

READING SHENBAO

NATIONALISM, CONSUMERISM AND INDIVIDUALITY IN CHINA, 1919-37

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Reading *Shenbao*

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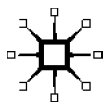
Reading *Shenbao*

Nationalism, Consumerism and Individuality in China 1919–37

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獻給我的父母: 蔡榮燦先生, 蔡黃清綉女士

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Glossary

- Ah Q 阿 Q
Ah yi 阿姨
Ah Ying 阿英
an rou Taishan 安如泰山
baifan pai 裨販派
Beiqiao 北橋
benfu zengkan 本阜增刊
biaoyu pai 標語派
Cao Juren 曹聚仁
Chang Kia-ngau 張嘉璈
Chenbao 晨報
changshi 常識
Chen Binhe 陳彬龢
Chen Cunren 陳存仁
Chen Diexian 陳蝶仙
Chen Duxiu 陳獨秀
Cheng Fangwu 成仿吾
Chen Guangfu 陳光甫
Chen Jinghan 陳景韓
Chen Leng 陳冷
Chenlun 沉淪
Chen Wangdao 陳望道
Chen Zizhan 陳子展
chi 恥
chou yaoshui 臭藥水
Chunqiu 春秋
chuxu 儲蓄
chuxuge 儲蓄歌
chuxuhe 儲蓄盒
Chuxu yinhangfa caoan 儲蓄銀行法草
Chuxu yinhang zeli 儲蓄銀行則例
cijili baifenzhibai 刺激力百分之百
Cui Hao 崔灝
Dagongbao 大公報
Dalu shangchang 大陸商場
dangpu 當舖
dazhong 大眾
dazhong hua 大眾化
Deng Zhongxia 鄧中夏
Dianshizhai huabao 點石齋畫報
Dongfang zazhi 東方雜誌
Dongsheng 冬生
doufujian 豆腐漿

duba Shanghai 獨霸上海

du shan qi shen 獨善其身

Dushu yuekan 讀書月刊

Duzhe guwen 讀者顧問

Duzhe tongxun 讀者通訊

Du Zhongyuan 杜重遠

er 耳

Ershiyi tiaokuan guochi wushengke 二十一條款國恥五聲歌

fangjin qi 方巾氣

fengcheng nüzi 風塵女子

fengyue 風月

fu hao 符號

funü 婦女

Funü zazhi 婦女雜誌

Fuxin 福新

Fu Sinian 傅斯年

gainian gongju 概念工具

gaizao 改造

ganshang pai 感傷派

Ge Gongzhen 戈公振

geren 個人

geren zhuyi yishi 個人主義意識

gexing 個性

gong 公

gongde 公德

gonggong kongjian 公共空間

gonggong lingyu 公共領域

gongji pai 攻擊派

gongli pai 功利派

gongmin shehui 公民社會

gongyi meishu 工藝美術

gongyü 公寓

guanli jiaoshi zhi fu 管理家事之婦

guan yinhao 官銀號

Guben 固本

Gu Fengcheng 顧鳳城

guniang 姑娘

guochi 國恥

Guohua yanco gongsi 國華煙草公司

guohuo 國貨

guohuo dianshan shengguo bolai 國貨電扇勝過舶來

guomin 國民

Guo Ming 郭明

Guo Moruo 郭沫若

Guyuan 谷遠

Huanghe lou 黃鶴樓

Huang Yanpei 黃炎培

Huang Yuansheng 黃遠生

Huasheng dianshan 華勝電扇

- huayuan tun* 花園屯
Hu Hanzhu 胡憨珠
Hubu yinhang 戶部銀行
Hunren 渾人
huoli 活力
huoqi cunkuan 活期存款
Hu Qiuyuan 胡秋原
Hu Yuzhi 胡愈之
Jiande chuxuhui 儉德儲蓄會
Jiang Baili 蔣百里
jiantou hang 薦頭行
Jian Zhaonan 簡照南
Jiating gongyeshe 家庭工業社
Jiating rixinhui 家庭日新會
Jilian huikan 機聯會刊
jimao 雞毛
Jincheng yinhang 金城銀行
jingpai 京派
jinqian 金錢
Jin Yi 金一
ji suo bu yu wu shi yu ren 己所不欲勿施於人
jiuguo 救國
Juanzi 娟子
juewu 覺悟
kaitian pidi 開天闢地
Kang Youwei 康有為
kechi 可恥
Kong Lingjing 孔另境
Kuaile jiating 快樂家庭
kuangre pai 狂熱派
Lang Shu 朗述
laopai xiangyan 老牌香煙
Lao She 老舍
li 理
Liang Qichao 梁啟超
Liangyou huabao 良友畫報
Li Gongpu 李公樸
lingcun zhengfu 零存整付
lingxing cunkuan 零星存款
liquan 利權
liquan cunkuan 禮券存款
Li Liewen 黎烈文
Liang Qichao 梁啟超
laomazi 老媽子
liangqi 良妻
Liang Shih-chiu 梁實秋
Liao Mosha 廖沫沙
Lin Yutang 林語堂
Li Zhaobei 李昭北

- Ling Lung 玲瓏
Liu Bannong 劉半農
Liu Naou 劉訥鷗
liupai 流派
liutong tushuguan 流通圖書館
Lunyü 論語
Lu Xun 魯迅
Maocheng ji 貓城記
Mao Dun 茅盾
Maoxin 茂新
Ma Yinchu 馬寅初
meijun 徽菌
Meishu shenghuo 美術生活
meiwen 美文
Miao Cheng Shuyi 繆程淑儀
minzuzhuyi wenxue 民族主義文學
modeng 摩登
modeng nülang 摩登女郎
Mu Shiyong 穆時英
Nanqiao 南橋
Nanshi 南市
nanxing 男性
Nanyang xiongdi yancao gongsi 南洋兄弟煙草公司
neiren 內人
Nie Gannu 聶紺弩
Nie Yuntai 聶雲臺
nǚxing 女性
Nǚzi shijie 女子世界
Pan Yangyao 潘仰堯
Pan Yangmang 潘仰莽
Pan Wenshan 潘文山
pianji pai 偏激派
piaozhuang 票莊
pingdeng 平等
putong zhishi 普通知識
Qian Xingcun 錢杏邨
Qian Xinzhi 錢新之
Qian Xibo 錢昕伯
Qian Zheng 錢徵
qianzhuang 錢莊
Qinghua xuebao 清華學報
qipao 旗袍
Qishierhang shangbao 七十二行商報
qizi 妻子
quan 權
quanli 權利
Quan zhichi ge 勸知恥歌
Qu Qiubai 瞿秋白
Qu Shiying 瞿世英

- ren* 仁
Renjianshi 人間世
renmin de shehui yishi 人民的社會意識
renqing 人情
Renyan zhoukan 人言周刊
Riyong zazi 日用雜字
Sanguo yanyi 三國演義
sanwen xiaopin 散文小品
Shanghai jizhi guohuo gongchang lianhehui 上海機制國貨工廠聯合會
Shanghai shangke daxue 上海商科大学
Shanghai shangye chuxu yinhang 上海商業儲蓄銀行
Shanghai Tongji chuxuhui 上海同濟儲蓄會
shangliu shehui 上流社會
Shangwu yinshuguan 商務印書館
shangye changshi 商業常識
Shao Piaoping 邵飄萍
Shao Xunmei 邵洵美
Shenbao 申報
Shenbao guohuo zhoukan 申報國貨週刊
Shenbao guohuo zhuankan 申報國貨專刊
shehuifu 社會福
shenghuo hua 生活化
Shenghuo zhoukan 生活週刊
shenjia 身價
Shen Lianqi 沈亮燊
Shen Gangfu 沈剛甫
Shibao 時報
shigu 事故
Shi Liangcai 史量才
shikumen 石庫門
shimin shehui 市民社會
shimao 時髦
Shishi xinbao 時事新報
shixin de 時新的
shikuan 時款
shiyang 時樣
shiyong hua 實用化
Shi Zhecun 施蜚存
Shueihuzhuan 水滸傳
Sihang chuxuhui 四行儲蓄會
Siming chuxuhui 四明儲蓄會
Simmons 席夢思
si you zhongyu Taishan huo qingyu hongmao 死有重於泰山或輕於鴻毛
Song Hanzhang 宋漢章
Sun Fuyuan 孫伏園
Su Wen 蘇汶
Taishan 泰山
taimai 太太
Taiyang she 太陽社

- Tang Jun 唐雋
Tang Tao 唐弢
Tang Yulin 湯玉麟
Tao Xingzhi 陶行知
Tao Xisheng 陶希聖
tezhong dingqi 特種定期
tezhong fenqi 特種分期
tezhong huoqi 特種活期
tezhong xingqi cunkuan 特種星期存款
tianran zhishi 天然知識
tianzhi 天職
tichang 提倡
Tichang guohuo ge 提倡國貨歌
Tilanqiao 提籃橋
tuipei pai 頹廢派
Wang Dungen 王鈍根
Wang Zhixin 王志莘
Wanguo chuxuhui 萬國儲蓄會
wanhui liquan 挽回利權
waiguo 外國
waihuo 外貨
Wangping 望平
weimei pai 唯美派
weisheng 衛生
weisheng yungdonghui 衛生運動會
Wentan denglongshu 文壇登龍術
Wen Tianxiang 文天祥
Wing On 永安
Wode chuxu jihua 我的儲蓄計劃
Wu Jingsong 吳景崧
Wu Kaixian 吳開先
Wu Tiecheng 吳鐵城
Wu Xiangyu 吳向隅
Wu Xizhai 吳習齋
Wu Yifang 吳貽芳
Xiafeifang 霞飛坊
xiaji pingmin 下級平民
xiaopin sanwen 小品散文
xiandai 現代
Xiandai shiliujia xiaopin 現代十六家小品
Xiandai zazhi 現代雜誌
Xiangzi 祥子
xianqiao pai 纖巧派
xianqi liangmu 賢妻良母
xianmu 賢母
Xianshi 先施
Xianzai shiye yiban 現在事業一般
xiaobao 小報
xiaofeizhe 消費者

xiaojie 小姐
xiaopinwen 小品文
xiao shimin 小市民
xiao yatou 小丫頭
Xie Bingying 謝冰瑩
xieshi wenxue 寫實文學
Xie Yunyi 謝雲翼
Xilou 息樓
xin 心
Xinchao 新潮
xin ganjue pai 新感覺派
Xincheng yinhang 信成銀行
Xinhua yinhang 新華銀行
xinmin 新民
Xinyi yinhang 信義銀行
Xinmin shuo 新民說
Xin Qingnian 新青年
xinshi zhuzhai 新式住宅
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Zhanquan 湛泉
Zhang Taiyan 章太炎
Zhang Yuanji 張元濟
Zhang Zhuping 張竹平
zhanshi cunkuan 暫時存款
Zhao Fengchang 趙風昌
Zhao Jiabi 趙家璧
Zhe An 哲安
Zhejiang xingye yinhang 浙江興業銀行
zhengcun zhengfu 整存整付
zhengcun zhixi 整存支息
Zheng Zhenduo 鄭振鐸
Zhili 致立
Zhongfa chuxuhui 中法儲蓄會
Zhongguo guohuo chanxiao xiehui 中國國貨產銷協會
Zhongguo guohuo gongsi 中國國貨公司
Zhonghua guohuo weichihui 中國國貨維持會
Zhongguo neiyi gongsi 中國內衣公司
Zhongguo tongmenghui 中國同盟會
Zhongguo tongshang yinhang 中國通商銀行
Zhongguo zhi chuxu yinhangshi 中國之儲蓄銀行史
Zhongguo zhonghe yancao gongsi 中國中和煙草公司
Zhonghua jiande chuxuhui 中華儉德儲蓄會
Zhonghua zhiye jiaoyushe 中華職業教育社
Zhonghua zhiye xuexiao 中華職業學校
Zhongnan yancao gongsi 中南煙草公司
Zhongnan yinhang 中南銀行
Zhongxibao 中西報
Zhongxi dayaofang 中西大藥房
Zhongyang yinhang 中央銀行

Zhongying da yaofang 中英大藥房
Zhou Qiying 周起應
Zhou Shoujuan 周瘦鵑
Zhou Tingbi 周廷弼
Zhou Yang 周揚
Zhou Zuoren 周作人
zhuangpiao 莊票
zhufu 主婦
Zhufu de riji 主婦的日記
Zhuo Jun 卓君
Zhu Wang Wanqing 朱王浣青
zhuyi pai 主義派
Ziyoushen 自由神
Ziyoutan 自由談
ziwo 自我
zizun 自尊
Zou Taofen 鄒韜奮

Introduction

Consumers, communities, individuals: a new readership for a new China

To live in Shanghai in the 1920s and early 1930s was to inhabit an era in which, as the title of Cole Porter's famous musical put it, 'Anything Goes'. This chaotic era, the humor, satire and irony of which was so brilliantly captured in the musical, gave rise to a distinctive style commonly found in China as well as Western countries at this time – Art Deco. Similarly, issues such as the crash in the stock market, the beginning of the Depression, changes in banking, marriage, religion, personal beliefs, and loyalty to society and tradition, were just as urgent themes in rapidly modernizing China as they were in America, and were particularly hotly discussed in Shanghai.

Recently, scholarly attention has moved from politics to the material sphere of ordinary life, and from nationalism as an isolated phenomenon to its interaction with consumerism and personal interests. Indeed, the study of material life and the history of urban populations has seen a shift in emphasis, becoming increasingly conducted within the larger context of Chinese modernization, one of the most significant trends in recent historiography. Against this scholarly background, this book examines the conflicts, challenges and opportunities generated through the encounter between nationalism and commercialism, impacting on individuals and wider society, alongside the conceptual transformations which accompanied the huge changes in material life which took place during this period. This is explored through the experiences and concerns of the readership of *Shenbao*, Shanghai's largest, most important and longest-running newspaper throughout this period.

This book also explores how these readers responded to the image of Chinese modernity which was built up through the information they received by reading *Shenbao*. By doing so, this will further allow us to understand how Chinese people, or at least *Shenbao's* readers, participated in this process of modernization, giving us the ability to observe Chinese modernization from multiple aspects: individually and collectively, materially and conceptually.

In the Chinese context, this task of mapping includes treating changing understanding and practices in both concepts of individuality and the living of daily life as sequences of reactions to changes in the wider world. China as a nation reacted to the world, and Chinese people reacted to China's changes. During these two decades, the Chinese nation kept one foot in the camp of tradition, but the other was planted firmly in the modern era. The book explores this ambivalent response through an examination of the phenomenon of individuality as it manifested itself in the readership of *Shenbao*.

Shenbao was established in 1872 by an Englishman, Ernest Major (1841–1908), but in 1909 passed into Chinese ownership under Xi Zipei (1867–1929); in 1912, Shi Liangcai (1880–1934) became the largest shareholder. Its broad editorial policy won it a wide circulation and loyal readership, and rendered it one of the most influential newspapers of the day. The diverse range of news and other content in *Shenbao*, including politics, economics, social news, education, international news, local news, several scientific columns, and literature, has established its importance as a useful source in historical studies.¹ Yet the question of its readership has, up until now, been little studied. In order to gain an understanding of the relationships between *Shenbao's* readership and everyday life in modern China, this book looks at the commodities and products advertised in the newspaper. These include cigarettes, personal banking accounts, and hygiene-related products, as well as other household goods. The role of the newspaper in the dissemination of new forms of knowledge, for example in the form of feature articles on home economics, reflecting the emergence of the modern housewife, is also discussed, while an exploration of *Shenbao's* literature columns and readers' letters helps us form a picture of how *Shenbao* built up and sustained its relationship with its readers, an important element of its overall business approach.

Business history has lately become an important area of Chinese studies. The study of those aspects of business that involve relationships between material culture and daily life not only allow historians to understand the shifting human environment, but also mental

responses to change. For example, by looking at the sale of cigarettes and matches, Sherman Cochran demonstrates how modern products arrived in China with the Western powers, and penetrated Chinese markets.² In studying how these businesses were built up, Cochran raises important issues ranging from the conflict between Chinese governments and foreigners, to Chinese merchants, tariffs, modernization, nationalism, and international political relations.

Beyond this strict focus on commerce, many scholars have explored the material element of Chinese modern history. Two good examples are Susan L. Glosser's study of milk, then an essentially new product in China, and Carlton Bacon's work on how radio affected Shanghai's commercial life.³ Both Glosser and Bacon show how changes in urban dwellers' lifestyles were related to the growth of general knowledge surrounding or generated by such new products. They also point out that the popularity of new products had a strong relation to the rise of the nuclear family. Of course, this phenomenon is also linked to the growth of consumer knowledge, a burgeoning mass media, and the ever-increasing importance of capitalist economics. Wen-hsin Yeh and Carrie Waara stress how commercial culture shaped Chinese modernity, in tandem with nationalism and the increasing scope for the expression of individual taste in daily life.⁴ Taking this new scholarship as its starting point, the intention in this book is to move the discourse forward by delving deeper into the emergence of a new concept of the individuality of the modern consumer, developed around the ideas of privacy, material life, and personal interests.

In turn, as we shall explore in the following chapters, this commercial and consumerist form of individuality was also strongly connected with the rise and practice of nationalism. Aspects of this relationship have previously been commented on, but it has only recently begun to be explored in depth, for example in Karl Gerth's *China Made: Consumer Culture and the Creation of the Nation*.⁵ In this study of the connection between consumerism and nationalism, Gerth demonstrates how, on the one hand, Chinese businessmen and pressure groups worked to transform consumption into a nationalist and patriotic issue, while on the other, the Chinese national product movement was itself tailored to fit in with a modern image of a consumer lifestyle through the tools of marketing and advertising. Gerth concludes that 'A weak sense of national identity among the vast majority of Chinese customers who evaluated their interests also in terms of themselves, their families, lineages, communities, and regions, made sacrificing on behalf of the nation difficult, even unthinkable.'⁶

Gerth demonstrates that through national product campaigns, a concept of citizenship became established, and the individual was drawn into the framework of the whole community. Gerth admits that from one point of view the national product movement can easily be interpreted as a 'dramatic failure'. Nevertheless, the movement 'insinuated nationalism into countless aspects of China's nascent consumer culture', and was an exercise in ideological education for the general public.⁷

Similar efforts in creating collective knowledge supporting Chinese modernization as a pre-requisite for national salvation can be found in other activities, many imposed by the various authorities, such as hygiene education and military-style training in schools.⁸ In her study on the making of modern Chinese citizens during the Republican era, Henrietta Harrison illustrates how China unified her people by unifying fashion, textbooks, ceremonies, and other symbols of the whole nation.⁹ Examining these movements, it is very clear that the tension between individual and community cannot be avoided, but beyond the obvious conflict, it is apparent that these two dimensions co-exist in a more complex, vibrant and elastic relationship than first impressions might suggest.

On the question of individuality and civil society

The concept of individual is the focus of this book, paying particular attention to shifting ideas of individuality that emerged in the conflict between tradition and modernity. When early twentieth-century Chinese intellectuals talked about the idea of individuality, many emphasized the release of the 'person' from family, tradition, discipline, and society. The idea of egalitarianism (*pingdeng*), the fundamental principle of this new equality, was the realization that each individual had his own qualities and personality that could not be constrained by the hierarchy of 'feudal' ethical codes. In this regard, modernity for the Chinese overlapped with the emancipation of the individual personality from tradition. Although political 'individualism' was introduced into China alongside many other Western notions, the 'individuality' this book is concerned with was not a simple reflection of this importation. Rather, these pages seek to examine how *Shenbao* readers developed their individuality in reaction to indigenous conflicts between tradition and modernity, and between nationalism and consumerism, which were not necessarily related to specifically political doctrines. In other words, it is concerned with how individuals reacted to the novelty of modernity in ways not provided for by tradition.

The use of the term 'individuality' also avoids confusion with Lydia Liu's observations about the retreat from 'individualism' during the mid-1920s and early 1930s.¹⁰ Liu's book *Translingual Practice* looks at the shifting meaning of individualism in its historical context from the 1910s to the early 1920s by examining three journals: *Dongfang zazhi* (Eastern Miscellany), *Xin Qingnian* (New Youth), and *Xinchao* (New Tide). Liu concludes: 'Just as the concepts themselves defy fixing, the attempt to pin down the notion of the individual or individualism in modern Chinese to one or two definitions will prove counterproductive.'¹¹ She argues that individualism was treated as a symbol of petty bourgeois capitalism and rejected by intellectuals, and that the background to this tension was a conflict between private interests and the goals of the nation. This point is discussed in detail later; for the present, it is enough to say that even if the political ideology of individualism was overshadowed by other political ideologies, using the largely apolitical term 'individuality' escapes this problem.

The idea of individuality employed in this book stresses the link with the experience of daily life. This is because the practice of daily life embraces a whole set of interactions between individuals and their environments. The understanding of the sequences of linkages between space, people, time, language, and action allows the 'individual' to come out from this complicated nexus and emerge to the surface. Moreover, the concept of individuality embraces both public and private spheres. The public and private realms of individuals in daily life, therefore, constitute a grand platform from which to comprehend social history and human conduct; and *Shenbao*, offers us one of the best resources in the period from which to study these topics.

Commercial life in Shanghai certainly reacted well to the new printing technology, and quickly used it to sell culture to the public. This phenomenon is well captured in Leo Ou-fan Lee's *Shanghai Modern*, which not only deals with the commercial scene in Shanghai, but also addresses publishing, cinemas, architecture, and literature.¹² Similarly, Yingjin Zhang and Peng Hsiao-yen offer their observations on how Shanghai printing culture was interwoven with artists' individuality in their literary works, particularly those involved in Neo-Perceptionist aesthetics.¹³ Shanghai's unique environment enabled the increased expression of individuality in the practice of daily life through the printing business. Christopher Reed's study of the printing technology and publishing business in Shanghai shows that Western printing technology was used selectively by Chinese society which already had a