, most *haafu* are Asian biethnic *haafu*. They are more dominant than other *haafu* in numbers but are the most invisible because they do not fit into *haafu* stereotypes. In this case, it is

their physical similarity to the Japanese that makes them not *haafu* enough.

The stories of five *haafu* in the film illustrate the fact that some *haafu* are seen as not *haafu* enough in Japanese society and suffer in ways unique from one another. *Haafu* in advertisements have inadvertently contributed to the creation of *haafu* stereotypes, and the pain of *haafu* who do not fit the stereotypes. The more *haafu* glitter in advertisements, the more ordinary *haafu* face pain in their everyday lives because they are seen as somehow not *haafu* enough even though they are ethnically or culturally *haafu*.

Conclusion

As we have seen, the proliferation of *haafu* in advertisements is quite wide-ranging, and the *haafu* stereotypes they inscribe in the Japanese mind are also deep-rooted. As long as *haafu* are useful commodities to promote consumer products in advertisements, marketers will not stop using them. Rather, they will continue to exploit the stereotypes of *haafu* as much as possible to stimulate the Japanese desire for consumption, and to maximize profits. If this is the case, can there be any hope for changing *haafu* stereotypes so that ordinary *haafu* who do not fit the stereotypes can negotiate the difficulties they face?

As stated, *haafu* themselves, such as Haefelin, Nishikura and Takagi have begun giving voice to more diverse experiences of *haafu*, and consciously challenging *haafu* stereotypes. Natalie Maya Miller and Marcia Yumi Lisa, who are also *haafu*, started the Hafu Project in 2008. In a 2010 pamphlet, they interviewed and photographed *haafu*, and questioned the problematic social position of *haafu* in Japanese society. While their project has halted due to their parental responsibilities, another group has begun disseminating the reality of *haafu*. Edward Sumoto (one of the subjects of the film *HAFU*) has launched a group for multicultural people called Mixed Roots Japan, whose purpose is described as follows:

*Japanese culture, language and customs are an indispensable part of us, multicultural individuals. Dialogues between multicultural individuals and Japanese society are necessary so that multicultural individuals can enrich their cultural heritages. In order for Japanese society to embrace the diversity of its population, we also work together with academia to accumulate and analyze statistics on multicultural individuals.*³³

The group attempts to promote dialogue between mixed-roots people, including *haafu*, and the Japanese by holding various activities such as radio broadcasts, meetings, etc. In doing so, they try to convey the reality of mixed-roots people to the Japanese.

Taking a cue from the stated purposes of Mixed Roots Japan, scholars have started examining *haafu* issues in academia. For example, 2014 saw the publication of an edited volume on *haafu*, entitled *Who is Haafu? Race Mixture, Media Representation, Negotiation*, which analyzed the various

representations of *haafu* in the media as well as *haafu* experiences. In 2015, several universities (including Konan Women's University, Kyoto Women's University, Ritsumeikan University) held a joint symposium on *haafu* where scholars discussed problems experienced by *haafu* in an effort to discover solutions. With the emergence of more *haafu* voices in many areas of Japanese society, *haafu* stereotypes are increasingly challenged.

The reproduction of *haafu* stereotypes will continue in advertisements because *haafu* are useful for marketers. But with the spread of more and more heterogeneous voices of *haafu* throughout Japan via many media, *haafu* who have been perceived as not *haafu* enough may gain confidence in what they are, and embrace their multiracial/ethnic heritage. This task is on the shoulders of not only *haafu* themselves but on all Japanese.

Figures



Figure 1. Meisa Kuroki, Kose advertisement, *No More Rules*, © 2015.
<http://www.nomore.rules.net/>



Figure 2. Naomi Trauden, Saganokan advertisement, © 2015.
<http://www.saganokan.com/furisode/>



Figure 3. Rola, *Yoshinoya* advertisement, © 2015
<http://www.yoshinoya.com/>



Figure 4. Yu Darvish, *Grand Seiko* advertisement, © 2015
<https://www.seiko-watch.co.jp/>

Notes

1. Murphy-Shigematsu, *Amerasian Children*; Haefelin, *It Is an Illusion*; Miller and Lisa, *The Haafu Project*.
2. Ko, "The Genealogy of Representations of Mixed Race"; Tanaka, "The Representation of Haafu in Girls' Comics;" Horiguchi and Imoto, "How Are Mixed-Race Represented."
3. Welty Tamai, "Multiraciality and Migration;" Spickard, *Mixed Blood*.
4. Small and King-O'Riain, introduction.
5. Nishikura and Takagi, *HAFU*.
6. Kamoto, *A Theory on International Marriage*, 151.
7. *Ibid.*, 145.
8. Haefelin, *It Is an Illusion*, 17.
9. Iwabuchi, "Cultural Politics of Mixing," 13.
10. *Yomiuri News Paper*, "A Unique Movie of Mixed Blood Actors," 5.
11. Horikosi, "Haafu Beauties," 29.
12. Murphy-Shigematsu, *Amerasian Children*, 101.
13. Sieger, comment on himself, "Jonathan Sieger Twitter."
14. Matthews, "Eurasian Persuasions," 50.
15. *Ibid.*, 43.
16. Wagatsuma and Yoneyama, *A Structure of Prejudice*, 26.
17. Haefelin, *It Is an Illusion*, 64.
18. Murphy-Shigematsu, "Multiethnic Lives," 212-213.
19. [N.a], "Mixed Race Athletes."
20. "Sani Brown as the First Japanese Athlete."
21. "Okoe is Bright."
22. "Okoe Fighting against Prejudice."
23. Inoue, "Expiration Dates of Haafu Female Beauties," 187.
24. Horikoshi, "Haafu Beauties Dominating Show Business," 29.
25. Takashino, "Nineteen Haafu Beauties," 1.
26. Shima, "Why Are There So Many Haafu Celebrities."
27. Haeflin, *It Is an Illusion*, 7.
28. *Ibid.*, 3.
29. *Ibid.*, 4.
30. Murphy-Shigematsu, *Amerasian Children*, 95.
31. Kawabata, "A Boundary where Double Becomes an Issue," 224.
32. National Institute of Population and Social Security Research, *Demography Trend*, 106.
33. "Mixed Roots Japan."

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Why Are Chinese Not Buying Chinese Brands? The Notion of Chinese Nationalism in the Discourse on Chinese Consumerism

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Since the 2008 financial crisis, Chinese consumers have become the most lucrative and desirable market for the luxury and fashion industries. Such consumers are the result of China's nationalist agenda to reform its economy in the 1980s. Despite the growth of Chinese buying power for Western luxury goods, Chinese domestic luxury brands are still struggling to attract more domestic consumers. One of the challenges facing such Chinese domestic brands is that Chinese consumers have adopted Western ideals and concepts of luxury and fashion. In addition, Western luxury brands have included various Chinese motifs in their products, thus appropriating the concept of "Chinese elements" and limiting the potential development of these concepts within China. Furthermore, China has a legacy of producing poorly made goods, creating the perception that all "made in China" products are of poor quality. As the Chinese upper and middle classes continue to grow, their buying power continues to be an obstacle for the growth of the Chinese domestic luxury brands.

Evolution of Chinese Consumerism

Contemporary Chinese consumer culture developed as a result of China's Open Door policy in the early 1980s, transforming the Communist country into one with more capitalist characteristics. This economic reform also permitted foreign companies to expand their global market share into China and allowed China to prepare its trade policies to join the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001.¹ Although many Chinese industries were still state-owned, China began to allow privatization of Chinese businesses as the foundation of its transformation to a market economy. Moreover, through foreign investments and joint ventures with foreign companies, China quickly became the world's largest exporter.² However, the Chinese government realized that it could not completely rely on external forces for the stability of its economy; hence, the government began to construct consumerism within its own populace. In Karl Gerth's book *As China Goes, So Does the World*,³ the author examines the "hurdles" that China had to overcome to create Chinese consumers, as

Chinese consumerism prior to the economic reform was nonexistent under the Maoist regime (1949-1976). However, within just four decades, Chinese consumers have become responsible for a large part of the world's luxury consumption.

As most Western countries suffered during the 2007-08 financial crisis, the market for luxury goods suffered as well. Brooke Unger notes the significance of Chinese consumers for their contributions towards "bail[ing] out" the luxury market in 2009, which was a "year of shame socially to consume luxury goods."⁴ Since the beginning of contemporary Chinese consumerism in the 1980s, Chinese consumers have evolved rapidly in their preferences for luxury. According to a Bain report, Chinese consumers only accounted for 1% of global personal luxury goods sales in 2000, whereas Chinese consumers are now responsible for one third of the global consumption of luxury goods.⁵ Despite the recent decrease in Chinese luxury goods consumption due to the enactment of a Chinese law against gift-giving to government officials, experts continue to believe that Chinese consumers are essential to overall retail sales.⁶ Thus, global fashion houses and luxury brands continue their efforts to attract more Chinese consumers.

In this paper, the term "luxury goods" refers to the premium set of goods that one can acquire with enough financial means. For example, Hermes Birkin purses and Louis Vuitton travel trunks are considered luxury goods.⁷ Chinese consumers use these categories of goods as means of expressing themselves, and consumption of such goods also demonstrates the growing economic wealth of China. However, as Chinese consumers are more inclined to purchase Western luxury goods, their concepts of luxury are heavily influenced by Western aesthetics and values. In this regard, Chinese consumerism in the luxury and fashion industries has diverged from the nationalist agenda that sparked the creation of Chinese consumerism.

Consumerism with a Nationalist Agenda

Despite Chinese consumers' desires for Western goods, which are constantly associated with the idea of quality, the notion of Chinese nationalism is still unmistakably embedded in the discourse on Chinese consumerism. Gerth argues that Chinese nationalism and consumerism constitute an inseparable entity that was shaped through the fear of Western imperialism through consumption of Western goods dating back to the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911):

Politicians worried about trade deficits and the new consumer lifestyles exemplified by opium dens and addicts. Intellectuals, who had begun to read works on Western political economy, feared the loss of sovereignty implicit in the growing foreign dominance of the commercial economy.⁸

This concern over the loss of sovereignty through the Chinese consumption of Western commodities carried over to the establishment of the Republic of China in 1912. In particular, the fear led to the establishment of the National Product Movement in the 1930s, which encouraged the Chinese people to purchase Chinese national products and thus defend China from imperialism. One of the key components of this movement was the notion of “nationalistic visuality,” which “centered on training the eye to identify visual clues and to distinguish between the foreign and domestic across social life.”⁹ This “nationalistic visuality” was used across a variety of spectrums but most distinctly centered on the discourse of nationalizing the appearance of Chinese men.

With the import of “Western” goods, Chinese men’s fashion began to change due to the introduction of “Western” suits and the introduction of wool. This transformation became the basis of demand for wool in China, and the popularity of suits began to take off when the new Nationalist Chinese government decided to shed “China’s backwardness.” The government began to encourage Chinese men to cut off their queues as a symbol of eliminating such backwardness.¹⁰ The demands for wool and “Western attire” were high enough to endanger the silk industry, which provided the main material to produce the traditional Chinese attire of the “long gown,” or *changpao* (長袍). In the face of this threat, members of the silk industry formed the National Products Preservation Association to advocate for the usage of silk as patriotic, a strategy that successfully saved the silk industry.¹¹ This notion of “nationalistic visuality” signifies unity of nationalism and consumerism in modern Chinese history. Although the Communist Party took control of China in 1949, this notion has continued to exist through Communist Mao suits and beyond.

After the Communist Party took control of China in 1949, consumption of foreign goods in China became extremely limited. Since excessive consumerism is closely tied to a bourgeois lifestyle, it is fundamentally against the Communist doctrine. In the 1950s, the Chinese Communist Party used anti-consumerist rhetoric to denounce the greed and capitalistic aspirations of urban coastal China.¹² However, by the end of the 1950s, the nationalization of private enterprises by the Chinese government was complete, and consumerism was reintroduced in a positive light and in the vein of “nationalistic visuality.” As consumerism in China actually contributes to the national economy, Chinese consumerism is aligned with the nationalist agenda. Hence, when Deng Xiaoping established the Open Door Policy in the 1980s, he and other Chinese government officials were conscious of the risk of allowing foreign brands to enter the Chinese market. However, the Chinese government of the 1980s envisioned China becoming an economic superpower, and to that end, the government encouraged Chinese consumers to spend. Chinese people have clearly responded to the government agenda, as Chinese consumers have become

responsible for one-third of global luxury sales.

Interestingly, despite the growth of Chinese buying power, Chinese domestic brands have not gained much success in attracting domestic consumers. Contemporary Chinese consumers are more exposed to and educated about foreign brands and goods, and they have developed a strong preference towards Western goods over Chinese brands. This outcome prompts the questions: How does the notion of “nationalistic visuality” fit into the modern context, and why are Chinese consumers not buying Chinese goods?

Why are Chinese not buying Chinese goods?

One potential obstacle to the growth of the domestic luxury market is that there is a Western influence on the contemporary concept of luxury. As Allison Hulme explains in her book, *The Changing Landscape of China’s Consumerism*, ownership of Western commodities is interpreted as a sign of wealth, since such goods are perceived as “prestigious” and “modern.”¹³ Thus, they are perceived as naturally superior to Chinese domestic luxury commodities. Additionally, in a WWD article, Arthur Zackiewicz calculates the total market capitalization of the Standard and Poor’s apparel, accessories, and luxury goods segment to be \$639.9 billion. The top ten companies with the largest market capitalization are not only Western companies (LMVH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton SA, Compagnie Financière Richemont SA, Hermès International Société, etc.), but they also make up almost 50% of market capitalization.¹⁴ At only number 14 on the list, the lone Chinese company, Heilan Home Co. Ltd, comes in with \$9.498 billion in market capitalization. This dominance of market capitalization in the luxury segment demonstrates that Western luxury brands have a strong influence on the global luxury market. Chinese consumers will continue to strengthen this influence, as they are responsible for one third of global luxury sales.

As Chinese consumers become more interested in buying Western luxury goods, the idea of Chinese nationalism continues to be linked with consumerism. Since Chinese consumers have proven their enormous buying power for luxury items, Western luxury companies have reciprocated by including “Chinese elements” in their luxury products. This strategy contributes significantly to the Chinese consumer’s desire for Western luxury goods. As Chinese nationalism is closely linked with Chinese consumerism, Chinese consumers are also interested in consuming Western luxury goods with integrated “Chinese elements.” Arguably, the notion of “nationalistic visuality” has transformed into the modern notion of “Chinese elements.” Although there is no clear definition of what constitutes “Chinese elements,” Hulme argues that it “must be conceived as a drive to stimulate creativity, as well as to promote the national spirit and the correct intercultural communication between China and the rest

of the world.”¹⁵ She further argues that the notion of “Chinese elements” should not just consist of the inclusion of Chinese cultural symbols and famous landmarks, such as the dragon or the Great Wall of China, but also incorporate Chinese “spirit, values, and habits.”¹⁶ However, as the practice of localization is a popular strategy for many international brands breaking into new markets, Western luxury brands have incorporated “Chinese elements” as a way of localizing their products to attract Chinese consumers.

Due to the growing number of Chinese luxury consumers, Western luxury brands have proven quite receptive to including Chinese motifs on their products. For example, the oldest Swiss mechanical watch company, Vacheron Constantin, has utilized the significance of “Chinese elements” in launching their *Metiers D’art* “The Legend of Chinese Zodiac” collection (see figure 1). The timepieces from this collection each include a depiction of the annual zodiac on the watch dial, and each timepiece costs around €80,000 to €100,000.¹⁷ In 2014, Gucci launched a “China-red” collection to celebrate the Year of the Horse, which included brightly red purses with “detailed Design of gold horse mouthpiece.”¹⁸ Through its Weibo account, Gucci explained that this collection represented “auspicious, success,” and other positive notes. Another example is how Rolls Royce launched its Majestic Horse Collection in celebration of the Year of the Horse. For this special collection, Rolls Royce included a Chinese art motif of a horse. Through the efforts of Western luxury brands engaged in producing “Chinese elements,” the very concept of “Chinese elements” is covered by a veil of Western interpretation of Chinese characteristics.

In addition to Western luxury goods, the discourse on Western appropriation of “Chinese elements” continues through fashion events. In one high-profile example, the theme for the 2015 Metropolitan Museum Gala (MET Gala) was “China: Through the Looking Glass,” and the dress code for this event evoked debates on Chinese fashion as well as Western perceptions of Chinese fashion. One of the popular topics was the outfit of actress Sarah Jessica Parker, which consisted of a custom silk gown from H&M, paired with a flame headpiece that resembled the head decorations of Peking opera signers (see figure 2). Famous hat maker, Philip Treacy, whose frequent customers include the English royal family, created the headpiece. Although the headpiece alluded to the history of Chinese fashion, it also signified the current appropriation of “Chinese elements” in Western luxury goods. As Treacy’s Peking Opera headpiece differed from those of traditional Peking Opera, he appropriated the design of the headpieces with his own unique interpretation. This headpiece transforms from cultural icon to fashion accessories, thus it is stripped from its cultural meanings.

Another popular debate stemming from the 2015 MET Gala surrounded Rihanna’s fashion choices. Rihanna stole the spotlight by wearing an

extravagant gold gown by Chinese designer, Guo Pei. Admittedly, Rihanna's selection of Guo Pei's works shone an international light on Chinese fashion designers who were previously unknown outside of the Chinese market. However, the process by which consumers choose these designers' works is still fixated on the criteria of Western-identified ideals of luxury, and these choices continue to be approved by audiences holding such Western ideals. Unfortunately, Western appropriated "Chinese elements" negatively affect the development of "Chinese elements" by Chinese designers. Furthermore, the growth of the Chinese domestic luxury goods market continues to abide by Western ideas of luxury and appropriation of "Chinese elements."

The development of the Chinese domestic luxury goods market must also overcome the perception of "made in China" goods as low quality. Historically, China has depended on its cheap labor force for its primary economic growth, thus attracting many outsourced jobs. In the modern context, "Made in China" products continued to struggle with the notion of poor quality. Thus, Chinese consumers are not receptive to purchasing domestic brands over foreign brands, which have been associated with higher quality goods. Over time, Chinese consumers became too reliant on Western commodities as a promise of quality, as evidenced by the new market surrounding the consumption of Western luxury goods. The business of overseas personal shoppers, or *haiwai daigou* (海外代购), has flourished through the high demand for Western luxury goods in China. According to CNN, this segment generated 74.4 billion yuan, or US\$12 billion, in 2013.¹⁹ The overseas personal shoppers are often Chinese students studying in Western countries, such as the U.S. or European countries, who frequently travel between China and the countries in which they are studying. They typically find their clients through social media channels, like WeChat or Weibo, as well as the ecommerce platform, Taobao. Depending on the arrangement, the overseas personal shoppers will buy brand name items at a discounted rate (due to tariffs and other fees, it is cheaper to buy Western luxury goods in Western countries than in China), reselling the items to their clients at an agreed upon price. Overseas personal shoppers can often make a hefty profit by reselling luxury goods. The business phenomenon of overseas personal shoppers will likely continue to flourish, especially in light of a 2011 report from the Boston Consulting Group that 61 percent of China's consumers are willing to pay more for a made-in-U.S.A. product.²⁰ Hence, the combination of high demand, poor perception of Chinese made goods, and increase in accessibility of Western luxury goods serves major challenges to the domestic luxury brands. Furthermore with booming industries, like overseas personal shoppers, Chinese domestic luxury brands continuously have to face fierce competition to attract Chinese consumers.

Despite all of the challenges facing Chinese domestic brands, there

are signs of support as well as promotion of Chinese domestic designers from the Chinese government and other influential parties within China. Multiple Chinese provincial governments have started initiatives to back domestic luxury goods projects and fashion events. For example, Shanghai Fashion Week is hosted by the Shanghai Municipal Government and supported by the ministry of commerce.²¹ According to a report on China's fashion industry by the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Shanghai is the fashion capital of China, due to the governmental support for Fashion Week and the fact that, on average, people in Shanghai have higher disposable incomes than the rest of the country. With extra disposable consumer income and rise of the Chinese ecommerce, the Shanghaiese government has high hopes that its people will invest money back in domestic fashion brands.

Aside from Shanghai, many cities around China have started promoting fashion events and local designers. The government of Dalian, a Northeastern coastal city, has also held an annual International Fashion and Garment Festival for more than twenty years to encourage innovative design within the garment industry.²² The city of Shandong, also on the Northeastern coast, has heavily supported the creative industry becoming its "pillar industry." Other Chinese cities that strongly promote domestic fashion designers and designs include Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Dongguan, Nanjing, and Chengdu. Aside from governmental promotion of domestic fashion and luxury goods industries, such supportive rhetoric also appears in Chinese media, including the magazine *Vogue China*.

The Chinese reclamation of "Chinese elements" may perhaps be most apparent in *Vogue China*. In spring of 2014, the popular fashion website, *Business of Fashion*, published a special edition magazine called "The Companies & Culture Issue."²³ Within this special issue were numerous interviews with some of the most well known names in fashion, including Angelica Cheung, the editor-in-chief of *Vogue China*. Cheung explains that her role is to produce a modern international magazine, "[b]ut at the same time, it's [her] job to meet with the Chinese culture. Five thousand years of culture, you cannot change that."²⁴ Cheung goes on to explain that it is not enough to just bring Western beauty and fashion trends into China.

In order for *Vogue China* to be successful in China, it must incorporate "Chinese elements" that Chinese readers at large can relate to. She is proud to say that the incentive for her job is "to prove to the world that Chinese could do something," reflecting the nationalism behind the notion of the "Chinese elements."²⁵ In setting out to prove this point, she saw that there was a lack of representation of Chinese supermodels in Chinese magazines, so she made it a point to feature more Chinese models. For example, the cover of the September 2011 issue of *Vogue China* features Liu Wen, Fei Fei Sun, Du Juan, Shu Pei, Ming Xi, and Sui He as *the* supermodels of China (see figure 3).²⁶ The models are all dressed in clothing from

Western brands, and Cheung believes that it is important for the Chinese people to see that “a Chinese could become big – and ultimately [our readers] want to see that a certain look would look good on Chinese.”²⁷ This cover exemplifies the heightened focus on “Chinese elements,” as fashion editors are increasingly using a “Chinese” interpretation of Western trends through their pictorials and articles within fashion magazines. Additionally, with the mission to reconnect the link between Chinese consumerism and Chinese nationalism, *Vogue China* can serve as a platform to attract Chinese consumers to new domestic designers.

Aside from *Vogue China* as a platform, there is also a new television show “Goddess’s New Clothes,” or *Nü Shen De Xin Yi* (女神的新衣), that introduces various groups of designers and has them compete in front of a group of buyers. Whichever designer receives the highest bid wins, and the one with the lowest bid will be eliminated from the contest. This show purposefully showcases the new breed of Chinese designers and their creations on national television. They are given a task by a “goddess,” i.e. a popular Chinese actress, and are asked to display their creativity. The show allows the designers to talk about their creative thought processes when designing their collections and what makes their designs special. This show is an excellent outlet for Chinese audiences to become familiar with the ideas of Chinese fashion designers and to get to know the daily influences the designers had in creating their pieces. However, the conversion rate of audience members into clients is still undetermined.

In contrast, as Chinese consumption has secured thriving revenues for luxury goods companies, the Chinese media has also praised those who have not followed Western trends or bought into commercialism. One popular online media website, *Sina*, featured First Lady of China Peng Liyuan as the “big figure” or *Da Ren Wu* (大人物) in its 107th issue of “Sina Female,” or *Xin Lang Nü Xing* (新浪女性). In this article, the Chinese first lady was praised for her elegance, confidence, and distinctive “Chinese positive energy,” or *zhong shi zheng neng liang* (中式正能量).²⁸ It is not uncommon for first ladies to be affiliated with consumerism, as we have seen with American first lady Michelle Obama, who wears products from American designer, Jason Wu, and American brands, like J. Crew. In explaining why the Chinese people adore their first lady, the article also reflects on how Peng Liyuan does not wear brand-name attire like the first ladies of many other countries. There is a nationalistic notion that Peng Liyuan is not conforming to the Western style of beauty and commercialism but instead creating her own sense of beauty and elegance through the notion of spirituality within “Chinese elements.”

In the *Wall Street Journal* article “The First-Lady Effect on China’s Fashion Labels,” the author, Wei Gu, writes about how all first ladies exert influence over the fashion market. In particular, Gu highlights how Peng Liyuan has stirred up a craze for Chinese designer goods among Chinese consumers:

*The timing of Ms. Peng's fashion statement couldn't be better. Her husband's call for austerity has damped the mood of conspicuous consumption in China and taken the shine off the luxury brands that have thrived there.*²⁹

Oftentimes, Ms. Peng appears in a tailored outfits without particular labels, which makes it hard to determine the price range of their outfits (see figure 4). Alongside the Chinese government's actions to combat corruption, Chinese consumers are becoming more interested in local fashion brands. As the Chinese public has praised the first lady for her Chinese brand fashion choices, there has been a spark of Chinese nationalism in the discourse of consumerism and a call to create "Chinese elements" in consumer goods. According to Mike Thompson, the purpose of "Chinese elements" was "designed by China's market community to regain Chinese culture..., which, according to some commentators, had been disregarded by the new Chinese consumer society."³⁰ The "Chinese elements" serve as a challenge in the already Westernized consumer markets. However, now is an opportune moment to strive to incorporate "Chinese elements" in Chinese consumerism, especially with the rise of China's economy, President Xi's condemnation of corruption, and promotion of local fashion events.

Conclusion

Chinese luxury consumption is skewed towards Western luxury brands, and it is evident that Chinese consumers have a strong preference for Western luxury goods. With the combination of Westernized ideals of luxury and the appropriation of "Chinese elements" in Western luxury products, the growth of the Chinese domestic luxury goods market is limited by various challenges. In particular, with the luxury market so heavily influenced by Western ideals, this generation of Chinese luxury designers is facing the obstacle of innovating beyond these ideals to break into the domestic market. At the same time, not only do Chinese consumers prefer Western aesthetics, they also hold a poor perception of Chinese-made goods. Despite all of these obstacles, China-made goods have the potential to become a global player in the luxury brand segment. As promoting fashion and luxury designers becomes part of local government agendas, Chinese luxury designs are also appearing more frequently within Chinese mainstream media. Thus, it is only matter of time before Chinese fashion and designers of luxury goods appear on the global fashion roadmap. However, the Chinese people themselves will need to recognize the potential of Chinese domestic designers before the rest of the world will follow.

Figures



Figure 1. Vacheron Constantin, “The Legend Of Chinese Zodiac,” Year of the Monkey. Source: <http://www.watchuseek.com/vacheron-constantin-metiers-dart-year-of-the-monkey-le-watch/>



Figure 2. Sarah Jessica Parker at 2015 METGala. Source: <http://uinterview.com/news/sarah-jessica-parkers-headdress-brought-fire-2015-met-ball/>



Figure 3. Cover of the September 2011 issue of *Vogue China* features Liu Wen, Fei Fei Sun, Du Juan, Shu Pei, Ming Xi, and Sui He as the supermodels of China. Source: <http://www.fashiongonerogue.com/vogue-china-september-2011-cover-liu-wen-fei-fei-sun-du-juan-shu-pei-ming-xi-sui-inez-vinoodh/>



Figure 4. Peng Liyuan at Ceremonial Welcome at Horse Guards Parade in London in 2015.
Source: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-3280964/Is-Chinese-lady-real-star-state-visit-Peng-Liyuan-exudes-elegance-cool-white-dress-suit-accompanies-President-Xi-Jinping-Buckingham-Palace.html>

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The State of the Archive: Research Resources for Advertising Studies in Mainland China

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Star Wars: The Force Awakens has been showing in China, where in the first three days the box office took in more than \$50 million. As an atypical fan of *Star Wars*, I think the most interesting aspect of this series is that it constructs an imaginary world visually as well as a real world metaphorically. For example, in *Star Wars II: Attack of the Clones*, the young Jedi knight Obi-Wan Kenobi consults with Madame Jocasta Nu, the resident archivist of the Archives Library at the Jedi Temple about the existence of a planetary system called Kamino. When Obi-Wan questions the incompleteness of the archives – since he cannot find the planet he is looking for – Madame Jocasta is obviously offended, responding: “The archives are comprehensive and totally secure, my young Jedi. One thing you may be absolutely sure of: if an item does not appear in our records, it does not exist!” Of course, the Jedi is ultimately proved right, since the force is with him. However, the authority of the archive is still unchallengeable! Why does the archive have so much power even for a Jedi knight? What do visibility and invisibility mean in relation to an archive?

Advertising ephemera provides the conditions for thinking about modern phenomena in a way that no other source can. Advertising ephemera break free of their origins to become an integral element of all consumer cultures shaping modern physical, emotional, and intellectual environments. Advertising and the industries that produce it give intellectual historians unique conditions for considering the content of thinking in relation to the conditions of thought, two important categories in our study. For instance, vernacular or popular theories about modern Chinese society were literally made visible in advertising images and thus formed the conditions where abstract thinking made perfect sense.¹

For example, in the late nineteenth century thousands of industrially-produced consumer items flooded into extraterritorially-governed, internationally regulated, Chinese treaty port cities. Transnational and international companies headquartered in other nations – e.g., the United Kingdom, the United States, Japan, Germany, France, Italy and Russia – sought Chinese markets for their goods and services. Foreign commodities were real products, but they also formed the backbone of the new, urban, popular consumer culture, and laid the foundation for the modern urban spectacle. Corporations advertised their products widely. The advertising

industry insinuated commodity brands and branding techniques into everyday life, and these commodity images came to be the paramount symbol of civilized urban life.

In order for an advertisement to become meaningful, it must be presented visually for the possibility of elaboration, based on the texts and images of advertisements. This makes the archive – especially online archives of advertisements – necessary to help the scholar obtain a close reading of ad images.

This short essay will investigate the state of the archive of advertising in China, beginning with the ideas of archive in the past decades and the pragmatic particularity of archives in China. The digital resources of advertising studies can be categorized in three ways: 1) databases of advertisements (or materials including advertisements); 2) websites of advertising history or other materials, and 3) academic resources for advertising studies. What all three share in common is that most of them are not research-oriented databases specializing in advertisements, but rather digital collections with very limited bibliographic information. The absence of any systematic collection of ad images, lack of fully-annotated metadata and any in-depth analysis of ad content, especially of the period of Republic of China, render these databases nearly useless to scholars pursuing academic research. The underlying reason can be found in the tension between over-commercialization and less academic participation in the database building process.

The “Archive” Story in China

A quick survey of the scholarly discourses on “the archive” over the past few decades shows that the concept has been thought and rethought by archivists and theorists from outside professional archive sciences or practices. Rather than emphasizing the traditional definition of archival documents as produced naturally or “naturally collected,” theorists such as Foucault and Derrida describe the crucial characteristic of archives in a different way than that usually shared by other historians. To borrow terms from Foucault’s discourse of genealogy, the archive is a collection of traces of materials from specific historical and cultural periods, which leads the subjective deduction of the epistème and the historical *a priori* of the period. To Derrida, the archivist, guardian and interpreter has a kind of natural hermeneutic power, not simply a taxonomic power. In this way, those who lead the hermeneutic discourse and the context surrounding the creation of the archive become the key to our understanding of archival documents. It is no surprise that historians value “archive stories:”

Our emphasis on the need for archive stories—narratives about how archives are created, drawn upon, and experienced by those who use them to write history—follows in the first instance from a move in the Western

academy (and also beyond it) to recognize that all archives are “figured.” That is, they all have dynamic relationships, not just to the past and the present, but to the fate of regimes, the physical environment, the serendipity of bureaucrats, and the care and neglect of archivists as well.²

All archives are “figured.” The meaning of the archive is more complicated. In China, the archive has a political meaning: as a result of activities conducted by the body producing them during socialist periods, the archive is more connected to personal identity, bureaucratic records and institutional documents than it is to historical authenticity. Every citizen generates archival documents to which the citizen her/himself is not allowed access, but only the collective unit – that is, one’s employer or residence committee. Meanwhile, the historical archives of cities or public organizations are hard to access. Additionally, archives offer variously limited ways of accessing documents, from read-only access in a reading room, to acquiring copies or taking photos. Libraries and archives are two distinct systems so it is very rare to see the term archive used by libraries, even for online resources. Librarians prefer using “database” (数据库) or “resource collection” (资源库), terms which utilize an entirely different internal logic than “archive,” to name resources that fit the definition of an archive. This further increases the difficulty for Western scholars to identify and utilize the archives of advertisements in China.

My use of Derrida’s theory here is to indicate the theoretical context of “archive” in China. When scholars – especially those outside of China – look for “the archive” (literally “档案” in Chinese), they can’t find the results they want because “archive” in China has a different meaning than the English term.

Advertisements in the modern sense first appeared in China during the late Qing dynasty. Ever since the first commercial advertisement was published in 1857 in 香港船头货价纸, a Chinese-language supplement of the *Daily Press* (孖刺报) in Hong Kong, advertising has only increased in popularity in China. Roswell Sessoms Britton (白瑞华) described the development of advertisements in *The Chinese Periodical Press, 1800-1912* as follows:

The earlier newspapers which, like the Shun Pao, were designed to earn profits did solicit advertisements but got modest returns. For years, the mainstays of the daily advertising columns were the large foreign businesses, the shipping and insurance companies at first, and later the oil, tobacco, liquor and patent medicine companies. Advertising rates long remained a métier of bargaining... Medical advertising, covering quack doctors and generalists, philters and patent medicine, became the largest classification. Advertising agencies began to develop some years after the revolution, and a degree of uniformity and system gradually entered. By 1930 patent medicine advertisements had begun to lose the lead.³

That's why the richest historical resources of advertisements often can be found in the databases of Republican-era (1912-1949) materials. Also, ephemeral materials like advertisements weren't the objective of these collections, so there was no tradition of collecting them until recently. It is for these reasons that the Republican period is the usual focus of studies of history of advertising in China, and that is why this essay will mainly stress that period, as well.

Three kinds of the online resources of advertisements

The online resources related to advertising researched can be categorized as follows.

1. Databases of advertisements or materials including advertisements

“Old Trademarks and Old Advertisements” Database (“老商標老廣告”數據庫)

Website: <http://www2.jslib.org.cn/was5/web/lsbindex.htm>

The only database named for its advertisements was created by a public library in Nanjing, the capital of the Republic of China from 1927 to 1937, during the “Golden Age” of the first half of twentieth century.⁴ The database collected 635 JPEG images at a resolution sufficient for web browsing. Ads are sorted into categories like “textiles and clothes,” “food, cigarettes and wine,” “medicine,” “daily necessities and chemical products,” “folk products,” “commercial services” and “mechanical products.” Most of the entries include the information of “name,” “category (trademark or ad)” and “producer.” But there are also some obvious mistakes: For example, the Three Castles Cigarette (大炮台) ad is mis-labeled as Embassy Cigarette (使館牌香烟), and one contemporary Kodak ad is included in the database. So the user should be careful when using this resource.

Late Qing Dynasty Periodical Full-text Database (1833-1911) (晚清期刊全文数据库) and Chinese Periodical Full-text Database (1911-1949) (民国时期期刊全文数据库)

These two major databases contain historical documents published in the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century. Both of them were produced by the Shanghai Library. The Late Qing Database covers approximately 280,000 articles published in 302 Chinese-language periodicals between 1833 and 1911 in China; the Chinese periodical database covers around 10,000,000 pieces of writing in over 25,000 different kinds of periodicals published between 1911 and 1949. These two databases are well known for their significant academic and historical value. Although they are billed as full-text databases, their search capabilities only *support* full-text searches, since PDFs of the texts – rather than the texts themselves – are embedded into the webpage frame, and the PDF files must be

downloaded to view them. When users search using the keywords of title, author, year, full-text etc., they get results with only limited cataloging information, such as “cataloging number,” “title,” “author,” periodical name,” “year, volume, page,” “index number” and “microfilm number,” and either a download link to the PDF file or a request link for the librarian. Most importantly, not all search results include PDF files. Even so, scholars still can find a lot of useful files containing advertisements or articles about advertisements.

Figure 1. Main page of database



Figure 1.1 Ad for Huamei electric device



Figure 2. Search results for “广告” in the two databases



Figure 3. “奴痛：河内博覽會廣告文” including a download link



Figure 4. Item of “開幕廣告” having a request link

Dacheng Old Periodical Full-text Database (大成老旧刊全文数据库) and Database of Dacheng Old Papers (大成故纸堆)

These two databases were developed by Beijing Shangpin Dacheng Data Technology Company, and are widely available at many public libraries. The Dacheng Old Periodical Full-text Database is similar to the database developed by the Shanghai Library. This database contains more than 2,200,000 articles from 7,000 journals, and are categorized into twenty-one subject areas, including “philosophy,” “economics,” “politics,” “military,” “agriculture,” “transportation,” “history and geography,” “astronomy” and “medicine.” The Database of Dacheng Old Papers is a search platform including multiple databases of books, periodicals, *Shenbao*, *Shuntian Times*, and the history of CCP. The most distinguished feature is all images are scanned from the original documents

so the resolution is adequate for publishing. Like the Shanghai Library databases, “full-text” here means that full-text searches are supported, and files can be downloaded.

Figure 5. Cross-search engine



Figure 6. Searching for “advertisement (广告)” in the Dacheng database



Shenbao Database (申报)

As one of the most important newspapers during the Republic of China period, *Shenbao* has been digitized and developed as a database a number of times by different commercial companies. Three companies, the Green Apple Company (青苹果), Beijing Erudition Digital Technology Research Center (爱如生) and Hytung (瀚堂) have released *Shenbao*

databases. For research purposes, the *Shenbao* Database developed by Erudition is the most useful, since it provides the stand-alone version for Windows, the full text of reports and the most of text from advertisements. “Advertisements” is a separate category in this database.

Figure 7. Browser of database and texts are presented alongside image of original



Figure 8. The full-text search page



2. Websites of advertising history or other materials

Advertising Museum of China (中国广告博物馆)

Website: <http://www.admuseum.cn>

This is a website of a Chinese advertisement museum, the Advertising Museum of China, founded in 2000 in Shenyang by Zhao Chen, a professor in the Art School at Northwestern University. This museum's collection includes more than 5,000 items, printed advertisements, wooden advertising signs⁵ and research documents. Some samples of the printed ads and photos of wood advertisements are displayed on the website as well as brief introductions to Chinese advertising history and significant individuals involved in the advertising industry.

Figure 9. Main page of website for Advertising Museum of China



3. Academic resources on advertising studies

China Knowledge Resource Integrated Database (CNKI) (中国知网资源库)

CNKI provides access to the China Academic Journals Full-text Database, the China Doctoral Dissertations Full-text Database, and the Masters Theses Full-text Database. All items are in Chinese but support searches in English. This is also the most popular database of academic papers in Chinese. In addition to providing papers in both PDF and CAJ formats, CNKI has additional function of analysis of references. For example, if running a general search for "广告," the researcher can get both a list of search results, as well as a graphic statistical analysis of their content. Another sub-database helpful for studies of contemporary advertising is the Statistical Database of Chinese Economic and Social Development. This database provides annual statistical reports of the advertising business on both a city- and nation-wide scale, and can be exported in Excel spreadsheet format.

Figure 10. Graph of cross-references among 20 papers using keyword “广告”

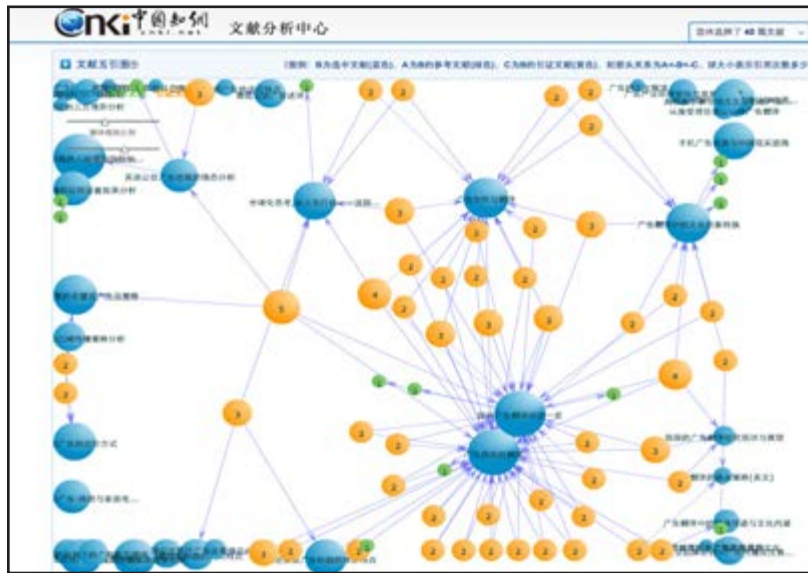
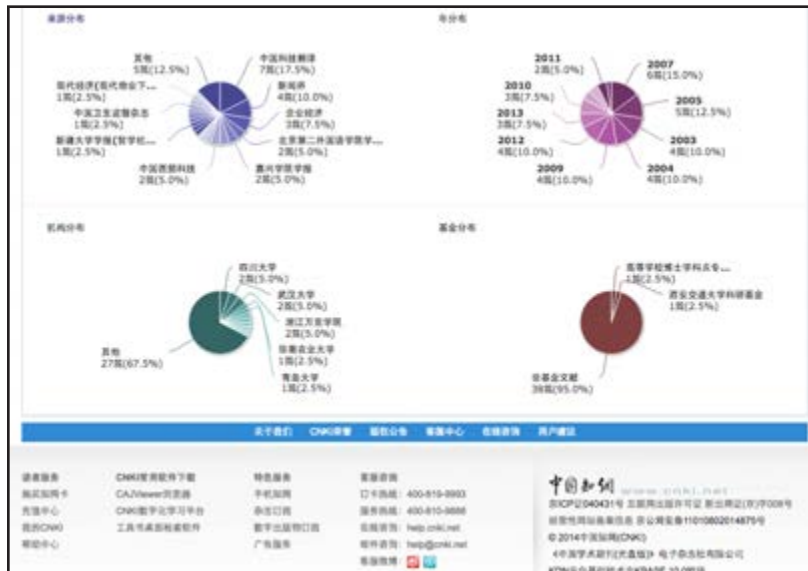
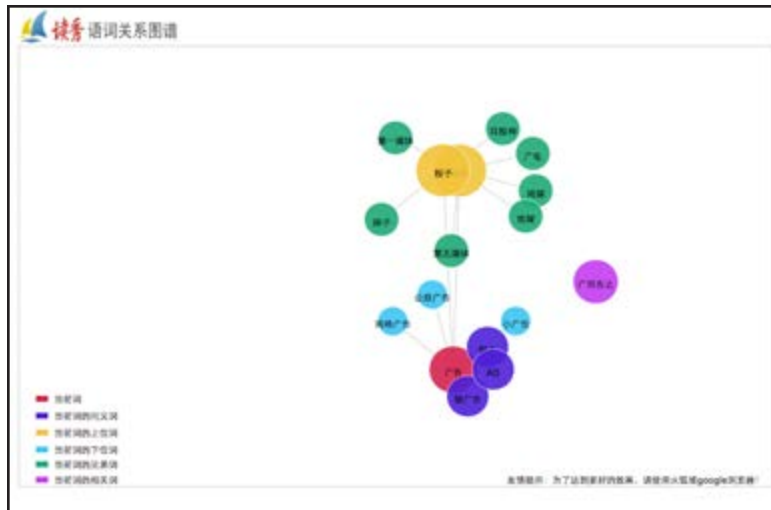


Figure 11. Graph of statistical analysis of bibliographic information



Duxiu (读秀中文学术搜索)

Similar to CNKI, Duxiu is a one-site, full-text search platform to more than 4.3 million books, as well as journal articles, conference papers and video clips on all subjects dating from the early 1930s to the present. Beside providing electronic books that were excluded from CNKI, Duxiu also provides the statistical analysis of relationship of companies appearing in articles including those written about advertisements. Readers can use the tool to get a general sense of scholarly studies on advertisements in China.

Figure 12. Graph analyzing the statistical relationship of “广告” and related terms in the database

Stories behind the archives

The archives listed here are some typical examples that tell the story of advertising studies in Mainland China. Most of them are not research-oriented databases specializing in advertisements but rather digital collections with very limited bibliographic information. The absence of any systemic collection of ad images, fully-annotated metadata and deeper analysis of ad content – especially that of the Republican period – render many databases very difficult to use for academic research purposes. This is the visible story we find in an investigation of these archives. But they also reveal some invisible stories behind the archives, which only become visible once researchers get their hands dirty with the reality of collecting, digitizing and annotating these records. In the case of newspaper advertisements, for example, even digitizing and archiving historical materials, like newspaper advertisements, has been a routine process at libraries, archival organizations, research institutes and companies. However, in terms of Chinese newspaper advertisements, access to archival resources is not as convenient for researchers as one might suppose. First, not all newspapers published during the Modern China period have been digitized, which means the researcher must still visit those archives to access a newspaper’s physical materials in the form of microfilms or photocopies. In case of CCAA, *Hankou Times* (汉口中西报) are preserved as microfilm at the Shanghai Library and the Peking University Library. Each library has about 10 years’ worth of newspapers but none of them have been digitized, which requires the researcher to browse each and every roll of microfilm to determine the quality of microfilm and its preservation status in order to decide whether those microfilms are good enough to be digitized. Meanwhile, of the newspapers which are digitized, not all are accessible online. For example, *Shengjing Shibao* has

been digitized but since there is no online access, readers can only use it in the library. Secondly, some important newspapers haven't been digitized repeatedly but user access is limited by high fees. Although *Shenbao* has been digitized by Green Apple Company, Beijing Erudition Digital Technology Research Center and Hytung respectively, all three databases charge high access fees; even users with affiliation to an institution that has purchased the database are only allowed to use the database at the institution's specific locations, like on campus or inside the library. Also due to the high cost of annotating images of advertisements, companies building databases of advertisements don't give a lot of attention to ads. Another reason is that advertisements are not considered as important as news. Thus it is rare to find any information about advertisements beside their title and date – which becomes an obstacle for any researcher who wants to use such information in their research. An exception is *Shenbao* Database of Beijing Erudition Digital Technology Research Center, where the texts of advertisements are partly transcribed, but can't be used for research without permission.

Another story that informs the shape of the archives is the tension between the power of commerce and academics. While research-oriented projects are generally directed by researchers, usually the best and fastest way for researchers to develop a digital project is to win a grant from the national or provincial government – but only a few of them are successful. Besides the Chinese government, only commercial companies can invest in digital projects, as they result in a commercialized database at the end. Understandably, the result of commercialization is less innovation, as companies are mainly interested in recovering their investment as quickly as possible. However, it also causes duplication of effort and wasted time, labor and money. *Shenbao* database is a good case: while there are already several databases of *Shenbao*, none of them has fully annotated all the contents of newspapers including advertisements. At the same time, *Dagong bao* (大公报) and *Shengjing Shibao* (盛京时报) haven't been digitized and built as databases at all. Such unbalanced development is the bane of researchers interested in utilizing advertising-related resources.

From Image to Text

Investigating the archives of advertisements in China is not easy work. But in recent decades, the trend is to look down to the level of images embedded within advertisements published on posters, newspapers, journals, books and other printed materials. Scholars are increasingly realizing the power of images. Images, more generally, an increasingly extensive and diverse visual culture, have been considered as a significant spectacle of (post) modern society, as symbolized and summarized in theory as the “pictorial turn” by W. J. T. Mitchell in 1992. Visual elements

in advertisements (trademark, icon, feature, photo and color) and the embodied media of ads (newspapers, posters, magazines, calendars) have become the focus of studies on Modern China. For example, Chen Pingyuan focuses on the pictorials in late Qing Dynasty – especially *Dian Shi Zhai* – finding that there was an alliance between the Chinese tradition of “image on the left and history on the right” (左图右史) and the western influence of “image narrative,” which emerged from the modernization process that is recognized as Enlightenment. Barbara Mittler approaches the crucial issue of “visual modernity” in Chinese cities: in modern Shanghai, for example, through Chinese women’s magazines and advertisements. Christian Henriot addresses the question of how photography and photos, a modern visual technology and form, shape the image of Modern China; Karl Gerth profoundly investigates the relationship between the visual myth-making process and the enhancement of political identity of nationality. While Tani Barlow’s articles reveal and elaborate upon the parallel connection among advertisement ephemera, the Modern Girl icon and vernacular society in Modern China. However, in order to make images speak or make images meaningful, the first step is describing and elaborating the images within the system of linguistic symbols used for historical narrative – that is, language. The meanings of ads – especially of ad images – are fulfilled and decided by language. Nonetheless, images should be regarded as independent objects of historical study just as important as texts.

Notes

1. Barlow, Tani. 2012. “Advertising Ephemera and the Angel of History,” *positions: asia critique*, 20: 111-158.
2. Burton, Antoinette, eds. *Archive Stories: Facts, Fictions, and the Writing of History*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2006.
3. 白瑞华著，王海译。2011。中国报纸（1800-1912）。广州：暨南大学出版社。
4. See Marie-Claire Bergère, *The Golden Age of the Chinese Bourgeoisie 1911–1937*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.
5. In ancient China, stores hung a wooden board with a sign or symbol in front as a means of communicating what kinds of goods were sold there.