

# The Formation of Encyclopaedic Commonplaces During the Late Qing: Entries on the Newspaper

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This paper proposes to do two things: sketch out the development of a stock of shared information and judgment on a given topic—“the newspaper”—through the various late Qing encyclopaedias; and sketch out the actual use of late Qing encyclopaedias as an information base for the new form of examinations that came with the “Reform of Governance,” Xinzheng 新政, beginning in 1901. In the Chinese entries the term *bao* 報 refers to a periodical publication. The word “newspaper” will here be used as shorthand for “periodical publication.”

## The Manufacture of Encyclopaedic Texts During the Late Qing

Rapidly changing political and market conditions kept the time frame for the production of most late Qing encyclopaedias extremely short. A first window opened in 1897 and 1898, the second with the Reform of Governance in 1901.<sup>1</sup> The technique of lithography facilitated fast and cheap manuscript reproduction. Seven of the eight works used for this study were lithograph prints. Time pressure worked in favour of large-scale copying of entire segments from earlier works.

Western encyclopaedic works were among the basic reference tools brought to China by foreign missionaries and officials from the early nineteenth century

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<sup>1</sup> Rudolf Wagner, “Wan Qing xinzheng yu xixue baike quanshu” 晚清新政與西學百科全書 [The late Qing ‘New Governance’ and encyclopaedias of Western knowledge], in *Jindai Zhongguo de baike cishu* 近代中國的百科辭書 [Early modern Chinese encyclopaedic works], eds. Chen Pingyuan 陳平原 and Miliena 米列娜 [= Milena Doleželová-Velingerová] (Beijing: Beijing daxue, 2007), 33–56. See also Figure 1 in the Introduction.

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onward. They allowed them to introduce information about fields such as optics or economics of which they knew very little.<sup>2</sup>

Western and later Japanese encyclopaedias were accordingly part of the horizon of knowledge within which Chinese authors worked, even if these were not available in translations. This was not a one-way road. In the early 1890s, the General Office [of Foreign Affairs], Zongli yamen 總理衙門, had a set of the huge *Collection of Texts and Illustrations, Old and New*, Gujin tushu jicheng 古今圖書集成 (1726–1728), printed as presents for foreign libraries.<sup>3</sup>

Newspapers were occasionally mentioned in the early Protestant missionaries' descriptions of the West; some foreign language papers came out in Canton and Macao, and efforts were made by Lin Zexu 林則徐 (1785–1850) and later the newly-established General Office of Foreign Affairs, Zongli Yamen, to mine them for relevant information. But no more systematic introduction to newspapers in Chinese has come to light yet, although commonplace notions might have spread via bilingual ethnic Chinese from Southeast Asia and direct contact with foreigners. An example of the transcultural flow of commonplace notions is the shifting Chinese image of George Washington since the 1830s. Tropes about the man and his labors moved with ease from American popular tracts through early geographical works in Chinese to biographies and encyclopaedic works.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Abraham Rees's (1743–1825) *The Cyclopaedia* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme & Brown, 1819–1820) was one of these works, especially appreciated by dissenting clergy who dominated the early English missionary efforts. It is called a *xi-guo-luo-bi-li-ya* 西果羅彼釐亞 by Lin Zexu 林則徐 and not a "leishu" 類書. Lin Zexu, "Yangshi zalu 洋事雜錄" [Miscellaneous notes on Western affairs]. 1846. Unpubl. manuscript in Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences. Transcribed into simplified characters in "Lin Zexu 'Yangshi zalu'" 林則徐《洋事雜錄》 [Lin Zexu's *Miscellaneous notes on Western affairs*], by Chen Depei 陳德培, Lin Yongyu 林永侯, and Meng Pengxing 孟彭興. *Zhongshan daxue xuebao (shehuikexue ban)*, no. 3 (1986): 14–34. Hugh Murray's (1779–1846) *The Encyclopaedia of Geography* (Philadelphia: Carey, Lea and Blanchard, 1837) was used by Lin Zexu for his *Record of the Four Continents*, Sizhou zhi 四洲志 1839 (excerpts preserved in Wang Xiqi, 1897). Articles from the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (9th ed. 1875–1879) were translated into Chinese, including such articles as "International Law" by Edmund Robertson (1845–1911), translated by John Fryer (1839–1928) and Wang Zhensheng 汪振聲 as *Gongfa zonglun* 公法總論, and appearing in *Xixue fuqiang congshu* 西學富強叢書 [Collection of books of Western learning [to make the state] rich and powerful], Zhang Yinhan 張蔭桓, comp., section "Faxue" 法學 [law] (Shanghai: Hongwen, 1896). The list of books brought to China by Young John Allen in 1859 contains many such encyclopaedic works, see "Young J. Allen's Personal Library Brought with him from Georgia to China in 1859–1860," in Adrian A. Bennett, *Missionary Journalist in China. Young J. Allen and his Magazines, 1860–1883* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1983), 289–292. Entries in *Chambers's Information for the People* were an important source for the *Liuhe congtan* 六合叢談 with the English title *Shanghai Serial*. See the study by Reynolds in the present volume, p. 155.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Lionel Giles, *An alphabetical index to the Chinese Encyclopaedia*, (London: British Museum, 1911), 18.

<sup>4</sup> Pan Guangzhe 潘光哲, *Huashengdun zai Zhongguo—zhizuo 'guofu'* 華盛頓在中國—製作〈國父〉 [Washington in China: manufacturing a father of the nation] (Taipei: Sanmin shuju, 2006); Rudolf Wagner, "The Image of the Public Leader out of the Chinese Crisis," (unpublished paper, 2010).

My sample, taken from the Heidelberg Database of Late Qing and Republican Encyclopaedic Works (HEIDENC), consists of eight encyclopaedias with an entry about newspapers that were published between 1884 and 1911.<sup>5</sup>

1. *Classified Compilation of Western Affairs*, *Xishi leibian* 西事類編 (1887), by Shen Chun 沈純 (Cuisheng 粹生).<sup>6</sup> This work consists of excerpts from the diaries of early Chinese ambassadors; from Chinese travelogues and world descriptions; and from some document collections on Chinese coolie labour abroad. Done according to the high scholarly standards of the Shenbaoguan 申報館 publishing house in Shanghai, the source for each excerpt is given together with a bibliography. The work is organised into topics such as “travel routes,” *chengji* 程紀, “government,” *zhengzhi* 政治, or “education and technical learning,” *wen yi* 文藝. It gathers under these headings information otherwise randomly dispersed in the various travelogues and diaries. The excerpts are often followed by a systematic summary of the topic that contains substantial new information. No further information on Shen Chun has been located beyond three additional titles of works.<sup>7</sup>
2. *A Comprehensive Summary of Current Affairs by Category and for All Nations*, *Wanguo fenlei shiwu dacheng* 萬國分類時務大成 (1897) by Qian Feng 錢豐 (Yixian 頤仙).<sup>8</sup> The work comes with an official printing permit from Jiangnan. The preface by Zhang Yunyu 張韞玉 complains of the ignorance of men of letters concerning contemporary and international affairs and advertises the work as the remedy.<sup>9</sup> Nothing further is known about the compiler and the author of the preface. The classification with its focus on contemporary government matters encompasses over 180 topics grouped into 24 broad sections, such as “astronomy,” *tianwen* 天文, “rulers,” *guojun* 國君, “bureaucratic organisations,” *guan zhi* 官制, “governance,” *zhengzhi* 政治, “commercial matters,” *shangwu* 商務, “foreign relations,” *bangjiao* 邦交, “military equipment,” *wubei* 武備, “manufacture,”

<sup>5</sup>The eight works are identified subsequently in the text by the pound or hash sign (#) and the number given in this list.

<sup>6</sup>Shen Chun 沈純, comp., *Xishi leibian* 西事類編 (Shanghai: Shenbaoguan, 1887).

<sup>7</sup>These are: the (extant and earlier) *Xishi li ce* 西事蠡測 [Tidbits on Western affairs], a work finished probably in 1883, an 18-page excerpt of which is included in Wang Xiqi 王錫祺, *Xiaofanghuzhai yudi congchao* 小方壺齋輿地叢鈔 (1897) (Hangzhou: Hangzhou guji shudian, 1985); *Yangwu jiyao* 洋務輯要 [Core elements of Western affairs], a work mentioned in the preface to the *Xishi leibian* of which I have not located a copy; and *Geguo shiwu leibian* 各國時務類編 [Classified compilation of contemporary affairs of the different foreign nations], a work in 18 *juan* bound in 4 *ce* and published before 1884 in Shanghai. While no copy has yet been located, it is listed with this information by Zhao Weixi (1860–1917) 趙惟熙 in his *Xixue shumu dawen* 西學書目答問 [Answers to questions about books on Western learning] (Guiyang: Guiyang xueshu, 1901), 18a. The difference in the number of chapters indicates that this is not a reprint of the *Xishi leibian* with a different title. No copy has been located.

<sup>8</sup>Qian Feng 錢豐, comp., *Wanguo fenlei shiwu dacheng* 萬國分類時務大成 (Shanghai: Shenjiang Xiuhai shanfang, 1897).

<sup>9</sup>Zhang Yunyu 張韞玉, “*Wanguo fenlei shiwu dacheng xu*” 萬國分類時務大成叙 [Preface], in Qian Feng, comp., *Wanguo fenlei shiwu dacheng*, 1a.

*zhizao* 製造, and “plants,” *zhiwu* 植物. Some of the difficulties with the classification are discussed in the itemised notes on the compilation. The entries are newly written, sources or quotations are not referenced.

3. *Comprehensive Examination of Current Affairs*, *Shiwu tongkao* 時務通考 (1897), compiled by Qilu zhuren 杞盧主人.<sup>10</sup> The compiler boldly links his enterprise to Ma Duanlin’s 馬端臨 (ca. 1254–ca. 1323) *Comprehensive Reference on Records and Documents*, *Wenxian tongkao* 文獻通考 and its sequels. The inclusion of Western affairs is justified by the “secret coincidence” between Western political systems and the Chinese political ideal of the three dynasties of antiquity.<sup>11</sup> The entries are grouped into 31 “classes,” *men* 門, each with up to 20 subheadings. It pioneered the inclusion of the “history” of different nations. The publisher compiled a sequel in 1898, which only came out in 1901 after the beginning of the Reform of Governance policies.<sup>12</sup>
4. *Handy Cyclopedial/Guangxue leibian* 廣學類編 (1903). Based on an unknown work by an Englishman referred to as Tang Lanmeng 唐蘭孟, this work has been edited by Timothy Richard and translated by Ren Tingxu 任廷旭.<sup>13</sup> Each of the 12 *juan* contains one of the classification categories, namely “historical events,” *shishi* 史事, “geography,” *dili* 地理, “general education,” *wenxue* 文學, “science,” *gezhi* 格致, “mathematics,” *suanxue* 算學, “commerce,” *shangwu* 商務, “medicine and pharmacopoeia,” *yiya* 醫藥, “measurements,” *quandu* 權度, “marriage ceremonies,” *hunli* 婚禮, “domestic management,” *jiawu* 家務, “construction,” *yingzao* 營造, and “hunting,” *youlie* 游獵. The focus is on everyday life rather than government.
5. *Comprehensive Classified Compilation on Contemporary Affairs*, *Fenlei shiwu tongzuan* 分類時務通纂 (1902). The editor Chen Changshen’s 陳昌紳 (*jinsi* 1887) own 1898 preface is preceded by a 1902 preface by Yue Tangzhen 越湯震.<sup>14</sup> The work probably was not published in 1898 because of the political shift in that year, but was rushed to print after the 1901 reform edict. The massive work assembles, without authorial comment, memorials and newspaper articles or excerpts from them into six broad categories: “domestic government,” *neizheng* 內政, “foreign relations,” *waijiao* 外交, “finance,” *licai* 理財, “military matters,” *jingwu* 經武, “science,” *gewu* 格物, and “engineering,” *kaogong* 考工, each with many subcategories. The editor Chen Changshen was an instructor at Longmen Academy, Longmen shuyuan 龍門書院, in Shanghai.

<sup>10</sup> Qilu zhuren 杞盧主人, comp., *Shiwu tongkao* 時務通考 (Shanghai: Dianshizhai, 1897).

<sup>11</sup> Qilu zhuren, “Xu” 序 [Preface], in Qilu zhuren, comp. *Shiwu tongkao*, 1b.

<sup>12</sup> Dianshizhai zhuren 點石齋主人, comp. *Shiwu tongkao xubian* 時務通攷續編 [Comprehensive examination of current affairs. Sequel] (Shanghai: Dianshizhai, 1901), 1.

<sup>13</sup> Tang Lanmeng 唐蘭孟, comp., Li Timotai 李提摩太 [= Timothy Richard], ed., Ren Tingxu 任廷旭, tr., *Guangxue leibian* 廣學類編 [parallel title: *Handy cyclopedial*] (Shanghai: Guangxuehui, 1901; Reprint Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1903).

<sup>14</sup> Chen Changshen 陳昌紳, comp., *Fenlei shiwu tongzuan* 分類時務通纂 (Shanghai: Wenlan shuju, 1902. Reprint, Beijing: Beijing tushuguan, 2005).

6. *Three Compilations of Western Learning*, *Xixue santong* 西學三通 (1902), supervised by Xie Ruochao 謝若潮 (*jinshi* 1877) and compiled by Yuan Zonglian 袁宗濂 and Yan Zhiqing 晏志清.<sup>15</sup> General preface by Xie Ruochao dated 1902; title calligraphy by the reformer and businessman Zhang Jian 張謇 (1853–1926); prefaces by a Tao Jun 陶鈞 for the three sections “Western government,” *Xi zheng* 西政, “Western history,” *Xi shi* 西史, and “Western technical learning,” *Xi yi* 西藝. The sections are subdivided with each having a finding aid. The texts are all newly-written summaries of unsourced information. The editorial team had a strong educational background and good connections. Xie Ruochao published a collection of examination essays in 1886.<sup>16</sup> Yuan Zonglian was a student of the classical scholar Pi Xirui 皮錫瑞 (1850–1908).
7. *The Political Essence of the Book of Zhou Rites (Zhouli)*, *Zhouli zhengyao* 周禮政要 (1902), by Sun Yirang 孫詒讓 (1848–1908).<sup>17</sup> Sun’s extensive *Zhouli* 周禮 commentary (1899), which showed the compatibility of Zhou institutions with those of the modern West, missed the 1898 deadline. *The Political Essence of the Book of Zhou Rites* has forty headings, some of which have subheadings. Each entry starts with relevant excerpts from the *Zhouli* and early *Zhouli* commentaries and links them into a cohesive narrative. This is followed by a description of the corresponding Western institution from Sun’s hand. The slim volume with the “essence” of both Chinese and Western political institutions was widely reprinted and was used as a shorthand encyclopaedia of both revised traditional and new knowledge in some of the new schools.
8. *New Encyclopaedic Dictionary of General Knowledge*, *Putong baike xin da cidian* 普通百科新大辭典, (1911), compiled by Huang Ren 黃人 (Huang Moxi 黃摩西, 1866–1913).<sup>18</sup> This is the last of the late Qing encyclopaedic works. The sequence of the entries follows the new formal criterion of stroke number. Each entry is linked to a category such as “History,” *shi* 史, or “writing,” *wen* 文, under the name of the entry, and a separate index lists all entries grouped under these categories. As the *Dictionary*’s simultaneous use of the terms 辭典 and 詞典 (both pronounced *cidian*) in the work’s title suggests, the entries are identified by terms. Where appropriate, Huang Ren combines definitions with historical information. His order has 55 categories, starting with “constitution,” *xuan* 憲, and ending with new terms in “common use,” *tongyong* 通用, such as “reform,” *gaige* 改革, “universe,” *yuzhou* 宇宙, “state,” *guojia* 國家, or “absolute,” *juedui* 絕對. Three of the categories, “geography,” *yu* 輿, “history,” *shi* 史, and “writing,” *wen* 文, are subdivided into one section dealing with China and another that deals with the “world.”

<sup>15</sup> Xie, Ruochao 謝若潮, ed., *Xixue santong* 西學三通 [Three compilations of Western learning], Yuan Zonglian 袁宗濂 and Yan Zhiqing 晏志清, comps., Lithograph, (Shanghai: Cuixin shuguan, 1902).

<sup>16</sup> Xie Ruochao 謝若潮, *Tiekuo zhenzhong mi* 帖括枕中秘 [Pillow secrets of the examination] (N.p., 1886).

<sup>17</sup> Sun Yirang, *Zhouli zhengyao*, 2 vols. (Ruian: Putong xuetang, 1902).

<sup>18</sup> Huang Ren 黃人 [=Huang Moxi 黃摩西], comp. *Putong baike xin da cidian* 普通百科新大辭典. Prefaces by the author and Yan Fu 嚴復 (Shanghai: Zhongguo cidian gongsi, 1911).

The 1887 *Classified Compilation of Western Affairs* ended up providing the mother-lode for all later entries. In a critical departure from “hearsay-based” and unreliable earlier descriptions, the work’s claim to truth and authenticity hinged on its use of first-hand Chinese evidence and its independence from earlier translations of foreign descriptions of the world.<sup>19</sup> This type of fact-based and objective conveyance of information was part of a wider current at the time. It extends to the diaries and country reports of the new ambassadors, to the reporting style of newspapers such as the *Shenbao*, and even to fictional works published by the *Shenbaoguan*.<sup>20</sup> The editor’s comments on the newspaper maps both their positive potential and the drawbacks arising from government censorship, bribes, and the venality of the newspapers.

## Re-using Entries

To quantify and qualify borrowing, I will now in a first step trace the elements informing newspaper-related entries in the 1902 *Three Compilations of Western Learning*. The entries are to be found in the section Western Governance, *Xizheng* 西政, subsection Educational Records, *Jiaodian* 教典 10, *juan* 18, 14b–17a.

1. The entry “On the origin of newspapers” (*juan* 18, 14b–15a) is copied verbatim from the *Handy Cyclopedia* (#4 in the sample of encyclopaedias given above) (*juan* 3, 2b–3b).
2. No source for the second entry on dailies with a history of the editorial in Europe has been identified.
3. The entry “English newspapers” (*juan* 18, 15a, b) copies information on the types of newspapers as well as the numbers it gives for newspapers in England from the *Comprehensive Examination of Current Affairs* (#3) (*juan* 15, 7b–8a). It adds substantial new text about the international distribution of the *Times* as well as the registration process and censorship of newspapers in England.
4. The entries on the German and Austrian press (*juan* 18, 15b) are copied verbatim from *A Comprehensive Summary of Current Affairs by Category and for All Nations* (#2) (*juan* 14, 51b) and a note by Wang Tao 王韜 (1828–1897) in #2 (*juan* 14, 50a, b) on scholarly periodicals.
5. The next section is new. It deals with the high standing of newspaper editors in England and France, especially those at the *Times* in London and *Le Temps* in Paris, as well as the strict standards for reporting maintained by these papers. It is followed by an anonymous essay “On Newspapers,” which goes very knowledgeably into the potential of papers, but also the danger of manipulation, especially in times of war.

<sup>19</sup> Cheng Xianchao 程咸焯, “Xu” 序 [Preface] to *Xishi leibian*, comp. Shen Chun, 1b.

<sup>20</sup> More evidence of this shared concern for fact-based information is provided in the studies by Douglas Reynolds and Natascha Gentz in this volume.

6. The next five sections on the deposit required from Russian periodicals and from which fines may be deducted; on Russian papers not being allowed to leave the country; on a fine imposed on a Paris popular monthly; on the shifts in the Newspaper Stamp Tax in England; on US papers and on a court paper (*juan* 18, 16b–17a) are all stock items from *Classified Compilation of Western Affairs* (#1) (*juan* 6, 18a and 23b), already copied in 1897 by #2 (*juan* 14, 51b–52a) and #3 (*juan* 15, 6b and 7b).

In sum, of the 12 entries nine have been copied verbatim from earlier encyclopaedias, the remaining entries are new or their source has not yet been identified. A check of the newspaper sections in items #2 and #3 reveals that 12 of the 27 subheadings in item #3 have been copied verbatim from item #2, and at least two more from other sources. Item #2 in its turn has taken a few pieces wholesale from item #1 but inserted smaller quotations into a much enriched context. The later works then made use of this enlarged base.

There is thus evidence of large-scale copying in late Qing encyclopaedias. It ranges from a selective and judicious use of relevant information to copying nearly half of a long entry, to the complete copy of an entry with all its subcategories. As a result of the ensuing high coincidence, the different encyclopaedias do not present radically different orderings and evaluations of the new information about the West. Similarly, the continued use of information from item #1, suggests that the incentive to keep up-to-date was not very strong. Given the increased Chinese access to Japanese encyclopaedias and encyclopaedia translations that has been established, these will also have to be checked as possible new sources of information.<sup>21</sup> The extraordinary role played by item #1 indicates that its mixture of first-hand observation and systematic survey provided a convincing framework from which later compilers felt no need to depart. The intensive reuse of already published information is endemic to the encyclopaedia industry worldwide. In the Chinese context it primarily reflects the need to come out with reference works for the new and rapidly changing examination requirements at high speed, as well as the still very rudimentary acceptance of intellectual property rights. The tight link between the peaks of the publication figures of late Qing encyclopaedias with court policies suggests that compilers and publishers were keenly aware of the importance of these policies. Since the often very extensive encyclopaedias could not be compiled within weeks—although lithography allowed for very quick printing—we can infer that the compilers and publishers were betting in 1898 that eventually the reform policies of the “Hundred Days” would be resumed so that once the Reform of Governance edict was published in 1901, their new compilations were already prepared.

<sup>21</sup> The *Hyakka zensho* 百科全書 [Encyclopaedia/Complete work of a 100 disciplines] (Tokyo: Mombusho, 1875–1885) is a translation of Chambers’s *Information for the People* published in separate and independent instalments. Originally, this work also appeared in separate and independent instalments. For relevant Japanese encyclopaedias see Rudolf Wagner, “Chinese Encyclopedic Works 1840–1937, their Japanese and Western Models and Sources. Continuously Updated Metadata for the Database HEIDENC.”



## Placing the Newspaper into the Order of Things

In a second step, I will study the place of the newspaper in the encyclopaedic order of things. Encyclopaedias present an order of the world through a hierarchy of categories and subheadings. This is even true of *A New Encyclopaedic Dictionary of General Knowledge* (#8).<sup>22</sup> At the same time, this order has to help a reader locate information. It therefore anticipates the implied readers' probable mindset when looking for this information rather than following the editor's whim. The place of the newspaper is meaningfully marked within this order. The *Classified Compilation of Western Affairs* (#1) placed the newspaper under "government," *zhengzhi* 政治, together with a note: "[This chapter offers excerpts and comments on] Reports on Western government affairs. These include such things as parliaments, public servants, and penal laws with a note on newspapers appended, because all the documents relating to the [government's] orders and edicts will be carried by them" (記泰西政事。凡議院, 官守, 刑獄之類, 而以新聞紙附之, 以其發號施令悉藉以傳大). The focus of the first Chinese ambassadors was on the operational mode of the Western states; they had little sense of something now called "society," and the option to regard newspapers as forms of articulation by the members of "society" is not present. The newspapers in this heading have the primary function of transmitting government orders. The implied reader—even for a book published by the Shenbaoguan, a press that also published the most important early Chinese language paper, the *Shenbao* 申報—is familiar with the *Peking Gazette*, *Jingbao* 京報, with its complete record of the approved government documents. Private newspapers were a different matter, and when looking for newspapers, the reader might well search for them where the *Peking Gazette* would be placed, i.e. under government matters. The projected reader seems to be preparing for a job in the new diplomatic service, because the *Classified Compilation* follows not just the diaries but also his own trajectory—the travel to get there, the basics of foreign relations, the presentation at court etc. As we shall see, the newspaper entry in #1 does not just follow this implied reader but in a way responds to him.

Compared to this, *A Comprehensive Summary of Current Affairs by Category and for All Nations* (#2) broadly followed the heaven, earth, man order familiar to the reader from earlier Chinese encyclopaedias, with astronomy, geography and state as the three pillars. Within the broad state group, we find different types of rulers, different systems of public service, and various official ranks and ways to maintain state order. The newspaper also comes under "government," and again is tacked on to an appendix after the subheadings of moral administration, finance, and law. It now is part of a state-organised system of communication between the state and society, and between

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<sup>22</sup> Western encyclopaedias also have been struggling with this problem. Cross-referencing and detailed indexes were to help find content linkages across the formal arrangement. In a more radical departure, information contained in *Chambers's Cyclopaedia* (1728) with its alphabetical sequence was repackaged into 100 extensive topical entries ("Astronomy," "Horse," "Kitchen Garden") in *Chambers's Information for the People* (1,835, many later editions) with access to terms through an alphabetical index. The encyclopaedic series coming out in England, Germany, Japan and eventually China followed the same principle, but without an overall index.



society's members in the form of a postal service and the telegraph. The place of the newspaper here is still within the top-down structure of the state's administration of society. The anchor determining the newspaper's place here is its conveyance of information and opinion, and differs from the private letter and the personal telegram by doing so publicly. Its awkward place in the state-organised communication structure confirms the absence of a concept of "society" as something with legitimate agency.<sup>23</sup>

*Comprehensive Examination of Current Affairs* (#3) also starts with heaven and earth, but then is more diffuse in its structure. After railways and mines, it has a chapter each on the telegraph and the postal system. The newspaper entry is an appendix to the information on the postal system.

Timothy Richard opted for a different order in the *Handy Cyclopaedia* (#4), dealing with the newspaper under "General Education," *wenxue* 文學. After giving the number of speakers for the different Western languages, the section sketches early European thinking on physics, and then introduces the origins of the newspaper, followed by a sketch of mythology. The section is focused on educational resources such as schools and libraries, and the newspaper is defined as a source of information. The state plays no role.

Since the six sections of the *Comprehensive Classified Compilation on Contemporary Affairs* (#5) all have to do with contemporary affairs, *shiwu* 時務, a term that actually refers to political management, it dispenses with heaven and earth and goes straight to the state's duties. The entry on money in the section financial management is followed by entries on telegraph lines and the postal service. Although the material has been taken entirely from the *Comprehensive Examination of Current Affairs* (#3), the newspaper has graduated here from an appendix to a separate entry coming after the postal service.

*Three Compilations of Western Learning* (#6) deals with the "newspaper" in the subsection "education," without any connection to the post office.<sup>24</sup> This again stresses the educational potential of the medium while short-changing its role as a place of negotiation and contestation between state and society.

Sun Yirang in *The Political Essence of the Book of Zhou Rites* (*Zhouli*) (#7) draws on the *Zhouli* to support a push for a modern educational system and open communication between state and society. In this work, we find the newspaper embedded in a

<sup>23</sup> Even the handbook of model essays, *Zhong wai zheng yi cefu tongzong* 中外政藝策府統宗 [Comprehensive summary of Imperial Examinations about government and technical learning in China and foreign countries] (1901), which reserves a separate chapter for the newspapers, places them after the postal service although the actually selected texts have nothing to do with it. As Natascha Gentz shows in her article in this volume, the section consists of articles taken from independent newspapers, in most cases the *Shenbao*, not from a government gazette, Yishu hui zhuren 譯書會主人, comp. *Zhong wai zheng yi cefu tongzong* 中外政藝策府統宗 (Shanghai: Zhong wai yishu hui, 1901), *juan* 24. Another such compilation from the same year also has a separate chapter with articles on newspapers, and inserts them into an environment that has to do with schools and education. Shao Zhitang 邵之棠, comp., *Huangchao jingshiwen tongbian* 皇朝經世文統編 [A comprehensive compilation of statecraft essays from our august dynasty] (Shanghai, Baosha zhai, 1901), Section 15, "Bao" 報 [Newspapers] in *juan* 15 of the part *Wenjiao* 文教.

<sup>24</sup> The other subsections of this category are governance, *zhi* 治, education, *jiao* 教, law, *fa* 法, finance, *cai* 財, agriculture, *nong* 農, commerce, *shang* 商, industry, *gong* 工, and military, *bing* 兵.

sequence focused on education on the one hand, and on communication between state and society on the other. After “Education of the Dauphins,” *jiaozhou* 教育, “Broadly Setting up Schools,” *guang xue* 廣學, “Understanding Technical Learning,” *tong yi* 通藝, “Selecting [the Best],” *xuanju* 選舉, and “Broadening Public Discussion,” *bo yi* 博議, which refers to a parliament, comes “Disseminating Papers,” *guang bao* 廣報, which is specified as referring to “newspapers.” This is followed by “Understanding Foreign Languages,” *tong yi* 通譯. In this order of things, the role of the newspaper to publicly spread information and opinion is emphasised next to the role of a parliament.

Huang Ren in the *New Encyclopaedic Dictionary of General Knowledge* (#8) gives one entry each to daily papers—under the term *xinwen zhi* 新聞紙 that translates “newspaper” verbatim—and to journals, *zazhi* 雜誌. His order combines a scientific modernism with aids facilitating searches. Papers and journals come under the very formal category “Chinese writing,” *guowen xue* 國文學, together with such diverse things as “Seal Script,” *xiaozhuan* 小篆, “Bringing Together the Written and Spoken Language,” *wen yan yi zhi* 文言一致, or the “Tendenzroman,” *qingxiang xiaoshuo* 傾向小說.<sup>25</sup> As we shall see later, the emphasis is on the formal difference between the two types of medium and on their legal framework in civilised states.

The place of the newspaper in the order of things remained contested. The first big Republican period encyclopaedia, the *Everyday Cyclopaedia*, *Riyong baike quanshu* 日用百科全書 (1919), had no entry on newspapers at all.<sup>26</sup> Only a supplement that appeared in 1925 included an entry. It did this in a context connected with libraries and schools as part of a “social education” process, but did not even acknowledge the existence of Chinese newspapers. The fully revised 1934 edition finally gave a long, separate entry to the newspaper, including the Chinese newspaper, but again in connection with libraries and schools.<sup>27</sup>

## Content Analysis: Late Qing Encyclopaedic Commonplaces about the Newspaper

In a third step, I will now give a bestiary of the tropes commonly accepted in the encyclopaedias for the newspaper, together with the most important deviations.

A basic and quite sophisticated framework is provided by the *Classified Compilation of Western Affairs* (#1).<sup>28</sup> It starts off by quoting the diary of Liu Xihong 劉錫鴻 (–1891), who ranked second behind Guo Songtao 郭嵩燾 (1818–1891), the first Chinese ambassador in London from 1877–1879:

<sup>25</sup> “Fenlei mulu” 分類目錄 [Index of classification categories], in *Putong baike xin dacidian*, comp. Huang Ren, 43b–44b.

<sup>26</sup> Wang Yanlun 王言綸 *et al.*, eds., *Riyong Baike quanshu* 日用百科全書 [parallel title: *Everyday Cyclopaedia*]. (Shanghai: Shangwu, 1919).

<sup>27</sup> Huang Shaoyu 黃紹緒 *et al.*, eds., *Chongbian Riyong baike quanshu* 重編日用百科全書 [Completely revised *Everyday Cyclopaedia*], 3 vols. (Shanghai: Shanghai shangwu, 1934), 1:58–82.

<sup>28</sup> Shen Chun, comp., *Xishi leibian*, *juan* 6: 15b.

Newspapers in the British capital are a sort of “pure discussion,” *qingyi* 清議, every day the ruler of the state sees from what is contained there and what is not which government business is urgent and which is not. One of the papers is called *The Times*. The people in charge of it are gentlemen of exceptional talent and knowledge. It is read at the court and in the provinces. It sells 70,000 copies daily, at 3 pence each. This gives a daily income of 4,375 *liang* silver. If someone has an item he wants to have carried by the paper, the expense [for the advertisement, R.W.] is 8 shillings per day and item. Another paper is called the *Daily News*, *Dili niushi* 地里牛士, and yet another the *Telegraph*, *Dili jia* 地理家. Another is called the *Standard*, *Sidan* 司丹; this one [is] inspired by officials. Another one, the *Morning Post*, *Molengshi* 磨稜士,<sup>29</sup> carries all the comings and goings as well as promotions and demotions of officials, no different from the Chinese *Palace Excerpts*, *Gongmen chao* 宮門抄, and *Yamen Excerpts*, *Yamen chao* 轅門抄.<sup>30</sup> If those holding forth on politics have something to criticise or those holding the levers of power have something to communicate, they publish it here.<sup>31</sup>

英都 [=倫敦] 新聞紙乃清議所繫。國君 [主] 每視其臧否為事之弛張 [=舉廢弛張]。有曰戴唔士 [者], 才識特優之紳士主之。朝野所共披 [=○] 覽者也。日售新聞紙七萬分, 每分價三邊士, 每日售銀四千三百七十五元。有事請登入報者, 每事每日非八息零 [日售 to 息零 missing]。次 [=次則] 曰地里牛士。次 [次則] 曰地理家。其曰司丹 [司丹達] 者其 [其 missing] 則官授之意者也。其曰磨稜士 [=磨稜卜士] 者則備載仕宦往來與其黜陟 [=升黜], 無異中國之宮門抄, 轅門報 [=報者] 也。論政者之有所刺譏, 與柄政者之有所申辯 [=伸辯], 皆於是乎著。

Liu Xihong, who was of a much more conservative bent than his superior, defined the newspaper in Britain, as exemplified by the *Times*, primarily as a medium of communicating critical opinion to the ruler. The papers are to serve communication between high and low, although that formula is not used here. Papers resembling Chinese government gazettes are of little importance. The importance of the *Times* is due to the standing of its chief editors and the resulting broad authority of the paper. The emphasis on the public nature of information and opinion has to be read against the background of the Chinese secret memorial system of the time. In the emphasis on highly qualified people being selected for the editorship of papers that are then regularly perused by the highest authorities for information, advice, and criticism, Liu Xihong is echoing a Chinese ideal. The editor adds a more systematic comment.

Comment by editor:

Newspaper companies have started in France. They select people of great talent and renown and make them editors-in-chief, *zhuzheng* 主政. Things befitting and not befitting the rules of the court, benefits and damages incurred by the people—once they hear about it they report it and

<sup>29</sup> This identification is not fully supported by the transcription here, because our text failed to copy the *bu* 卜, which would have given Moleng Bushi, a solid transcription of the *Morning Post*. When Liu Xihong was in London, this paper was indeed famous for its “court notices.” See Wilfrid Hope Hindle, *The Morning Post, 1772–1937: portrait of a newspaper* (London: Taylor and Francis, 1937), 205.

<sup>30</sup> The Chinese reference is to the *Peking Gazette* and the regional gazettes.

<sup>31</sup> The source is Liu Xihong 劉錫鴻, *Ying yao riji* 英報日記 [Diary of an assignment to England]. I am not sure what kind of copies or excerpts of Liu’s diary as a vice-ambassador in London circulated. The only other early excerpt printing this passage I found in Wang Xiqi 王錫祺, *Xiaofanghuzhai yudi congchao* 小方壺彙輿地叢鈔, (1897; repr. Hangzhou: Hangzhou guji shidian, 1985), set 11, 167b. In the brackets I have indicated the differences between the *Xishi leibian* text and the Wang Xiqi text.

know no taboos in their praise and criticism. [These papers are] in name different but in reality identical with the flags announcing virtue, *gao shan zhi qi* 告善之旗, and the wooden boards for criticism, *fei bang zhi mu* 誹謗之木, in ancient [China]. They are the instrument through which the information on those below is communicated and pure proposals are reproduced.

按：新聞紙館創自法蘭西。選才高望重者為之主政。朝章之得失，民間之利弊，聽其記，載褒貶無所忌諱。與古者告善之旌，誹謗之木，名異而實同。所以通下情重清議也。

After this glowing introduction, which shows the compatibility of the new medium with ancient Chinese ideals, the editor tackles the problems that accompany the newspaper.

However, the abuses are also beyond description. Upon his ascension, the French President Patrice de MacMahon [gov. 1873–1879] issued a decree to the different newspaper companies that, because his reforms harboured without exception the best intentions to benefit the national economy and the people's livelihood, the editors should only convey words of appreciation and not indulge in any slander. He also set out to bribe them with hefty sums. The parliamentarian Erlang (?) got into a duel with an editor because he had been belittled for once having been a rebel. 然弊竇亦不可勝言。法國統領麥馬韓即位，諭知各報官，以所更新章無不斟酌盡善，有裨國計民生，主筆者止宜廣為揄揚，不得任意貶謫。且賄以重利。議員爾朗以曾為亂黨為所菲薄，與報館主白刃相仇。

The editor then takes up press regulations and censorship.

With the exception of England, the USA, and Belgium, various prohibitions exist in the other states regarding critiques of court policies. Originally the motive for setting up newspapers was to allow straight talk without holding anything back. But to wish to have those words spoken out, and then to shut people's mouths so that the flaws remain hidden and the blemishes are out of public view, and only the embellishments are visible from the outside—what good is such news?

泰西除英美比三國而外，報館議論朝政皆有例禁。設立新聞原冀其直言無隱，既欲其言，又箝其口，藏瑕匿垢，徒飾外觀，亦何取此新聞乎

At the same time, the papers may become instruments of commercial propaganda, political upheaval, and libel:

Apart from this, once some object has been successfully manufactured or a technique perfected, inevitably the newspaper company will be bribed to fill its pages with campaigns so as to meet the private profit-making interests [of those who made the object or perfected the technique]. And not only this. Rebellion and opposition to the authorities cannot be done by a one man alone. People are of different minds, each is obsessed with having an immaculate countenance and they do not dare to divulge what irritates them. But once such private concerns are published in a newspaper, those with similar ambitions will respond. As to the pressure from Western industry and the domination of their political cohorts—in all cases [they operate] in such a manner that one person gives the tone and hundreds and thousands of miles away a hundred respond—how would all this be possible without newspapers? And how should other things such as their denunciations of somebody's ills and detractions from his true nature or exaggerations of his good sides—way beyond the facts—simply be regarded as minor problems?<sup>32</sup>

此外一物之成，以技之就，無不賄囑報館，鋪張揚厲，以遂其牟利之私。不特此也。作亂犯上，非一人所能為，而人心不同，各如其面即素，所狎習亦不敢違白。其私一登新聞，則同志皆響應矣。西洋工匠之挾制，黨人之把持，數千百里外，無不一唱而百和，苟非新聞，焉能如是。他如稱人之惡，而損其真，揚人之善，而過其實，猶事之小焉者也？！

<sup>32</sup> *Xishi leibian*, juan 6: 16a.

The emphasis here is not on information, although it plays a role, but on evaluation. The newspaper is obviously different in manner from the way that the people's feelings and criticisms of government officials reached the court during the golden age of antiquity, but the ultimate purpose of the newspaper is the same. The British government shares the ideals of Chinese antiquity and therefore tolerates and appreciates such frank talk.

The entry ends with a more general and blunt assessment of the purpose of newspapers and their potentially tense relationship with the government. The West does not have some unified essence. There are substantial differences between the various Western states, and even in states such as France, where the press is relatively free, government abuses occur. Russia is quoted as a government that shackles its press.

Russian papers:

As for Russian papers, nothing relating to state affairs is allowed to circulate outside of Russia's borders. The customs houses exert strict controls in this matter. If they find a newspaper [in a traveller's luggage, R.W.] referring to state affairs they blacken the article out with black ink. It will only get outside of Russia if friends snip it out and put it in a letter. From Zeng Jize 曾紀澤 [1839–1890], *Diary of an Ambassador to the West*, Shi Ying riji

使西日記。<sup>33</sup> 俄羅斯新報凡涉國事者不准傳出境外。稅關察之甚嚴。見新報之涉國事者皆以油墨塗之。惟友人裁割如函，始能達於境外。

The editor comments:

The regulations for Russian newspapers [stipulate]: Just before publication the paper is to be submitted to the newspaper censors for inspection. If after going through it they find nothing objectionable, the [paper] may be issued. When a new paper is being set up, it also has to pay a deposit to the [censorship] office's treasury. If the authors are found guilty for what they write they are fined a certain amount, which is deducted from the deposit. That is why the [newspapers] do not dare to make straightforward comments on state matters

故於國事不敢直言也。俄國報館章程凡新報臨發時，呈監報官校閱。一過如無違礙，再行頒發。且於開報之初，以銀繳存部庫。如以言得罪，應罰鍰，若干即扣此項。故於國事不敢直言也。

We have here a shopping list of the political danger of rebellion posed by newspapers, of their impact in spreading technical and political ideas, and of the problems of libel or flattery on the printed newspaper page. One single and rather ambivalent example is given to show the questionable uses of the press. The example is taken from the United States.

In the US a paper has been issued [*The Revolution*, R.W.] in which a woman argues that 'in our country all office holders are men and now [in 1876] the person who is about to be elected president is also inevitably going to be a man. Why cannot we women line up and be eligible in the same way? This is very unjust.' I have furthermore heard that in England there also are women who want to enter Parliament so as to join in the deliberation of state matters. This is

<sup>33</sup> *Xishi leibian*, juan 6: 18a. Zeng Jize succeeded Guo Songtao. His diary is available as *The Diary of Zeng Jize*, Zeng Jize riji 曾紀澤日記 (Changsha: Yuelu shushe, 1998).

rather unprecedented. Li Gui 李圭 [1842–1903] *A Trip around the Globe*, Huan you diqiu lu 環游地球錄.<sup>34</sup>

美國出一新報，有女子倡言‘我國居官者皆男子。近欲公舉伯理璽天德必又為男子。何以我婦女不能在列同受選舉大非公道事。聞英國亦有婦女欲進議院，同參國事。語頗創聞。

#### The editor comments:

This American woman is called [Susan B.] Anthony [1820–1906]. After putting forward this proposal she was impeached by the criminal authorities and received a small fine for the proposal. Anthony had construed the term “persons” [entitled to citizens’ privilege according to the constitution] too broadly, and had taken part in this election with the intention of indirectly making the point.<sup>35</sup>

美國女子名安妥尼。創議後為刑司思所劾，議以薄罰。安妥尼因定制凡人二字過泛，故有是舉以申諷諭之意耳。

Yet even in this example, Ambassador Li Gui quotes a foreign friend as saying that these women actually had a point (a part left out by Shen), and Shen Chun does not see an abuse of the press, emphasizing as he does that Susan Anthony only received a small fine.<sup>36</sup>

The *Comprehensive Summary of Current Affairs by Category and for All Nations* (#2) stresses the information value of newspapers for merchants not mentioned in the *Classified Compilation of Western Affairs* (#1).

The newspapers set up in the different states of the European continent also publish the prices of goods far and near, as well as the weather reports about rain and snow as well as the annual harvests to help the merchants decide what to go for and what to avoid. When the papers of these publishing companies are dispatched abroad by postal offices, the fees are lower than those for letters so as to increase their benefit for the people (*juan* 14, 50a).<sup>37</sup> 歐羅巴大洲各國報館之設亦將遠近貨物之價，及雨雪多寡，年景豐歉俱登於報一便商賈知所趨避，而報館之報由信局外寄則較信函減價一其有益於民也

<sup>34</sup> For the source, see Li Gui 李圭, *Huanyou diqiu xin lu* 環游地球新錄 [New account of a trip around the globe] (Changsha: Yuelu shushe, 1985), 237. In the original a “Western friend” is speaking. He is also the person who has heard about the British women’s demands. He originally ends with “although this is unheard of, they still do seem to have a point,” but the latter part has been cut by Shen.

<sup>35</sup> *Xishi leibian*, *juan* 6: 19b.

<sup>36</sup> Li also made sure he talked to the editor of the New York *Sun* in person, who told him, “In New York there are over 60 newspapers, with the [New York] *Sun* reigning supreme. All matters from the court down to the villages are reported there.” Li Gui, *Huanyou diqiu xin lu*, 275. For the fine identification of the name of the paper, which in Chinese is given as *Di Sen Bao* 滴森報, *The Sun*—namely the *New York Sun*—, see Charles Desnoyers, *A Journey to the East. Li Gui’s A New Account of a Trip Around the Globe* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004), 187. While Shen is careful to stay close to the original, he is also willing to extract simply the key information and leave out the rest. The little piece here reads in the original: 紐城報館大小六十餘家，渠館每日出報十四萬張，有極大印字機六具。報館之大，英國泰吾士而外，滴森稱最。又云新報紙上至朝廷，下逮閭閻事，無不具。This passage is simplified and summarized as 美國紐約大小新報館六十餘家以滴森報為最。上自朝廷，下逮閭閻，無事不具。“Among the more than 60 big and small New York papers, *The Sun* stands out. From the court above to the popular quarters below, everything is covered.”

<sup>37</sup> Qian Feng, *Wanguo fenlei shiwu dacheng*, *juan* 14: 50a.



Then, however, we find the already familiar selection of “editors of great talent and high renown” 才高望眾 (*juan* 14, p. 52a). Moving on, the purpose of the press as the instrument of communication between high and low is clearly articulated here.

The establishment of newspapers was in the beginning there to state opinions; their main purpose is to communicate the information/feelings between high and low, to make understood the ideas of both, and to disseminate them inside and outside of the court without distinction between near and far (*juan* 14, p. 50a).

新聞紙之設, 其初立意所在, 主於通上下之情, 達彼此之意, 傳之內外, 無間遐邇。

The ideal of a free flow of communication between high and low was very much *en vogue* among reform-oriented writers in that day, and they routinely referred to Chinese antiquity as the time when this ideal had been realised—with the implication that the present-day situation was the exact opposite.<sup>38</sup> The article then opens up the view to a new and very broad range of regular publications, without making any formal difference between periodicals and daily papers. They tend to be specialised in certain fields, be they political, economic, scientific, geographic, or amusing, such that even the entertainment papers are mentioned. All of these “are widely distributed, swift as the wind, and reach everywhere without even having legs. For printing they solely use machines, which are fast and easy and do not require any supplemental labour.”

These two aspects are both new, as is the very general and powerful assessment of the benefits of the press in Europe that follows:

The various states of Europe all consider these [periodical publications] to be the carriers of the opinion of the millions; the commonweal relies on [newspapers] to persist between heaven and earth. Only under these conditions will the ruler be enlightened and the ministers excellent, those above and those below will be in harmonious relationship with each other, the lord does not need to display his power to remunerate and to punish, and the officials do not need to inflict harsh repression. [This is the reason why] in olden days, Zichan of Zheng did not abolish the village schools because he did not wish to block the people’s ‘pure proposals’ from reaching the ruler’s ears (*juan* 14, p. 50a).<sup>39</sup>

歐洲各國皆以此為億兆公論之所寄, 公道賴以常存於天壤間。必如是而後, 君明臣良, 上和下睦, 人主不得逞其威福, 官吏不得行其苛暴。昔鄭子產不毀鄉校, 蓋欲使庶民之清議不壅於上聞也。

The newspaper here becomes the anchor for the commonweal, fed by the public discourses of the millions of citizens, which will make a ruler enlightened and the ministers excellent. The Chinese term *qingyi* 清議, already used in the *Classified Compilation of Western Affairs* to characterize the content of this public opinion or these public discourses, reappears here. It had been appropriated by a wide swath of

<sup>38</sup> On this ideal see my “The *Zhouli* as the Late Qing Path to the Future,” 376–378.

<sup>39</sup> The details of the story in *Zuozhuan* 左傳, Duke Xiang 襄公, 31st year. Zichan has been eulogized for this enlightened attitude by, among others, Han Yu 韓愈. See Fang Jie 方介, “Han Yu ‘Zichan bu hui xiangxiao song’ xilun” 韓愈《子產不毀鄉校頌》析論 [An analysis of Han Yu’s ‘A word of praise for Zichan’s NOT tearing down the village schools’], in *Taida wenshi zhaxue bao* 67 (2007): 63–82.

Chinese officials who used it to claim that their criticisms were “pure” and with no other motive than the public good in order to articulate their disagreement with court policies, which they often felt to be too accommodating to the Westerners. Since no difference is made between the London *Times qingyi* and the Chinese *qingyi*, the praise for the former must be valid for the latter. The reference to Zichan’s decision not to abolish village schools in which people were lambasting his policies emphasises the compatibility of the purpose of the newspaper with the *imaginaire* of the ideal Chinese state in antiquity. This segment concludes with another new thought.

Generally speaking it is true that the reason why, once the empire is ruled according to the Way, the common folk will make no criticisms, is not because they do not have critical opinions. [The reason is] that if governance coincides with the people’s aspirations—what then would there be to decry?! (*Juan* 14, 50a)

夫天下有道，庶人不議，非不議也。政治洽於民心—亦安有所斥言哉

There is some ambivalence in this statement. One might argue that no government in real historical time can do better than try to “rule according to the Way,” and newspapers are always necessary in order to help it do better, although their critical pitch might vary. This would coincide with the drift of the previously quoted passage. At the same time, the statement opens the frighteningly real option of reading the very existence of newspapers as an implied criticism of the failure of government to live up to its own ideals.

The work follows the precedent of the *Classified Compilation of Western Affairs* (#1) by combining newly-written text with verbatim extracts from named Chinese authors. It now quotes at length from Wang Tao. As the founder and editor of the Hong Kong *Universal Circulating Herald*, Tsun-wan yat-po (Xunhuan ribao) 循環日報, and author of numerous books on Europe and Japan who had spent extensive time there, Wang could be quoted as a reliable Chinese source.

The recluse Wang Tao says: How could the circulation of newspapers in the nations of the West just be a trivial phenomenon?! What they carry relates above to the successes and failures of government actions, so as to probe the fortunes of the nation’s fate, and below they record what people’s hearts appreciate and what not [change 事 to 是], which allows the state of people’s customs to be gauged. Altogether, everything—from the territorial particularities of mountains and rivers to the places where things can be easily produced or not, to the quality of the soil, the strength and wealth of the state—will be understood at one glance. That is good reason why the newspapers should be so appreciated, both at the court and out in the provinces (*juan* 14, 50a).

日報之行與泰西諸國豈泛然而已哉?所載，上聞政事之得失足以驗國運之興衰，下述人心之事[是]非足以察風俗之厚薄。凡山川之形勝，物產之簡蕃，地土之腴瘠，邦國之富強，莫不一覽而了。然其所以見重於朝野良有以哉

Wang Tao then gives a summary of the numbers of dailies in different states, taken from an unnamed Prussian author. This is a fine example of the migration of encyclopaedic information across languages and cultures. The information was originally contained in the official journal of the German Postal Office, the *Archiv*

*für Post und Telegraphie*, in April 1886.<sup>40</sup> This journal in turn claims to have the information from a “French specialist in statistics.” The German journal, which contains in each issue a wealth of information on postal and other communications in all parts of the world, was widely read and excerpted all over Europe. Wang Tao might have had his information from the excerpt in the *Aberdeen Weekly Journal* or from the *Pall Mall Gazette*, which in its turn got its information via the *Scottish Weekly* of July 22, 1886. As the editor of the *Universal Circulating Herald* in Hong Kong, Wang Tao must have had access to a wide variety of Western papers and journals as sources of information. He claims that “the five continents altogether have over 5950 dailies” with the whole of Asia (without Japan) having just 57 against Prussia’s 1743 and England’s 1253. As these numbers were from the early 1870’s, this encyclopaedia supplements them with more recent data. Wang concludes:

Has the wide spread of dailies and their circulation far and wide to this day not been sensational? This is a situation that has truly never existed before. Had the [newspapers] not been connected with public opinion—how could they have maintained themselves for so long and spread so wide without going under? Only with regard to China, this “wind” [of newspapers], while having made a beginning, has not thrived—might this be because there is no human being around to espouse “pure criticism,” or do we just have to wait a bit longer? (*Juan* 14, 50b)

日報推行之廣，流播之遠，迄於今日，不綦盛哉。此實創前未有之局者也。苟非公論所繫，安能持之久遠而不廢。獨至中土，此風雖開，猶未盛行，豈以維持清議者無其人歟，抑或尚有所待也。

Wang Tao reinforces many of the tropes we have already heard: the communication between high and low, the information and opinions, and the readership in government and society. The last comment claims that the blossoming of newspapers has to do with their close link to public opinion, which provides them with buyers and advertisers. The blossoming of the papers reflects the vitality of public opinion. The depressing assessment of China’s prospects in this regard must be read against this background, since it was written by one of the most active and prominent of early Chinese journalists.<sup>41</sup> His last comment is the only reference to the Chinese press situation I have located in these early encyclopaedias, despite the fact that quite a few of the authors of encyclopaedic works—such as Zou Tao—were journalists in such papers, and the *Classified Compilation of Western Affairs* (#1) was put out by the newspaper publisher Shenbaoguan. The text now turns to the dissemination of technical and scientific knowledge.

There are many different kinds of newspaper in the West, and more than half of them are scholarly by nature. When they explain a process and offer insight into one principle, and this is published in the newspapers, the entire nation benefits from it. The increase in knowledge through newspapers is great indeed! (*Juan* 14, p. 50b)

<sup>40</sup> Anon. “Die Zeitungen der Erde,” *Archiv für Post und Telegraphie* 7 (1886), 284–285.

<sup>41</sup> For a systematic study of China’s first generation of journalists, including Wang Tao, see Natascha Vittinghoff, *Die Anfänge des Journalismus in China (1862–1911)* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2002).

泰西新聞為類甚多，學問之類過半。格一事，悟一理 載入新聞舉國均霽其益。新聞紙之增人智識也大矣

To this it adds an editorial summary:

In the West, there is news about academic subjects, among which again there is a division for scientific news, which again has a subdivision for political matters, which again has a subdivision for merchants, which again is subdivided. When looking for medicine or technology, the same is true. Different people check out what they wish to know so as to increase their familiarity [with the respective field] (*juan* 14, p. 50b).

泰西有講學之新聞，講學中亦分類有格致之新聞，格致一分類有政事之新聞，政事中亦分類有商賈之新聞，商賈中亦分類。推之於鑿於藝亦然。各觀其所學以習益。

The last new item in this encyclopaedia refers to the effort in Britain to make a great variety of newspapers and periodicals available to readers without the need to subscribe to them all.

If one wished to buy all of the different kinds [of newspapers], the expense would be large, and not everybody would be able to afford it. That is why newspaper clubs have been established that link people living nearby. They set up a place where all the different newspapers are bought, and the members may enter at their leisure to read them. The costs are negligible, but the benefits are huge (*juan* 14, p. 50b–51a).

欲備購各種為款甚多，非盡人可能。是以有新聞會之設。聯近地之人置一館，館中備購各種新聞，會中人任意入館遍觀。費無幾，獲益甚大

John Fryer (1839–1928) set up such a reading room in Shanghai in the 1870 s. The entry ends with copies of the relevant material on newspapers in New York, Russia (including the censorship), Great Britain, and France, as well as on abuses of the newspaper from the *Classified Compilation of Western Affairs* (#1). While it leaves out the little piece on Susan B. Anthony, it keeps the note on the uses of the newspaper to spread rebellious ideas. A note on heliograph transmission, *riying bao* 日影報, is attached at the end.

Huang Ren's "newspaper," *xinwen zhi* 新聞紙, entry in #8 (1911) runs with formal rigour:

Print products appearing at regular intervals with a main focus on reporting social and political phenomena. While it may contain essays, *lunshuo*, it is not a newspaper if it contains these alone. This distinguishes it from a journal, *zazhi*. Journals mainly consist of critical assessments of social and political pros and cons, successes and failures. If they only contain facts, they would again not be classified as journals. Although critical assessments and factual reports are in the end unavoidably mixed up with one another, their difference in character must be kept in mind.

以報告社會上/政治上現象為正目的之定期出版物。雖亦載論說，而僅載論說，即不得為新聞紙。此其與雜誌之區別也。雜誌以評論社會/政治上是非得失為主，若僅載事若僅載事實，亦不得為雜誌。雖評論記載二者終不免混雜，然其性質之異，不可不知也。

This new section recasts and systematises information that was previously available. While the information that periodicals contain essays of political opinion as well as factual information is familiar, the sharp analytical distinction between the two types of media is new. It is less convincing, however, than interesting in its effort at systematic definition, because the periodical press is reduced here to high

political and social matters, while scholarly journals, for example, or entertainment dailies are left unaccounted for. The entry continues:

According to the current statutes of the different civilised states, each issue of each newspaper and journal must carry, besides the publisher and the printer in charge, a record of the editor and the place of publication.

As to the origins [of the newspapers], in China things such as the *dichao* 邸抄 [= *Peking Gazette* regional editions] and the official gazettes 官報 are sources, whereas in Europe the *Acta Diurna* published by the government in ancient Rome marks the earliest beginning, while the *Gazetta* published in Venice in 1563 is the actual ancestor.

The different states all have fixed newspaper laws, but as to the type, the form, and their orientation they may proceed as they wish.<sup>42</sup>

照文明各國通例，新聞紙/雜誌，每號每冊，發行人印刷人負責任外，更須記載編輯人發行所。其起源，在我國則邸抄管報等為濫觴，在歐洲則古時羅馬政府發行之亞克拉塔求那為嚆矢，而一五六三年發行於威尼斯之伽西答，為鼻祖。各國皆有規定之新聞紙律，若種類/形式/宗旨，則聽自由

This segment deals with newspapers only. The focus is on the state rules for their registration, and their origin in state gazettes. The available knowledge that the *Gazetta* was privately published is not given, nor is any mention made of the potential benefits and flaws of newspapers or of the problems of censorship. In the effort to provide a formal and technical definition of the content, the legal framework, the antecedents, and the leeway of the newspaper, its functions, the agency involved, and the contestation surrounding it have been left out.

The entry for the journals, *zazhi* 雜誌, within the same “Chinese writing category,” comes with the English “magazine” as an equivalent. It also focuses on a formal definition.

Formerly a name for writings of unspecified type, such as brush notes, *suibi* or collected jottings, *conglu*, since the opening of overseas communication it has been appropriated for periodicals that are bound, such as monthlies or weeklies. (In fact these periodicals each have their exact boundaries, but because they have not much developed, there is some confusion in their denominations). In the West, magazines started with the printing in 1737 of the *Gentleman's Magazine*, in China they started early in the Tongzhi reign (1860–1874) with people in the Christian congregation and gradually increased until after the *wuxu* 戊戌 year (1898) [the year of the Hundred Days Reforms]. However, these magazines appeared and collapsed [in quick succession], so very few were able to survive for long.<sup>43</sup>

舊為無種類之書名，如隨筆叢錄等。自海通後，遂以成帙之報當之，如月報旬報等。(其實各有界限此時尚未發達骨朵混稱)。西國始於一七三七年散德門斯麥伽勤之刊行。我國始於同治初教會中人。至戊戌以後而稍盛。然此起彼仆，能持久者甚少。

We learn that *zazhi* is an older Chinese term used now as a calque for the Western genre “magazine” that differs from the newspaper by being bound, and by coming out at longer, but also regular, intervals. While accurately noting the flurry of Chinese magazine publications since 1901, the entry misdates the earliest Chinese-language magazines and fails to note the role of Japan in their

<sup>42</sup> Huang Ren, *Putong baike xin dacidian*, 13 strokes, entry #151.

<sup>43</sup> Huang Ren, *Putong baike xin dacidian*, 18 strokes, entry #50.

development. Both entries are newly written, and nothing in them has been visibly copied directly from earlier Chinese encyclopaedias. The information in the first entry is enriched with new elements, and in the second entry is new throughout. The strong emphasis on a formal and rigorous set of definitions follows up on the efforts of the *The New Erya*, *Xin Erya* 新爾雅, in 1903 in the field of political science.<sup>44</sup> Huang Ren is thus part of a second stage in the Chinese integration of Western categories. The first stage, as best seen in the *Classified Compilation of Western Affairs* (#1), defined them through their specific appearance in institutions, objects, and practices. In this second stage, an effort is made to arrive at scientific definitions of general validity. Huang Ren no longer treats China as if it were defined by some ancient and unchangeable tradition, and challenged by the new things from the West, but inserts the Chinese past into global history and now groups many things that are of distinctly Western origin (such as the newspaper) under things Chinese.

To illustrate the tropes shared by our body of texts, I will provide a list. The numbers behind each trope refer to the encyclopaedia having this trope in the sequence in which they were listed earlier in the section “**The manufacture of encyclopaedic texts during the late Qing**”.

- (a) Beneficial for talent and knowledge: 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7.
- (b) Regulated by press laws: 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 8.
- (c) Different focus in content: 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8.
- (d) Similar to “pure discussion,”: 1, 2, 3, 5, 6.
- (e) Establishes communication between high and low: 1, 2, 3, 5, 7.
- (f) Reveals government abuses: 1, 2, 3, 5, 6.
- (g) Wide distribution of news: 2, 3, 5, 6, 7.
- (h) Origin of the newspaper: 3, 4, 5, 6, 8.
- (i) Functions like remonstrance boards of antiquity: 1, 2, 3, 5.
- (j) Used for making private profits: 1, 2, 3, 5.
- (k) Does not flourish in China: 2, 6, 7, 8.
- (l) Medium of public opinion: 2, 3, 5.
- (m) Used for rebelling against authorities: 2, 3, 5.
- (n) Newspaper reading rooms: 2, 3, 5.
- (o) Official gazettes and privately owned: 3, 5, 7.
- (p) Stamp tax: 3, 5, 6.
- (q) Names of most important papers: 3, 5, 8.
- (r) Flaws in newspapers: 3, 5, 6.
- (s) Similar to *Peking Gazette*: 3, 5, 8.
- (t) Appreciated by high and low: 3, 5.
- (u) Rapid increase in newspapers: 3, 5.
- (v) Flaws of editors: 3, 5.
- (w) Editorials: 6, 8.

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<sup>44</sup> Wang and Ye, *Xin Erya* (Taipei: wenhai shuju, [1903] 1977).



The list shows a sizeable overlap of core tropes that augments the evidence given above of wholesale or partial copying. It also shows that the *Handy Cyclopaedia* (#4) has a largely different narrative, and that Huang Ren's *A New Encyclopaedic Dictionary for Common Use* (#8) eschews many of the established tropes. The pervasiveness of the habit of copying signals social acceptance. A pool of common tropes and commonplaces developed that was drawn upon by people, often of different persuasions. The difficulty they shared in the treatment of the press consisted in determining its place in the order of things.

None of the encyclopaedias had a category "society" to group together what in fact was developing all over the place, i.e. social associations (chambers of commerce, professional associations, political groupings, privately-run schools, welfare organisations), or public means of articulation (newspapers, journals, meeting halls, protests). All sides in the late Qing debate were focused on the state. Even the most ardent reformers and revolutionaries foresaw a long period in which the Chinese populace would have to be re-educated to qualify for citizenship in a modern Chinese state. There was no place or legitimacy for independent social agency that was not guided by the state or its contestants. The fact that most Chinese newspapers were run by foreigners with extraterritorial status seemed to confirm that Chinese society had not matured to the point of being able to sustain papers independently of the state. Even Huang Ren, who grouped newspapers and magazines with "Chinese" rather than "foreign" writing, was unable to get beyond a very formal definition with a strong emphasis on state regulation. None of the late Qing encyclopaedists, in short, had the will, the brains, or the time to provide the readers with a specific factual analysis of the hybrid character of the Chinese public sphere at the time.

## The Uses of Late Qing Encyclopaedias

While encyclopaedic works might copy each other's entries, they are not a closed society with commonplaces and shared opinions all of their own. To have them would even defeat their very purpose. In a last foray, I will study the newspaper entry in Sun Yirang's *The Political Essence of the Book of Zhou Rites* (#7), a work that does not follow the standard encyclopaedia format, and an essay for the new examinations published in 1903, to see to what extent they shared the encyclopaedic commonplaces.

Sun Yirang's entry "Spreading the News," starts with verbatim quotations from the *Zhouli* about all the institutions that might contain a link to the functions a newspaper should fulfil in the modern world.<sup>45</sup> Sun then provides a summary that is indented and introduced as "Comments," *jin'an* 謹案:

The different Zhou officials, such as the Travel Guide, the Royal Scout, down to the Messenger, are jointly in charge of making known the virtue of the ruler above [to those

<sup>45</sup> Sun Yirang, *Zhouli zhengyao*, 52–53.

below], and of communicating the situation below [in society to the ruler above]. This corresponds to [the] deliberation [in the statement of Shun] in the *Books from Yu* (in the *Book of Documents*, Shangshu, such as *Yao tian*, *Shun tian* etc.) [with the chief of the four mountains to throw open the doors (of communication between the court and the empire and)] to see with the eyes of the [four directions] and understand with the intelligence [of the four directions].<sup>46</sup> This idea is very sophisticated and when his imperial highness gave orders to broadly investigate and gather information in an encompassing manner, the Junior Messengers were in fact taking care of this. This is what the *Zhouli* means when he says “he [the Junior Messenger] carefully details information for each one of the states and reports them back to the emperor [so that the latter might be completely informed about the empire].” The sub-commentary by Jia Gongyan (seventh century) thinks that “for each individual item a separate letter was made out to report on it to the emperor.”<sup>47</sup> [This would prompt a translation of the repeated “makes a book...” as “makes one series of reports.” R.W.]. If the *Hanshu* 漢書 “Treatise on the economy”, *Shihuo zhi* 食貨志, says: “The Messengers of the Zhou went through the lanes to collect the songs . . . [to give them to the Music Master, who would adjust their notes and let the emperor hear them, therefore it is] said, ‘The king without watching out of the front door is informed about all that goes on under heaven’;”<sup>48</sup> —this is in full accord with the actual features of the *Zhouli*. He Xiu’s 何休 [129–182] commentary to the *Gongyang zhuan* 公羊傳 says: “‘Searching for songs’ [from the people] means that the village transmits them to the district, the district to the commandery, the commandery to the fief, and the fief brings them to the knowledge of the Son of Heaven,” but as Yang Xiong 楊雄 also says in his *Fangyan* 方言: “In former times all [missives] coming from the envoys in the light carriages as well as the memorials and documents were archived at the offices of the Zhou and the Qin.” Thus we know that presenting songs [to the emperor] to [enable him to] observe the customs [of the people] is about the same as presenting writings to inform [the emperor] about the state of the polity, and these are also just the buds of the official and private newspapers in the Western nations today.

周誦訓士訓及行人諸職，並掌宜上德而通下情，合與虞書明目連聰之誼。其意至精，而皇華命使，博放周咨，則小行人實掌之。所謂美每國辨異質以反命於王者。賈公彥疏以為各各條錄別為一書以報上也。漢書食貨志說周行人徇路采詩而曰王者不窺戶庭而知天下，與周禮實相通貫。公羊傳何休注說求詩，謂鄉移於邑，移邑於國，國以聞於天子，而楊雄方言亦謂先代輶軒之使，奏籍之書，皆藏於周奏之室則知陳詩觀風，與陳書知政，其事略同，亦即今西國官報民報之權輿也。

This summary shows that the institutions mentioned in the *Zhouli* are also mentioned in other texts, and that the ultimate purpose of this entire flow of information was to keep the emperor fully informed about society in all its aspects. After the transition in the last phrase, Sun turns to the West.

Generally speaking, the power of the state, *guoshi* 國勢, and the aspirations of the people, *minzhi* 民志, are linked. If [the people’s aspirations] are beneficial and they are guided in those [activities by the government], there will be order, but if they deviate and then are

<sup>46</sup> James Legge, trans. “The Shoo King, or The Book of Historical Documents,” in *The Chinese Classics*, James Legge, ed. vol. 3 (1861; reprint, Taipei: Wen shi zhe, 1972), 41. This reference had already become a topical subject for newspaper discourses.

<sup>47</sup> Sun Yirang, *Zhouli zhengyi*, *juan* 72: 3008.

<sup>48</sup> Ban Gu 班固, *Hanshu* 漢書 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1963) *juan* 24a:1123. The phrase about being informed about everything going on in the world without going out of doors also occurs in *Laozi* 47. By 1902 it had long become a standard quotation in Chinese newspaper editorials. With newspapers, one can be informed about the entire world without even looking out of the window.

subjected to control, there will be chaos. If fettered and blocked, the people will become more stupid, and the state will definitely become weaker. In the Western nations since the Southern Song, the English King John made a contract with the people, called the Magna Charta,<sup>49</sup> which, translated, means 'great document'. It broadly established private papers, *minbao* 民報, and the rule that frank words should not be taboo.<sup>50</sup> For this reason the aspirations of the people greatly expanded and the people's own knowledge opened up greatly. 富國勢與民志相同, 利而導之則治, 逆而制之則亂。錮蔽而阻抑之, 則民愚而國必弱。西國自南宋時, 英王約翰與民立約, 名馬格那吒達, 譯言大典, 廣立民報, 而定直言不諱之律。故民志大伸, 民智亦大開。

Sun then turns to the Western papers:

Nowadays the official Western gazettes, *guanbao* 官報, contain everything in full, from debates in parliament, the handling of the state's finances, military policies on land and water down to new principles in the natural sciences and new products in engineering. The journals of private scholarly associations, *minjian xuehui baozhang* 民間學會報章, are even more numerous. There are geographic, agricultural, commercial associations', medical, and engineering journals and even astronomy, mathematics, acoustics, optics, chemistry and electricity all have their specialised professional journals down to journals even for women and children. They appear quarterly, monthly, weekly or daily. In the morning a paper comes out, by the evening [the news] has spread over the five continents.

This is why the state [government] has no troubles in the form of a lack of communication and ignorance, and those who peruse [these papers] have the benefit of seeing the good and broadening their knowledge. As to those supervising the writing [= the editors, *sijishuzhe* 司紀述者], the great majority are learned scholars [Ru 儒] of broad insight, accomplished men of letters who are fully acquainted with the science of government. Their importance may be gleaned from the fact that some of them step in as editor-in-chief of a newspaper company after retiring from their position as prime minister.<sup>51</sup> Once they assume the management of newspapers, they report on the state administration above, and sample public discussions below. Since every word is distributed through networks of readers around the globe, time and again newspaper offices within a single state number in their tens of thousands, and the runs put out by a single newspaper company number in many tens of thousands. As servants and maids, women and children all read papers, the knowledge and skills, *zhiqiao* 智巧, of the Western nations grow by the day. Ultimately becoming rich and powerful hinges on this. 近來泰西官報, 自議院之言論, 國會之會計, 水陸之軍政, 以逮格致之新理, 工藝之新製, 靡不畢具。民間學會報章尤夥, 有地學報農學報商會報醫報工程報, 以逮天算聲光化電各有專門名家之報, 下至婦女孩童亦有報。其出也, 或以季, 或以月, 或以旬, 或以日, 朝登一紙, 夕布五州。故國無隔閡蒙昧之憂, 覽者得觀善廣學之益, 至其司紀述者, 大都通儒達士, 諳悉政學。有以宰相大臣退位而充報館注筆者, 其重可知矣。至其為報, 上陳國政, 下采公議, 一言之布, 環球觀聽係之。故往往一國之內, 報館以萬計, 一館所出之報, 以數萬紙計, 廝隸婦孺無不閱報。西國智巧日開, 富強在握, 其根柢實在於此。

<sup>49</sup> The name is given in phonetic transcription, *magenazhada* 馬格那吒達。

<sup>50</sup> I see no such rule in the Magna Charta; the rule that frank words in parliament should not be punishable was made in 1523, and was famously used by Thomas More (1478–1535) in his defence.

<sup>51</sup> Another trope of newspapers is self-depiction. Liang Qichao already used it in a programmatic article in the first issue of the *Shiwubao* 1, August 9, 1896 "On the Benefits of Newspapers for State Affairs," see Vittinghoff, *Die Anfänge des Journalismus*, 29.

Sun then turns to the Chinese situation.

China has taboos that are far too deeply engrained, and its rigidity is excessive. Time and again, when there is a great political event in the Chinese land, the Western papers will have already communicated it in all four directions while the officials, clerks, gentry and people in inland China remain utterly ignorant of it. What greater absurdity can be imagined! As to the *Peking Gazette* and the *Dichao* [editions made for the regions]—these are leftovers from the Tang and Song courts. Formerly they existed only in the capital. They contain nothing but imperial edicts and memorials [from officials], and that is not all. The governors of in the provinces also each has a *Provincial Gazette*, *Yuanmen bao* 轅門報, but these are even more fragmentary and hardly worth mentioning.

Since trade has opened with the Western nations, dailies have begun to be set up in Fujian, Guangdong and Shanghai. They are all managed by Westerners. In recent years [Chinese] commoners in different provinces have begun to open companies for the publication of papers, but their numbers are still small and furthermore, because they are afraid of interference and bans, some of them have put themselves under the name of a foreign firm. In a district with several tens of thousands of households, the number of newspaper readers does not amount to one in a hundred, it is truly sad that the rustics have definitely no way of receiving enlightenment.

中國忌諱太深，拘牽尤甚。往往國有大政，西報已四布，而內地官吏市民猶懵然不知者，其顛倒孰甚，至京報邸抄，即唐宋朝報之遺，舊唯京師有之，只載諭旨奏摺，既不賅備，而各省督撫藩司署有轅門報，則尤瑣屑不足論。自與西國通商，閩粵上海始有日報，皆西人主其責，近年各省市民，始有開館發報者，然為數無多，又以恐于禁詰，或託名洋牌。數萬家之縣，閱報者不及百一。舛陋固無由啓發，甚可慨也。

Finally, Sun makes his own suggestions.

I dare say that right at the beginning of this reform one should open official gazette bureaus in the capital on a broad basis, and then likewise open newspaper offices in each province, commandery, circuit and district. For private papers by the people one must relax the restrictions as far as possible. Each month the ministry officials and the provincial governors [have to] send a collection of the articles from the official gazettes and the private papers to the Grand Council for perusal during [the emperor's study time,] the second watch, and the different offices and educational facilities should exchange the papers appearing in their precincts, should broadly disseminate them and protect them and should make sure that they gain wide circulation. The famous foreign papers such as the *Times* from England and *The* [New York] *Sun*<sup>52</sup> from the USA should also be bought, translated and brought to the emperor's attention. Their key contents, furthermore, should be inserted into the official gazettes and thus be distributed about the different provinces so as to supplement the emperor's learning above and open up the people's knowledge below. [All] this would be of no small benefit for understanding the contemporary situation and the people's feelings.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>52</sup> The source here is Kang Youwei's fourth letter to the emperor in 1895. There Kang refers under point #4 to the London *Times* and the New York *Sun* as models. Sun Yirang, who had never been abroad and knew no foreign language, wrongly thought that the *ling* 令 (orders should be given) after *Di Sen* 滴森 [The Sun] in Kang Youwei's phrase "among the foreign newspapers... the best-known and most useful are the *Times* from England and the *Sun* from America, and orders should be given to the Foreign Affairs Office to translate their political and technological news for Imperial perusal" (至外國新。最着而有者，莫如英之泰晤士，美芝滴森，令總署派人每日譯其政藝以備乙覽) belonged to the name of the American paper. Kang Youwei 康有為. *Kang Youwei quanji* 康有為全集 [Complete works of Kang Youwei] (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 1990), 2:180. The New York *Sun* was a popular paper with the largest circulation until about 1900, but not comparable to the London *Times* in its elite impact.

<sup>53</sup> Sun Yirang, *Zhouli zhengyao*, 1:44–47.

竊謂當此更化之初，宜廣開官報局於京師，以次及於各直省府廳州縣，亦飭廣開報館。民間私報亦盡弛其禁。每月部吏督撫以公私報章彙送軍機處，恭備乙覽，而各官署各學堂，亦各以本地所出之報互相移送，擴充保護，務使暢行。外國著名各報，若英之泰晤士美之滴森令之屬，亦宜購譯，進程禦覽，並擇其要者刊入官報，頒行各省，則上裨聖學，下開民智，於以警時勢而通羣情，非徒撮壤涓流之益也。

The technique that Sun used to establish a unified picture of the optimal information flow informing the *Zhouli* was to show the links between various offices assigned to different ministries bound together by an underlying common purpose. Some descriptions are enriched by drawing on other early texts. For example, there is no mention in the *Zhouli* that the officials collect the people's songs as sources to help the emperor understand their mood, grievances, and criticisms. Through a single reference in the *Hanshu*, Sun links the messengers, *xingren* 行人, with this collection effort. This greatly enriches the *Zhouli* text and brings it in line with a key ingredient of the Chinese social *imaginaire*, the openness of channels of communication through which social problems can reach the court.

Sun Yirang reads the *Zhouli* as a handbook for state management. The addressee of the channels of information which the *Zhouli* sketched out and which the modern press has made so much faster and more efficient, is the emperor. The emperor has to be informed about all that goes on in the empire. The same is true of opinion, whether articulated by officials or commoners. They are to give him advice. Sun describes what the state could and should do. He lived in an age when state institutions were becoming increasingly invasive and took on more and more responsibilities, from preventive inoculation to nationalist indoctrination. Japan showed the benefits of such a decisive top-down approach characterised "not by many words but by vigorous action." Society's contribution was marginalized, and not conceptualised in any way.

Sun places the greatest emphasis on the development of the official gazettes, relegating papers by private citizens to the level of those dealing with scholarship or addressed to women and children. The official gazettes were even to select and publish suitable articles from the London *Times* or the New York *Sun* in translation. The Western papers in turn are put into a semi-official context, with prime ministers becoming editors and Bismarck sending items to the press for publication. Not even Sun's note on the foreign-run papers in China (and the Chinese-run papers with fake foreign management) includes a strong statement on the need for an independent press.

While this particular feature seems out of sync with international trends at the time, Sun probably represents the mainstream of newspaper thinking among Chinese elites of his and subsequent generations. Liang Qichao was perfectly willing to have his *The Chinese Progress*, *Shiwubao* 時務報, transformed into the official gazette, and the political organisations a generation later, such as the Kuomintang and the Chinese Communist Party, were certainly pushing for a monopoly of the party/state papers, which the CPC eventually managed to establish after 1949. In Chinese press history, the official gazette, rather than the privately-owned paper has been the mainstream. As an advocacy paper run by the party/state, it was considered the best tool for the effective education of society.

Sun Yirang's very personal plea is quite different in tone from the objective stance assumed by the editors of the other works studied here. At the same time,

while not quoting verbatim and while subordinating the particular facts to the flow of his argument, he clearly shares a number of their key tropes. This strategy allowed him to give a general outline of the best that Chinese antiquity and the modern West had to offer in two slim volumes.

Let us turn to the examination essay. The peaks in the publishing of Chinese encyclopaedias closely coincide with a shift in the court's policies. Once the Reform of Governance appeal was out and it was clear that the new examinations would also test "Western" knowledge, a new market opened up: candidates beyond school age, but not beyond the hope of landing a government job with the need, the literacy, and the means to acquire in book form the knowledge they had not learned in school. Publishers rushed to print with encyclopaedias and collections of model essays.<sup>54</sup> One such collection is the 1903 *Grand Prospectus of Policy Questions on Chinese and Foreign Matters*, *Zhong wai cewen daguan* 中外策問大觀, with its mock questions on actual policy and model essays to answer them. The newspaper does not have its own separate entry in the 28 chapter headings of this work, but one essay deals with the newspaper in the odd, familiar place together with the post office and telegraph in chapter 3 on internal administration, *neizheng* 內政. No author is given, but terms in the essay such as "the yellow race" indicate that it must have been written shortly before the work went to print, because such terms had only very recently come into fashion. [The essay is in answer to the policy question "How should a Chinese postal system be managed? Answer with specific measures," and is entitled "Suggestion for a policy of emulating the English newspaper *Times* by setting up official newspapers in the different provinces and running them jointly with post offices and the telegraph so as to widely open the public climate [for communication]" (授 [here written with the radical 人] 仿英國泰晤士日報例各省編設官報局與電報郵政並行以期廣開風氣策).]<sup>55</sup>

This essay is a good indication of the uses to which the new encyclopaedias were put. It starts off with some flourish:

What is the form within the written documents that makes visible in a precise way the rights and wrongs, the achievements and failures of more than fifty states and enlightens our most topical interests? I say: It is the newspaper, *zhibao* 紙報, and nothing else. And what is it which, while [sitting] in a small room, lets me in all calmness understand the insights and stupidities, the skills and ineptitudes of the one hundred and fifty million [Chinese] and lets me develop unlimited capacities? Again I say: Nothing but the newspaper.

尺幅之內儼然觀五十餘國之是非得失，牖我最新之腦質者何耶？曰紙報而已矣。斗室之中晏然知十五百兆之智愚工拙，長我無限之能力者，又何耶？亦曰紙報而已矣

<sup>54</sup> The link between encyclopaedic works and the examination system is also addressed in the essays by Iwo Amelung and Natascha Gentz in this volume. They primarily deal with reference material for examination candidates rather than the examination essays themselves, of which an example is presented here.

<sup>55</sup> Lei Jin 雷縉, Lu Runyang 陸潤庠, comp., *Zhong wai cewen daguan* 中外策問大觀 [Grand prospectus of policy questions regarding Chinese and foreign matters] (Shanghai (?): Yangang shanzhuang, 1903), *juan* 3: 18b–19a.



He then takes on the Chinese attitude:

Today the world is galloping full speed towards an age that follows the same course and shares the same language. Surrounding our China are all sorts of races that cut their hair, have deep-seated eyes, high breasts or black teeth.<sup>56</sup> When one visits their states without even relying on the guidance of a compass and on the importance of qualified translators, [it is clear that our] political system is no match for theirs; when one studies these people [it is clear that our] learning does not compare to theirs; and even all [our] goods, trade, and manufacturing are no match for theirs. Still, just as we passively tolerate their fierce glares and tiger-like glances without ever daring to offer resistance, so I have been longing to get one single instrument [such as the newspaper] to shake ourselves up and smash this four thousand year [Chinese] habit of self-aggrandisement and to increase the self-strengthening spirit of our provincial administrators.

今天下亦騷駸乎同軌同文之世矣。環吾中國而居者，斷髮深目長耐黑齒之種類。已無待南車之指，九譯之重，然而問其國，政治不如彼，晤其人，學問不如彼，且一切種質貿易製造不如彼，而坐受其鷹麟虎視，曾莫敢抗，則思得一術以求自振擧，破我四千年自大之習，增我各行省自強之氣。

Now why should the idea to set up official gazettes have been spurned? Even if the journals, which China did have, stopped after a few years because of lack of funds or dissolved because they ran into trouble, and even though the pundits thereupon declared that this enterprise [of setting up newspapers] had many flaws—I, for one, have the wherewithal to clear all this up.

舍官局報之設，其曷由哉？雖然，中國之有報局，蓋亦有年，或以費絀止，或以事敗散。議者遂謂是事有數弊，而吾則皆有以明之。

Two tropes familiar from the encyclopaedia entries are taken up here, the newspaper as the medium that informs the reader about the “rights and wrongs, the achievements and failures” of the different states of the world, and the possibility it offers of not leaving one’s room and still understanding all that is going on in China. The author now quotes a list of five flaws together with his remedies.

Years ago, “upon his ascension, the French president Patrice de MacMahon (1873–1879) issued a decree to the different newspaper companies that, because his reforms harboured without exception the best intentions to benefit the national economy and the people’s livelihood, the editors should only convey words of appreciation and should not indulge in any slander, *bianzhe* 貶謫. He also wanted to bribe them with hefty sums.” This is flaw number one.

昔法國統領麥馬韓即位，諭報館以所更新章，無不盡善，主筆者宜為揄揚，不得貶謫，且欲賄有以重利。其弊一。

This description in [my] quotation marks first appears verbatim in the *Classified Compilation of Western Affairs* (#1) from whence it was incorporated into the *Comprehensive Examination of Current Affairs* (#3). There, however, it appears not as one of the five flaws of a newspaper editor, but under the heading “common abuses.” Thus we have first a government imposing an editorial line on the

<sup>56</sup> While the first items refer to Westerners, the black teeth refer to a fashion among Japanese women at the time.

newspapers, and bribing the editors to make them accept it. This, however, is only an abuse of an otherwise useful institution, and the author continues: “However, is it not better that the power of a brush can give the ruler something to fear than having him execute someone for a random remark or kill a critic together with his family?” (然筆舌之權，能使人主有所忌憚，不猶愈偶語之誅，誹謗之族乎!).

The second flaw takes up the second editorial flaw from the *Comprehensive Examination of Current Affairs* (#3).

Transmitting untruths about military matters and information of interest to the enemy and randomly uttering slander and doing damage to the overall military situation. This is flaw number two. 軍事敵情，傳聞失實，臆說譸語，貽誤大局，其弊二。

The *Comprehensive Examination of Current Affairs* (juan 15, 7b) had put it as follows:

To carry untrue military matters and information of interest to the enemy, relying only on canards circulating on the markets and blindly trusting the disgruntled statements of prostitutes to the point of simply whipping up the sentiments of the masses and randomly fabricating baseless stories [so that], while they [the army] already have been annihilated outside the country, the [news]paper’s reports of victory misrepresent the overall situation—this is flaw number two.

軍事敵情，記載不實，僅憑市虎之口，罔懲夕雞之嫌，甚乃揣摩眾情，臆造詭說，海外已成劫燼，紙熒惑聽聞，貽誤大局，其弊二也。

From the substance of the argument as well as the overlap in some key formulas, it is evident that the author of the essay consulted and thought closely about entry in #3. His solution:

However, if both [newspapers] and cables are available, then an announcement from [the government palace at] Ganquan 甘泉 will already have arrived [before a paper goes to print] so that the stories from these misrepresentations will not [even] make it into [into the papers]. 然與電報平行，則甘泉之書已到，郢人之說未登也。

The third flaw:

For each product and each invention there will be gifts [to the papers] to add praise with the consequence that any stone from Yan [that looks like jade] and every brick from Zhou [that looks like a stone but contains a precious jade] will make a profit. This is flaw number three. 一物一技，賄屬鋪張，燕石周璞，得遂牟利，其弊三

The key phrases take up the wording of another of the current abuses listed in #3, namely bribing for profit, but this again does not figure in the five flaws there:

Apart from this, once some object has been successfully manufactured or a technique perfected, inevitably the newspaper company will be bribed to fill its pages with campaigns so as to meet the private profit-making interests [of those who made the object or perfected the technique].

此外一物之成，一技之就，無不賄屬報館，鋪張揚厲，以遂其牟利之私。

Again our essayist has a remedy:

However, if both [papers] and postal services [for letters] are available, it will already be known that an empty gourd is of no use, and for a vessel in the shape of a bird it will be even more difficult to find a market. 然與郵政並行，則康匏已知無用，鷹鼎更難求售/

### The fourth flaw:

To take personal preferences and aversions as bases for praise or denunciation, and favours or disfavour as bases for denunciation or encomium—this is turning [the morally pure] [Bo] Yi and [Liuxia] Hui into robbers and [the robbers] Zhi and Qiao into paragons of virtue. This is flaw number four. 其或以愛憎為褒貶，以恩怨為毀譽，是夷惠可盜，跖躄可廉，其弊四。

Some of the key language is taken from the third flaw in #3:

In judging personalities and discoursing on recent events relying in one's praise and denunciation on favours or disfavour [one has received] and writing these with a pen that is sharper than a dagger, either by praising someone in power or authority as a basis to gain his protection, or by denouncing someone rich and noble as a handle to get a bribe, in short, being in one's actions no different from a rascal and in one's attitude at variance with auspicious words, that is flaw number three.

臧否人物，論列近事，毀譽憑其恩怨，筆舌甚於刀兵，或颺頌權貴，為曳裾之階梯，或指斥富豪，作苞苴之左卷，行同無賴，義乖祥言，其弊三也。

The author is confident, however, that facts will eventually prevail:

However, even when Sun Sheng (302–374) wrote the [historical chronicle *Weishi*] *Chunqiu*, he was unable to make the defeat [of Huanwen] at Fangtuo [in 369] look as if Huan and Tang had “ceded,” and even when [Zhu Xi (1130–1200) from] Ziyang wrote his [historical chronicle *Zizhi tongjian*] *Gangmu*, he was unable to turn [Zhang Jun's] defeat at Fuli into something not mentioned in connection with Zhang Jun (1097–1164). 然孫盛作春秋，不能以枋頭之敗，為桓湯寬；紫陽作綱目，不能以符離之潰，為張浚諱

One element in the fifth flaw is that “one trifling chit is able to make the worst of words, so—what with the rigid monopoly of a faction in which one sings the tune and everyone joins in, so that people of the same ilk emulate each other [with praises] of the ‘this one is great, that one alright’-kind—does this mean that Yan Hui has come back to life or Confucius is reappearing in this world?!” (區區一紙，得以譽言。抑或黨人把持，一昌百和，同類標榜，此唯彼阿，則顏回可復生，仲尼可再世)。

This flaw takes its language and content from the “current abuses” section in #3:

As to the pressure from Western industry and the domination of their political cohorts—in all cases [they operate] in such a manner that one person gives the tone and hundreds and thousands of miles away a hundred respond—how would all this be possible without newspapers? And how should other things such as their denunciations of somebody's ills and detractions from his true nature or exaggerations of his good sides—way beyond the facts—simply be regarded as minor problems ?!

西洋匠工之挾制，黨人之把持，數千里外，無不一昌百和，苟非新聞，焉能若是。他如稱人之惡而損其真，揚人之善而過其實，猶事之小焉者也。

Again, our author has a remedy, in this case history's long breath.

However, after the disaster of the end of the Han, [Shentu] Pan [申屠]蟠 and [Guo] Tai [郭]泰 (128–169) [who were originally much maligned for their opposition to the power of the eunuchs at court] achieved their fame; and from the Donglin disturbance [at the end of the Ming], Gu [Xiancheng] 顧憲成 (1550–1612) and Zhao [Nanxing] 趙南星 (1550–1627) [who were maligned at the time for protesting against the power of the eunuchs at court] alone today have great fame—how could [one say] that the final judgment was based on the posterous mouths of the multitude?!

然漢季之禍，蟠泰卒全大節；東林之變，顧趙獨有今名，豈悠悠眾口，遂為定論乎

The anonymous author clearly tackles what he considers the common view about the flaws of newspapers, as represented by the encyclopaedias, and offers his own solutions. He agrees that newspapers are a key instrument for securing the flow of information between high and low. He writes, “If [newspaper] offices are set up by officials, their character will be different from [newspaper] offices set up by commoners, but they will exactly augment each other with the papers of the commoners. As a matter of general principle, among the ills of the world there is none graver than information from above not being understood at the social base, and that information from below is not grasped at the top” (局由官設, 則體制與民局異, 而正與民局相表裏。夫天下之患, 莫大於上情不能下究, 下情不能上達). He now proposes to set up official gazettes that will then be supplemented by private papers. “If we set up official papers and have them assisted by private papers and they are like the carriage and the axle supporting each other, like water and milk mixing, so that high and low will not be cut off from each other, this will be of benefit for the suffering people” (設官局而以民局佐之, 如車輔相依, 水乳交融, 上下不隔閼矣則利在民隱).

This, however, is only one of the three benefits brought by newspapers. The first benefit will accrue to human talent. Following the model of the London *Times*, only “gentlemen superbly qualified both in terms of talent and of knowledge” (以才識特優之紳士) will be selected as editors, to whom the ruler always listens with the utmost humility. As many of these journalists might eventually “rise to become members of parliament, the benefits accrue on the side of talented people.” The career paths linking government and parliament on the one hand and the newspaper on the other have been mentioned since #1 to illustrate the stature of this new medium. The third benefit, first mentioned by Zeng Jize in the quotation in the *Classified Compilation of Western Affairs* (#1), is financial in nature, because the London *Times* shows how profitable such papers can be.

The author is confident that the triple introduction of the post office, the telegraph, and the newspaper will lead to a situation where “those of our yellow race who are sunk in dreams will wake up, and those who are in a drunken stupor will awaken; intelligence will broaden and talent and knowledge will, too. What is seen and heard will be new, and what is felt and thought will also be new. How then could we still be idling about in ease and laziness like a summer insect that is unable to say anything about ice, or the frog in a well who cannot say anything about the sea!” (我黃種之人, 夢者覺, 醉者醒, 聰明廣, 而才智亦廣。耳目新而心思亦新。尚有怵怵倪倪, 泄泄沓沓如夏蟲之不可語冰, 井蛙之不可語海者哉).

To sum up: The encyclopaedias were mostly geared towards a rapidly expanding market for knowledge about the West that came with the increased marginalization and eventual abolishment of the examination system. The *Zhong wai cewen daguan* [Grand prospectus of policy questions regarding Chinese and foreign matters], of which one specimen has been analysed here, shows that the writers were familiar with the encyclopaedic tropes, largely followed them, and occasionally engaged in debate with some of their statements. The author of the essay studied at the end obviously felt that the five flaws of the newspaper were undermining his strong advocacy of both official and private papers. While broadly

agreeing with the core purpose of the newspaper—facilitating the flow of information between high and low—he took issue with the result to which the pundits came in view of the “flaws” in newspapers and their resulting short lives.

The evidence from these two pieces, Sun’s work and the model essay, shows a pattern that is confirmed by a look at the late Qing statecraft writing, *jingshi* 經世, compilations as well as in the editorials of Chinese newspapers. While the different encyclopaedic works studied here did have a degree of authority, none of them had anything comparable to the authority enjoyed by the major eighteenth and nineteenth century encyclopaedias from France, England, Italy, the USA, Germany, and later Japan. While they were part of a widely dispersed and shared body of knowledge and assumptions, they lacked the capacity to authoritatively define their terms or their order of things.

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