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The nationalization of the hardship of travel in China, 1895–1949

Progress, hygiene and national concern

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The nineteenth century was a watershed in the history of travel. Several factors related to technical development and industrialization, among them improvements in communications and transportation, rendered travel easier and more comfortable, particularly in the more developed areas of the world. It was against this background that the travel industry was to start arranging organized tours that reached out to a large range of social groups,¹ the first ones by Thomas Cook in 1841 having been described as the ‘birth of tourism’ (in the commodified meaning of the term).² One of the consequences of this new context of travel was that for travelers from developed countries the hardship of travel came to be viewed as an unfamiliar experience that contrasted with that of travel at home. This was what happened, for instance, with a large number of the British travelers who visited China and wrote about it.³ Reactions to the hardship of travel varied greatly. Many of the foreign travelers who struggled through the difficult conditions of travel in China were vocal in complaining about them, one of the prominent aspects they mentioned being the lack of hygiene.⁴ For some, however, the hardship of travel was a source of attraction. At the height of the Grand Tour in Europe during the seventeenth century, travel writer Richard Lassels, who had greatly promoted it, wrote that travel taught the young nobleman “wholesome hardship”.⁵ By the nineteenth century, anti-“tourism” emerged as an important cultural marker of sensitivity, originality, acculturation, education and distinction,⁶ turning hard travel into an attraction for those who cherished these aspects. Joseph Conrad was to be one of those who shared a contempt for the comforts of modern travel, lamenting that the days of heroic travel with their spirit of adventure were over.⁷ In China, Westerners yearning for the hardship of travel had plenty of opportunities to experience it. Their motivations behind such a quest ranged from simple nostalgia of the past and of pre-“tourist” travel to a search for adventure, insight, authenticity and the “real China”, that they found in old sites and in the interior and that they distinguished from a “counterfeit modernity” evident especially in the treaty ports.⁸ Among Chinese nationals, in contrast, notions of hardship of travel in their own country were increasingly influenced by growing concerns about the nation. It is this process of nationalization that this chapter aims to analyze.

During the imperial period, travel had undoubtedly been a joy for many in China, as numerous tour descriptions included in travel accounts, as well as in other writings, such as Shen Fu’s *Six Records of a Floating Life*,⁹ demonstrate. It had also been particularly significant for many

literati as a means of participation in an elite culture, through the association of scenic sites with a literary tradition that alluded to them and included both printed texts and engravings carved on the landscape.¹⁰ At the same time, however, travel had often been perceived as a difficult, unpleasant enterprise, both due to the tough conditions of travel and the sense of estrangement which many travelers felt. In a letter dated 439, Bao Zhao told his sister about “the discomfort and the hardship” which he had endured during a thousand-*li* journey along the Yangtze River, and commented on how distressing it was to be a “traveller away from one’s relatives”.¹¹ In his 18 variations of the poem “Imitating ‘Travelling along the road is hard’” (*Ni xing lu nan*), he further dwelt on the topic of travel hardship, which in this case he used more broadly as a metaphor for life.¹² Chinese literature was full of references to the dislike of travel, which, as Li Chi has pointed out, were to a large extent related to the laments of exile, with roots in the misfortunes of demotion and loss of favor.¹³ Examples of this are found in the poems of Li Bai, such as “The road to Shu is hard” (*Shu dao nan*) and his own three versions of “Travelling along the road is hard” (*Xing lu nan*).¹⁴ There was certainly a psychological note behind many of the depictions of travel hardship. By 1703 Xi Youpu, the author of a foreword to an edition of Xu Xiake’s *Travel Diaries*, interpreted Liu Zongyuan’s writings about his travels in Yongzhou as doing nothing but using hills or ravines as a pretext to express frustrations in his heart and strange irascible thoughts.¹⁵ In many cases, however, descriptions of the hardship of travel were far from simple reflections of private woes. Traveling was often an ordeal of its own and many travelers alluded to the objective difficulties they had experienced in their writings. This was the case with prominent wayfarers such as Xuanzang, who stressed the dangers and complications of his journey to Central and South Asia in his *Record of the Western Region*,¹⁶ and Xu Xiake, who likewise narrated the risks, effort and hardship of travel.¹⁷ There are multiple reports of how travel seemed a dismal prospect for many in the Ming, given the dangers it involved, including coming across bandits.¹⁸ This situation continued into the Qing. Merchant manuals of this period prepared traveling merchants for the various perils of travel, and an essay titled “The Bitterness of the Traveling Merchant” included in a morality book by Shi Chengjin published between the reigns of Kangxi and Qianlong described in detail the troubles which they had to undergo.¹⁹ Naturally, certain journeys during the imperial period would have involved more hardship and been less attractive than others. Wang Anshi clearly pointed this out in his *Record of a Tour to the Mountain where Bao Meditated* of 1054. In his words, “If a place is level and near, travelers are many. If it is dangerous and far, those who reach it are few.”²⁰ Be that as it may, for both practical and cultural reasons, the notion that travel involved hardship became an ingrained element in Chinese culture, much as it was in the Western world until the nineteenth century.²¹

This perception that travel implied suffering persisted through the last years of the Qing and into the Republican period. It was present in a wide range of sources. There was repeated reference to it in general writings on travel, in travelogues, in travel guidance material and in other types of writings. A range of personal reasons might partly explain this, much as before, but the practical inconveniences of travel continued to be a reality, as well as a source of unease, especially for the wealthier urban residents who were the likeliest to travel. This is demonstrated by the recurrent reference to these practical inconveniences, as they were either described as an enduring problem in travel-related material²² or negated through reassurances regarding the convenience and comfort of traveling to specific destinations in travel guidance and advertising.²³ The unpleasantness of travel was commonplace and was therefore expected. In 1933, Ba Jin wrote that he could not stand any of the difficulties of travel and, had his friends not painstakingly prepared everything in advance for his journeys—“all sorts of conveniences”—, he would certainly not have gone to the many places described in his *Travel Notes*.²⁴ A manual for children on how to travel, published in the same year, illustrated several worries, by insisting

for instance on taking provisions – since much of the food at stops along the way would not be fresh – and on relaxing completely for one day before traveling by boat or plane, to prevent dizziness.²⁵ It did not identify hardship solely with external conditions. It recommended continuous training of the mind and body to travel, so that the journey might “not be difficult at all” and one might be able to “enjoy the happiness and pleasures of travel”.²⁶ Travel was thus viewed not as a completely natural pleasure, but as one that demanded physical and mental preparation for the challenges it imposed. In turn, the hardship of travel was considered a natural, inevitable reality. Communist Party member Fan Yuanzhen wrote in her diary that, on her first trip alone in 1939, she had not dared sleep on the bed in a hotel near the Lanzhou railway station and had therefore decided to lie underneath it, and how she had been surprised by the fact that there had been no bugs and no mosquitoes.²⁷ These would have been common, and probably more so during the war. Qian Zhongshu’s 1947 novel *Fortress Besieged* included a description of a hotel in which some of its main characters, Fang Hongjian, Zhao Xinmei and Sun Roujia, stayed in 1938 on their way from Shanghai to San Lü University in Hunan province and it was full of lice, bedbugs and fleas.²⁸ In fact, their journey was a trying one for a number of reasons, including crowded transportation and poor accommodation and food. The war clearly aggravated the circumstances of travel but it was in very general terms and with no reference to the war that one of these characters, Zhao Xinmei, protested that “travelling is the most exhausting and troublesome thing”,²⁹ in what would have been an echo of a widely held perception.

Significantly, the notion that travel was supposed to be a tough trial emerged in product marketing, which is relevant due to its sensitivity to common perceptions. This was the case in a 1930 Ovomaltine advertisement, where, under the heading “Going out the door is difficult”, reality was depicted as conforming to the proverb which identified leaving one’s home with hardship: the advertisement explained that, on a journey, simple and convenient food did not exist and any nutritious food was extremely hard to come by, but there was a way out, Ovomaltine.³⁰ The fact that such an advertisement was published in the *China Traveler*, the main periodical of the China Travel Service, seems revealing of the extent to which the hardship of travel was assumed. The magazine had been launched, as its first issue announced, with the aims of “promoting the travel industry”, by which was meant those of its businesses that were under Chinese control (including the China Travel Service),³¹ and “enhancing the interest of travellers”.³² In 1936, editor Zhao Junhao would confirm that Chen Guangfu and Zhu Chengzhang, president and chairman of the board of the China Travel Service respectively, had deemed it necessary to create the magazine in order to make it clear to the common people that traveling was a “happy thing”.³³ Recognition of the hardship of travel ran counter to this idea. Nonetheless, it might have been a necessary concession to reality, while at the same time presenting Ovomaltine as a solution to travel hardship offered some mitigation to what was otherwise an acknowledgment of the common view of travel as hardship.

While the traditional perception of travel as hardship lingered on, both the hardship of travel in China and this persisting perception came to be seen as problems. They came to be understood as examples of China’s backwardness in comparison to the advanced world, simultaneously emerging as elements that defined China and its mentality and as causes and symptoms for its condition. At the same time, the idea of travel as hardship was reshaped and even strengthened under nation-related emphases on progress and hygiene, which were ultimately linked to the sense of an urgent need to “save the nation”. All of this was in tune with the strong nationalist concerns of this period, which had rapidly escalated after the First Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895). This chapter examines the nationalization of the hardship of travel in these manifestations. For this purpose, it first explores the association that came to be made between the reality and the perception of the hardship of travel in China and its backwardness. Secondly, it investigates

OVOMALTINE

出門難 有辦法



諺有之。在家千日好。出門一時難。出門之難維何。即途中難得十分滋補，而又無十分簡便之食物是已。

華福麥乳精。原料為麥精牛乳蛋白質之精華。具有可可粉之香味。消化甚易。補身健腦。增長精神。其能提高游玩之興趣者實大。而旅中沖飲。又復十分便利。旅行家誠能携之篋箱。隨時服之。自無飢渴之患。客中如在家中。又何難之有乎。

中國獨家經理 瑞華洋行

贈券

奉上郵票二角請惠寄華福麥乳精一大樣聽以備嘗試為荷此上
上海黃浦灘十二號
華嘉洋行華福麥乳精部

姓名 _____
住址 _____

旅

Figure 20.1 This advertisement for Ovomaltine proposed the product as a solution against the hardship of travel, which it took for granted and saw confirmation of in the proverb “remaining at home a thousand days is good, leaving one’s door one single moment is hard.”

Source: *Lüxing zazhi*, 4.3 (March 1930), n.p.

the permeation of this perception through a preoccupation with hygiene that developed in China in connection with the idea of the country’s survival and which thus indirectly associated it with an angst about the nation’s fate.

The hardship of travel: the nation and national backwardness

In late Qing and Republican China, as greater knowledge of the outside world and a growing concern about the nation took root, the idea of travel as hardship gradually came to be

identified with China and its lack of progress. An essay published in 1904 in the Tianjin daily *Dagongbao* considered both the practical hardship of travel and a cultural perception of travel as hardship as reasons for the less developed culture of travel in China, as compared with that of European countries and America. First of all, it contrasted the practical situation in China with that of the advanced countries. It noted that when travelers from nations in the East (Japan) and the West left their countries transportation was fast and hotels were safe and comfortable, and everyone felt happy as if returning home. In China, by contrast, cars and boats were slow, hotels were smelly, filthy and cramped and thieves were rife, so much so that people became depressed and felt constrained. In the second place, it identified a tradition in China which equated travel with hardship and had contributed to the magnification of perceptions of travel as adversity. It found this in Chinese poems, which it portrayed filled with the difficulties of travel, such as the dangers of mountains and rivers, the roughness of roads and the bleakness of traveling conditions, and concluded that, as a result, people lost interest and did not ever dare take a tour. In its view, this imagery, as well as Laozi's "misleading theory" which advocated that people should reach old age and die, with no comings and goings, even when they were in sight of neighboring countries,³⁴ were deeply ingrained in people's minds and thus, even if one wanted to erase this mindset, this was not possible: the Chinese, in its view, had not yet overcome this old and backward mentality.³⁵

While a number of literary references may have contributed to shaping the travel culture in China in a negative way, the notion of travel as hardship emerged in an environment of actual travel difficulties, which would ultimately have been the defining point in the shaping of the general perception. It was not only the Chinese people that were put off by the hardships of travel in China. In 1887, a foreign resident, Archibald John Little, remarked how, given the "tedious" and "antiquated" modes of travel, few of the thousands of European residents at the treaty ports had the leisure or inclination to journey outside the routes covered by their steamers.³⁶ For many Chinese nationals, however, hardship, beyond merely preventing travel, may have been decisive in molding life habits that did not include travel as an enjoyable, leisure choice. Furthermore, in the early twentieth century such a perception may have been amplified through a process of fault-finding in China and its people which had been fermenting from the late Qing and was to find expression in Liang Qichao's blaming of Laozi for Chinese immobility in 1898.³⁷

This identification of the hardship of travel with China was common during the Republican period. So, for example, Ye Dingluo, a student who wrote a diary of a third-class train journey to Kaifeng in the late 1920s, was astonished that during his trip there were no crowds or noise and said: "such comfortable travel made me have doubts that this might be a trip by Chinese people, it really did not seem like one".³⁸ Educator and nationalist Huang Yanpei in a preface to a 1933 book on tours and observations of China, promoted the book by claiming that, since touring and observing China was often difficult, it was particularly worth paying attention to travel accounts.³⁹ In 1935, a writer for *The China Critic* pointed out that the old Chinese proverb, according to which "remaining at home a thousand days is good, but traveling even one day means difficulty", was still valid. He saw proof of the "truth" of this statement in the material culture of travel, recalling the "travelling paraphernalia of a Chinese gentleman, the standardized three pieces of baggage most frequently seen even then, that is, a trunk, a roll-up and a netted basket". He also noted that bedding, a wash basin, a towel and a mosquito net were amongst the items which he felt to be "an absolute necessity for travelling in China even today".⁴⁰

The clear-cut dichotomy between travel as hardship in China and travel as enjoyment in the advanced world that emerged in the *Dagongbao* article also appeared regularly in texts on travel, revealing a level of unease with the existing national situation. In a 1930 article in *The Life Weekly* magazine, its author sharply contrasted travel in Europe and America, where it was

“almost becoming the only path to seek happiness”, with travel in China, where it was an “extremely hard thing”. With regard to train travel, he commented on how people (with the exception of those in first class) had to endure enormous crowds to buy tickets before being unable to find seats, how there were unwarranted stops on the way and how people, upon arriving at their destinations, were overcharged for lodging, food and amusement. Not only did they not attain happiness, but they actually became ill, and so traveling, in the eyes of the Chinese, almost became a “dangerous undertaking”. This mentality, he reflected on “Chinese habits of not touring”—a remark which recognized an endogenous cultural pattern favorable to the perception of travel as hardship—but ultimately he said that this was due to “real difficulties”.⁴¹ Similarly, in 1932, *China Traveler* editor Zhao Junhao recognized the existence of hard conditions of travel in China and drew on them to explain the contrast between the Chinese view regarding travel and that of Europeans and Americans, who considered it the “ultimate pleasure”. Europeans and Americans enjoyed the luxury of their ships and trains and the comfort of their hotels, which encouraged exploration. Conversely, traveling was regarded as a hardship in China because such was the case: ships and trains were unimaginably dirty and messy and the environment in hotels was unbearably noisy, and so it was almost impossible for people to have access to the pleasures of travel, with the exception of the rich and powerful, who obtained exceptional comfort at very high prices.⁴² In a foreword by Huang Yanpei to a book on travel also published in 1933, he categorically affirmed that in countries where communications were advanced many common people considered travel a pleasurable thing, but in China the general idea was that “one thousand days at home is good, half a day out is difficult”.⁴³ Again, in 1947, in an article for the *Hu xun* (*Shanghai News*), an internal periodical published by the China Travel Service, the poor situation in China was juxtaposed with a foreign paradigm. The popular Chinese saying “out the door one *li* is no match to staying at home” was justified by past as well as “still” existing deficiencies and backwardness in transportation. It was observed that, because of this, people were “terrified of going out their doorstep”. In contrast, on Japanese ocean liners hygienic cleanliness and travel services had gradually made even those unwilling to do so acknowledge the joys of travel.⁴⁴

Some of these comments may have been aimed at the writer’s vested interests. Zhao Junhao’s comparison with the West may have been business-motivated and based on the marketing of a positive attitude toward travel which the China Travel Service was keen on encouraging. The reference to the Japanese model in the *Shanghai News* article served as illustration of the point that boat travel standards had declined since before the war, when foreign-owned companies had provided better service in their competition for business.⁴⁵ Be that as it may, the fact is that the perception of travel as hardship in China was being contrasted with the concept of travel as enjoyment that was predominant elsewhere. That it was revealing of how the perception of travel was being attributed more than just a meaning on an individual scale. It seems to have been understood as a symbol of China’s lagging behind the progress of other nations. It was therefore something that needed to be combated.

The hardship of travel: nation-building hygiene

In this context, the obsession with hygiene that developed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in China, with its implications for individual modernity and national advancement and survival,⁴⁶ may have helped invigorate the notion of travel as hardship and exacerbate fears of travel amongst some. Hygiene was sufficiently relevant for a manual on travel hygiene to have emerged in 1916, instructing travelers on how to avoid disease and illness in different travel situations. While these included extreme cases and dangerous locations, the book was written on

the basis that even the more common types of travel involved risks, such as the contraction of infectious diseases.⁴⁷ One of the repeated warnings related to food hygiene: when traveling, one was to be particularly careful and check whether food was fresh or rotten or whether it might contain dead insects, and not overlook this aspect at inns and eateries.⁴⁸ Accommodation was another major problem. The book explained that even when inns might be suitable one would not know what type of people had stayed in the same room the previous day (they were possibly not clean, it said), and it pointed out that this was one of the reasons why people returned home ill.⁴⁹ Published in a popular education collection and advertised as an item to take on one's travels,⁵⁰ amongst "useful books on hygiene" or "home and travel literature",⁵¹ this work had a large readership, as proven by the fact that there were six subsequent editions. The concept of "travel hygiene" became sufficiently widespread to also make its way into advertising. A Cleanliness-Inducing Pill was marketed in 1929 as a clever method of attaining "travel hygiene", allowing the traveler to avoid the troubles of car and boat sickness, and to prevent illnesses from the occasionally inappropriate food and drink that was consumed outdoors.⁵² An instruction manual on travel aimed at children that came to light in 1933 included a chapter on "travel hygiene", with similar emphases to those laid down in the 1916 manual. It asserted that inns were always unavoidable and necessary places to stay when traveling and one could not help but worry as former guests might have been afflicted with tuberculosis, syphilis or other infectious diseases.⁵³ As to eateries, the approach to them was again one of caution on account of an identical suspicion about the quality of food, and advice was further given not to go to such places.⁵⁴

The importance granted to hygiene in relation to travel appeared clearly in an illustrated book for youngsters, published in 1935, at the height of the hygiene-focused New Life Movement.⁵⁵ This book, which classified itself as a book on "hygiene", was the story of a journey by two siblings. Its central message focused on certain dangers to one's health which could arise from traveling but which could also be avoided. It presented a succession of travel wrongdoings leading to disease, which were mainly the result of a lack of caution, and outlined a correct alternative, embodied in the always-right procedure followed by the older, wiser brother. In contrast to him, the younger brother bought snacks on a train (despite the older brother's warnings), accepted a wet towel from a train assistant (despite the older brother's warnings) and drank water from a spring on a hill at their destination. He was therefore the only one to fall ill on their return home.⁵⁶ A fixation with hygiene was manifestly seeping into the travel culture. In *Fortress Besieged*, Sun Roujia commented that, on noticing that the inn at Yingtan where they stayed was full of flies, she had been afraid that it would not be very hygienic.⁵⁷ A heightened concern about hygiene would have implied a lesser degree of tolerance among many travelers with regard to hardship on the road. It is precisely with this in mind that Li Meiting replied to Sun Roujia's observation that she had had a particularly sheltered and pampered upbringing and did not know the hardships of the road. He added a postulate that was revealing of his perception of how unhygienic travel in China was supposed to be: "If you want to find an inn without flies, you will have to go abroad".⁵⁸

This assumption that travel was unhealthy emerged through a whole range of products directed against illness and disease that were publicized as objects to be taken on one's travels. Yee Tin medical oil, for example, was advertised as a miraculous medicine that was indispensable on a journey, being said to cure illnesses at the advanced speed of trains, a comparison which may have been specifically inspired by the fact that it was published in a railway travel guide, but may also have intended to draw a parallel between itself and train travel, which was itself a recognized solution to an aspect of travel hardship.⁵⁹ Taking such a drug was conveyed as a travel requirement, much as was the case with other pharmaceutical products. These included the four types of common medicine produced by Eng Aun Tong Tiger Medical Hall, which

Figures 20.2–20.4 The elder brother warned the younger brother not to buy things to eat that might not be clean (Figure 20.2), used a towel he had brought from home to wipe himself (Figure 20.3), and drank water from his water canteen only (Figure 20.4), thus presenting a set of hygienic norms of procedure while on travel. From *Xiao lüxingjia*

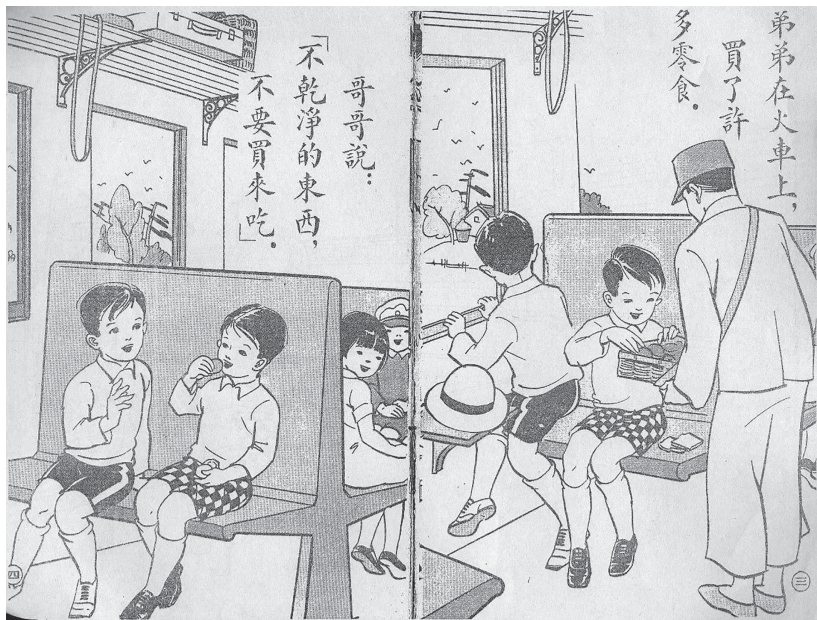


Figure 20.2

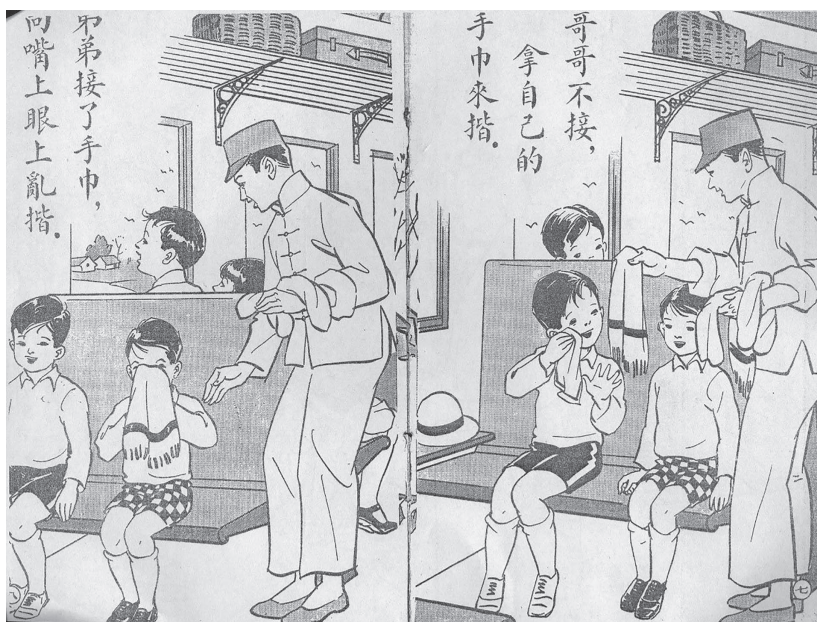


Figure 20.3



Figure 20.4

could allegedly eliminate hundreds of diseases,⁶⁰ a Five Continent Pharmacy drug identified as a “valuable treasure for travel”, which was promoted on the premise that “in the mountains, there are many miasmas” and then the reassurance that “if you go prepared with a good pellet, you need not worry”,⁶¹ and Watson’s No. 190 Universal Stomach Remedy, which was presented as the most precious medicine if one wanted to travel with no worries.⁶² Travel medical cases were also promoted as a necessity, on the basis of a fear of contracting a disease during one’s travels, which was described as an extremely distressing experience.⁶³ Advertisements would naturally emphasize the need for such products, but the repeated connection with travel found in them hints at a common understanding of travel as related to illness and disease, which an emphasis on hygiene would have boosted and which such advertising may have further helped perpetuate or enhance. The fact that publications by the China Travel Service, including its guidebooks, the *China Traveler* and the *Travellers’ Guide*, its Singapore branch magazine, were amongst the major venues publicizing these types of products on a travel-related note (while they also included references to the enjoyment of travel, which these products would guarantee by eliminating the journey’s ills) would particularly corroborate this view. It is not possible to know the extent to which practice confirmed it. It is significant, however, that in *Fortress Besieged* Li Meiting himself used a traveling trunk that was half filled with “Western medicine, for use on the road”, including “yatron, cinchona, sulfate of quinine, and formamint”.⁶⁴

The transformation of hygiene into a symbol of civilization in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries⁶⁵ was an important factor in the emphasis given to travel hygiene. In fact, it did not only contribute to raising awareness of travel hygiene, but also rendered it a measure of progress, both individual and collective. Fear of lack of hygiene while traveling was, accordingly,

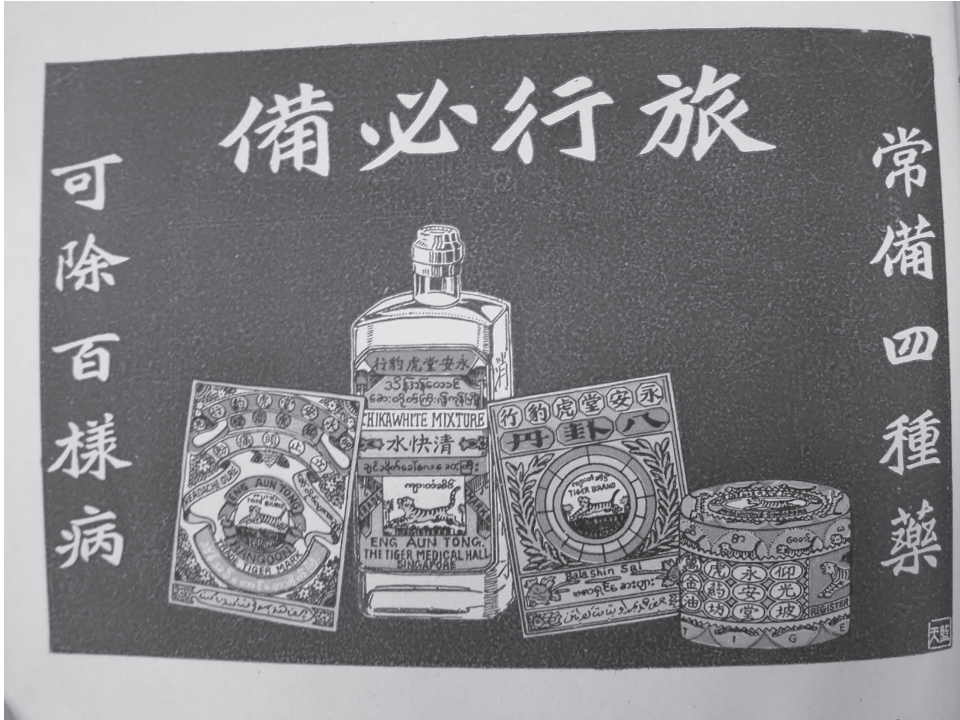


Figure 20.5 Eng Aun Tong - The Tiger Medical Hall presented a set of four types of common medicine it produced as must-have travel items. From *Lüxing zazhi*

to be considered not just in terms of its effect on health but also in terms of the deficit it signaled vis-à-vis the modern standard of hygiene. This, in turn, was not without its implications for the nation. It is in line with such ideas that, in a book on travel hygiene aimed at children printed in 1947, educator Chen Jianheng remarked that, since disease often occurred during travel due to negligence and ignorance, the “modern citizen” could not be short of some common knowledge of travel hygiene.⁶⁶ As demonstrated by this wording, travel hygiene was to be viewed as both a question of modernity and a duty to the nation (in an implicit recognition of its national importance).

Travel hygiene was urged, moreover, by particular perceptions of modernization in other aspects of travel and by the notion that modernity implied the absence of hardship during travel. Much as higher awareness and expectation of travel hygiene may have led to greater intolerance of its lack or insufficiency and to the reinforcement of the idea of travel as a difficult and negative reality, so may the notion of modern travel as implying ease and comfort have contributed to highlighting the nuisances of travel, including the problems of travel hygiene. The authors of an article published in 1943 in the *China Traveler* commented that

with the progress in communications, we have managed not to be constrained by long distances, and, with the development in travel agency business, we can feel at home anywhere. The world is big, but we can roam everywhere, and travel nowadays must somehow be a relaxed thing.

山中
多瘴氣，
備良丹，
無虞。

君於臨行之際，亦思及行篋中備有良丹否？

良丹乃精良國貨，功能祛暑辟疫，消鬱化食，居家旅行，不可不備。

旅行為人生之樂事
良丹乃旅行之至寶

五洲大藥房發行



Figure 20.6 This advertisement for a Five Continent Pharmacy product, which was published in a guidebook for the mountain resort of Moganshan, appealed to the idea of travel as a happy thing while recognizing the perils to health from summer and mountain travel. From *Moganshan daoyou*

行止無憂護身至寶

屈臣氏百病通靈水

WATSON'S
No. 190 UNIVERSAL STOMACH REMEDY

士農工商 請常備之

市上所售之藥水與屈臣氏之大同小異者名目可謂多矣究其能治百病可奏萬靈者實不多見屈臣氏為計策萬全起見特集名醫多位共同研究發明此藥性甚偉大無論急症緩症服之立刻全愈無病服之可以助消化防百病誠居家旅行不可少之聖藥也

各埠藥店 均有代售

馬來亞 總代理 星洲 永福安藥行

中國旅行社
行旅指南

Figure 20.7 Watson's was well aware of the relevance of a potential travel clientele to its No. 190 Universal Stomach Remedy and advertised the product in the *Travellers' Guide*, the Singapore branch magazine of the China Travel Service. From *Xinglü zhinan*

They contrasted this evolution in travel practice and mentality, however, with the negative aspects of travel in China. Inquiring rhetorically “if anyone amongst us goes from Chongqing to Chengdu or Guiyang, will he be able to say that he had an agreeable travel?”, they mentioned the provisional disruption in communications provoked by the war, but looked beyond it and specifically referred to their constant experience of flies and mosquitoes, and once again the lack of hygiene at accommodation facilities. In their words, “the farther we travel, the more hotels we lodge in, the bigger the risks of being affected with illnesses”. They saw hotels as “the headquarters of bedbugs and lice”, guests as “the inheritors of diseases” and tiny insects as “formidable enemies of travel!”⁶⁷ They criticized the situation in China in contrast to what they perceived to be a travel-friendly ideal, but also in relation to the situation in developed countries. In this they showed the same kind of national concern and comparative anxiety that had emerged in the *Dagongbao* article. As they put it, “The countries of Europe and America are all very careful about these pests and spare no efforts to prevent and eliminate them, but in China the health authorities are still short of large-scale implementation of measures against them”. Given such a situation, they stated that it was imperative to protect oneself against harm in China: “in traveling, we cannot but be careful and defensive and take good care of ourselves!”⁶⁸ Unlike the *Dagongbao* article, however, they viewed China's backwardness in respect of hygiene as the reason behind the lack of travel practice. This difference between these two texts, written almost 40 years apart from one another, may be significant. The justification of the lack of a travel culture based, in the 1940s, on the health-related problems of travel rather than those derived from inconvenient communications might in fact signal a shift in perceptions of travel,

resulting from the modernity of actual improvements in conditions of travel and of a greater concern with hygiene.

Conclusion

The nationalization of the hardship of travel through its association with the nation, national deficiency and nation-building hygiene constitutes an example of how the national issue was coming to the fore during late Qing and Republican China. This was a process of invasion of the individual domain of travel by public concern, which ultimately rendered it a matter of collective importance. This type of national encroachment on the level of discourse may not as such have been of particular consequence in terms of state engagement with the improvement of travel communications and transportation, even as such engagement did occur.⁶⁹ It is relevant, however, as a symptom of the nationalist atmosphere that developed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It stands as confirmation of a wider trend, running parallel as it did to the nationalization of other aspects of private life, such as material consumption,⁷⁰ body cultivation⁷¹ or sex.⁷²

This process found a direct counterpart in the nationalization of a perception that also made its appearance during this period and ran counter to the perception of the hardship of travel, that of its elimination. This perception repeatedly sprang up in the sources of this period. As a result of progress in communications, transportation and travel services in China, descriptions of travel itineraries that compared the easiness of the present with the hardships of the past regularly emerged in material of interest to travelers, such as scenic spots descriptions and guidebooks. So, for example, a 1919 booklet from a collection on scenic spots commented on how the journey to Hengshan had been tiresome and perilous, and how it now only took three days on the Peking-Suiyuan Railway.⁷³ Similarly, a 1947 guidebook on Sheshan mentioned how the construction of the Nanjing-Shanghai-Hangzhou Railway and of motorways had transformed travel into an agreeable experience, with people now being able to enjoy a happiness impossible in the past.⁷⁴ The pace of development was allowing some, moreover, to consider that notions of travel as hardship were something of the past or quickly fading away. The editor of the 1916 manual on travel hygiene justified the need for its publication precisely by pointing out that there was a clear division between the present and the past, during which, he alleged, there had been “no talk of travel”, because of the “inconvenience of communications”, the “natural barrier of the Yangtze River” and the belief that “the road to Shu is hard”. He did not fail to ascribe all these expressions to a different time: they were “old sayings handed down by tradition”, the last one of which was traceable to Li Bai’s poem. Now, however, with cars on land and steamers on water, even one thousand *li* away became one’s courtyard, and so there was not one person who did not consider traveling, individually or in a group, as fashionable.⁷⁵ This was a vision that was constantly laid down in sources issued by agents of the travel business. In a preface to the 1921 edition of the *Tianjin-Pukou Railway Travel Guide* by the Railways Administration, the present easiness of rail travel was contrasted not only to past hardship of travel to far-away mountains and rivers but also to past writing about hardship.⁷⁶ A 1924 guidebook to Sichuan by the Travel Department of the Shanghai Commercial and Savings Bank, was more explicit about the change in mentality, hinting at it through a comparison between past perception and present practice: people in the past had considered travel as a frightful undertaking but nowadays, with convenient transportation, Chinese tourists were going to Sichuan in ever greater numbers.⁷⁷

One important aspect in this respect is the extent to which the perception that the hardship of travel had become or was becoming a thing of the past was brought about as a national phenomenon, with specific references to China and the Chinese mentality. A 1927 article of

the *China Traveler* mentioned how the Chinese were being drawn into considering travel in an optimistic way, as the result of a gradual development in transportation – a change from the past, where traveling had been considered a fearful undertaking.⁷⁸ The idea of a mental shift among the Chinese people was reiterated in another article of this magazine a year later. In the earlier times of difficult transportation, it was argued, the feeling had been that “traveling along the road is hard” (the literary allusion being used to essentialize the past). Since steamers and trains had come into use, though, more and more Chinese loved traveling.⁷⁹ That people were seeing things differently was also suggested in an article published in a 1930 issue of *The Unison Travel Magazine*, a publication by the Unison Travel Party, the largest travel association of the Republican era. Its author, recognizing that people in China had in the past traveled under hard circumstances and therefore considered travel a perilous undertaking, contrasted all this to the current situation, as travel communications had become convenient, on water and land, with trains and steamers.⁸⁰ As conditions kept improving, observation and reasoning may have made it gradually more possible to infer and affirm that perceptions had changed. It seems significant in this respect that Zhao Junhao, who in 1932 had lamented that travel was regarded as hardship in China, should later, in summing up the development of the China Travel Service, have suggested that this was no longer the case (and have done so even at the time of the war, in 1941). In his argument, he emphasized how more than ten years before the sentiment had indeed been one of travel as hardship, due both to the domination of traditional concepts and to a deficient travel structure. He did not dwell explicitly on the present mentality but implicitly signaled that it had gone through a transformation, if only self-promotingly to conclude on how his company had acted to reduce the difficulties of travel.⁸¹ In all these cases, the Chinese change of perception was particularly highlighted. That it should be specifically mentioned as a national reality suggests that it was being implicitly measured against a standard of international modernity. Such self-consciousness was certainly the result of a deeper integration of China in the international community.⁸² But, what is more, it seems to have reflected how ever present the nation now was.

Notes

- 1 Lynne Withey, *Grand Tours and Cook's Tours. A History of Leisure Travel, 1750 to 1915*, New York: William Morrow and Company, 1997, pp. 135–68.
- 2 Piers Brendon, *Thomas Cook. 150 Years of Popular Tourism*, London: Secker & Warburg, 1991, pp. 5–17.
- 3 Jeffrey N. Dupée, *British Travel Writers in China—Writing Home to a British Public, 1890–1914*, Lewiston, Queenston, Lampeter: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2004, pp. 227–29.
- 4 *Ibid.*, pp. 247–58.
- 5 Richard Lassels, *An Italian Voyage, or, a Compleat Journey through Italy*, London: Richard Wellington, 1697, A Preface to the Reader Concerning Travelling, n.p.
- 6 See, for instance, James Buzard, *The Beaten Track: European Tourism, Literature, and the Ways to Culture, 1800–1918*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001, pp. 6–8, 32–4.
- 7 Robert Burden, *Travel, Modernism and Modernity*, London, New York: Routledge, 2015, pp. 30–1.
- 8 Nicholas Clifford, “A Truthful Impression of the Country”: *British and American Travel Writing in China, 1880–1949*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2001, pp. 46–50, 90, 93–114, 116; and Jeffrey N. Dupée, *British Travel Writers in China*, pp. 232–6.
- 9 Shen Fu, *Fu sheng liu ji*, Beijing: Jiuzhou tushu chubanshe, 1998, Part IV, pp. 57–92.
- 10 See Richard E. Strassberg, *Inscribed Landscapes: Travel Writing from Imperial China*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1994, pp. 5–7.
- 11 Bao Zhao, *Bao Canjun jizhu*, Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1980, p. 83.
- 12 Lu Qinli (ed.), *Xian Qin Han Wei Jin Nan Bei chao shi, zhong*, Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983, pp. 1274–8.
- 13 Li Chi, *The Travel Diaries of Hsü Hsia-K'o*, Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong, 1974, p. 7.
- 14 An Qi (ed.), *Xin ban Li Bai quanji biannian zhushi, shang*, Chengdu: Bashu shushe, 2000, pp. 156–7, 201–2, 563–5.

- 15 Xu Hongzu, *Xu Xiake youji, xia*, Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1980, p. 1259.
- 16 See, for instance, Xuanzang Bianji and Ji Xianlin (eds.), *Da Tang Xi yu jiaozhu*, Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1985, p. 67.
- 17 Julian Ward, *Xu Xiake (1587–1641): The Art of Travel Writing*, Richmond: Curzon Press, 2001, pp. 47–8, 53.
- 18 Timothy Brook, 'Communications and commerce', in Denis Twitchett and Frederick W. Mote (eds.), *The Cambridge History of China. Volume 8. The Ming Dynasty, 1368–1644, Part 2.*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, p. 622; and Tim Brook, *The Confusions of Pleasure: Commerce and Culture in Ming China*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1999, pp. 177–9.
- 19 Richard John Lufrano, *Honorable Merchants: Commerce and Self-Cultivation in Late Imperial China*, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997, pp. 157–9, 162–76.
- 20 Wang Anshi, *Wang Anshi quanji*, Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1999, p. 316.
- 21 See Dieter Richter, 'Die Angst des Reisenden, die Gefahren der Reise', in Hermann Bausinger, Klaus Beyrer and Gottfried Korff (eds.), *Reisekultur: Von der Pilgerfahrt zum modernen Tourismus*, München: Verlag C. H. Beck, 1999, pp. 100–8.
- 22 With regard to Sichuan, in spite of improvements downriver from Chongqing, see Shu Xincheng (ed.), *Shu you xinying*, Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1934, preface, p. 1.
- 23 In relation to Emeishan, see Zhu Chengen (ed.), *Eshan daoyou*, Eshan lüxingshe, 1947, back cover.
- 24 Ba Jin, *Lütu suibi*, Shanghai: Kaiming shudian, 1939, foreword, p. 2.
- 25 Sun Shuji, *Xiao pengyou lüxing*, Shanghai: Beixin shuju, 1933, pp. 62–3.
- 26 *Ibid.*, p. 51.
- 27 Li Nanyang (ed.), *Fumu zuori shu (1938–1949) – Li Rui, Fan Yuanzhen tongxin ji (yi)*, Guangzhou: Guangdong renmin chubanshe, 2008, p. 109.
- 28 Qian Zhongshu, *Wei cheng*, Beijing: Shenghuo dushu xinzhì sanlian shudian, 1947, pp. 168–70.
- 29 *Ibid.*, p. 201.
- 30 *Lüxing zazhi*, 4.3 (March 1930), n.p.
- 31 As opposed to foreign companies established in China, such as Thomas Cook & Son and American Express, which had enjoyed a monopoly in travel mediation in the early 1920s. The reassertion of Chinese rights with respect to travel services had been an important aspect behind a petition put forward by the Shanghai Commercial and Savings Bank in 1923 to the Ministry of Communications under the Beiyang government requesting permission to sell train tickets on a commission basis and to conduct travel services. See *Benhang chuangan lüxingshe de yongyi*, Shanghai Municipal Archives, Q275–1–128. It had also later been a fundamental element of the discourse surrounding the creation in 1927 of the China Travel Service. See Pan Taifeng, 'Ji Zhongguo lüxingshe', in *Chen Guangfu yu Shanghai yinhang*, edited by Chen Haibin, Beijing: Zhongguo wenshi chubanshe, 1991, p. 189; and *Lüxing xiangdao: guohuo zhanlanhui jintian kan*, Zhongguo lüxingshe, p. 1.
- 32 'Bianzhe zhuiyan', *Lüxing zazhi*, 1 (Autumn 1927), n.p.
- 33 Zhao Junhao, 'Bianjishi shi nian ji', *Lüxing zazhi*, 10.1 (January 1936), p. 197.
- 34 Reference to the *Daodejing*, 80, where Laozi describes the picture of an ideal primitivism not corrupted by civilization.
- 35 'Lun Zhongguoren bu neng lüxing zhi yuanyin', *Dagongbao*, 835 (21 October 1904), p. 2.
- 36 Archibald John Little, *Through the Yang-tse Gorges, or Trade and Travel in Western China*, London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington, 1888, viii.
- 37 Liang Qichao, 'Shuo dong', in *Yin bing shi wenji zhi san*, Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1941, p. 38.
- 38 Ye Dingluo, 'Lü Bian riji', in *Nanguo qingdiao*, Shanghai: Liangyou tushu yinshua gongsi, 1933, pp. 70–1.
- 39 Huang Yanpei, *Huanghai huanyou ji*, Shanghai: Shenghuo shudian, 1933, n.p.
- 40 C. Chen, 'China's service to travellers', *The China Critic*, 8.9 (28 February 1935), p. 206.
- 41 Zhengyan, 'Lüxing he xiaofei', *Shenghuo*, 6.33 (8 August 1931), pp. 706–7.
- 42 Zhao Junhao, 'Bianzhe zhi yan', *Lüxing zazhi*, 6.5 (May 1932), n.p.
- 43 *Youzong*, Shanghai: Shenghuo shudian, 1933, foreword.
- 44 Wen Mu, 'Fuwu lüxing yu lüxing fuwu', *Hu xun*, 8 (25 July 1947), p. 4.
- 45 *Ibid.*
- 46 See Ruth Rogaski, *Hygienic Modernity: Meanings of Health and Disease in Treaty-Port China*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2004, pp. 2–3, 6, 75, 125–7, 137, 143–147, 151–7, 190, 233–5, 238; and also Yip Ka-Che, 'Health and Nationalist reconstruction: rural health in Nationalist China, 1928–1937', *Modern Asian Studies*, 26.2 (May 1992), pp. 398–9; and Yip Ka-Che, *Health and National Reconstruction in Nationalist China: The Development of Modern Health Services, 1928–1937*, Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan, 1995, pp. 26–43.

- 47 See Zhuang Shi (ed.), *Lüxing weisheng*, Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1916, pp. 56–9.
- 48 Ibid., pp. 26–27, and also 29–31, 41.
- 49 Ibid., p. 34.
- 50 Xu Ke, *Jigongshan zhinan*, Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1922, n.p.
- 51 See, for instance, *Zengding Xihu youlan zhinan*, Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1919, n.p., and back cover.
- 52 *Lüxing zazhi*, 3.3 (March 1929), n.p.
- 53 Sun Shuji, *Xiao pengyou lüxing*, p. 82.
- 54 Ibid., p. 84.
- 55 On the focus on hygiene within this movement, see Arif Dirlik, ‘The ideological foundations of the New Life Movement: a study in counterrevolution’, *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 34.4 (Aug. 1975), pp. 945–80.
- 56 Yang Jinhao (ed.), *Xiao lüxingjia*, Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1935, pp. 3, 5, 8, 16, 18.
- 57 Qian Zhongshu, *Wei cheng*, p. 175.
- 58 Ibid.
- 59 *Quanguo tielu lüxing zhinan*, Shanghai: Guang yi shuju, 1921, n.p.
- 60 *Lüxing zazhi*, 2 (Summer 1928), n.p.
- 61 *Moganshan daoyou*, Shanghai: Zhongguo lüxingshe, 1932, n.p.
- 62 *Xinglü zhinan*, 4 (January–March 1937), p. 45.
- 63 *Shenbao* (12 June 1930), p. 5.
- 64 Qian Zhongshu, *Wei cheng*, p. 171.
- 65 See Ruth Rogaski, *Hygienic Modernity*, p. 17.
- 66 Chen Jianheng, *Lüxing weisheng fá*, Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1947, p. 11.
- 67 Dong Jingyi and Qiu Changxuan, ‘Lüxing zhi di’, *Lüxing zazhi*, 17.4 (April 1943), p. 5.
- 68 Ibid., p. 10.
- 69 For an evolution of travel communications and transportation until 1945, see H.C. Darby and B.M. Husain, *China Proper Volume III. Economic Geography, Ports and Communications*, London: Naval Intelligence Division, 1945, pp. 429–556, 602–5.
- 70 See Karl Gerth, *China Made: Consumer Culture and the Creation of the Nation*, Cambridge, MA, London: Harvard University Asia Center, 2003, pp. 3–4.
- 71 See Andrew D. Morris, *Marrow of the Nation: A History of Sport and Physical Culture in Republican China*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2004, p. 3.
- 72 See Frank Dikötter, *Sex, Culture and Modernity in China*, London: Hurst & Company, 1995, pp. 1–2.
- 73 *Zhongguo mingsheng, di qi zhong: Hengshan*, Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan 1919, n.p.
- 74 Zhang Tiansong (ed.), *Sheshan daoyou*, Nanjing: Nanjing chubanshe, 1947, editor’s words, p. 1.
- 75 Zhuang Shi (ed.), *Lüxing weisheng*, p. 1.
- 76 *Jin-Pu tielu lüxing zhinan*, Jin-Pu tielu guanliju, 1921, preface.
- 77 *You Chuan xu zhi*, Shanghai: Shanghai shangye chuxu yinhang lüxingbu, 1924, preface by Xu Shizhang, n.p.
- 78 Zhu Chengzhang, ‘Lüxingbu yuanqi’, *Lüxing zazhi*, 1 (Spring 1927), p. 3.
- 79 Tu Zheyin, ‘Cong Shanghai dao Ha’erbin’, *Lüxing zazhi*, 2 (Spring 1928), p. 15.
- 80 Tuiweng, ‘Zhong xi ren dui lüxing guannian zhi yidian’, *Lüxing yuekan*, 5.4 (June 1930), p. 1.
- 81 Zhao Junhao, ‘Zhongguo lüxingshe fazhan jianshi (shang)’, *Lü guang*, 2.1 (January 1941), p. 2.
- 82 See Frank Dikötter, *The Age of Openness: China before Mao*, Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2010, pp. 2–3, 31–80.