On the Track of the Straits Baba Diaspora: Li Qinghui and his “Summary Account of a Trip to the East” (1889)

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A lot of research has been done on the Hong merchants of Canton and on the compradors who supplanted them after the abolition of the Cohong system and Western intrusion into China consequent on the 1842 Treaty of Nanking, by whose terms Hong Kong was ceded to the British and the ports of Canton, Shanghai, Xiamen, Fuzhou, and Ningbo were opened to foreign commerce. Researchers have also focused on the compradors as a social group, studying their geographic origins and their impact on the economic and political development of the Middle Kingdom as well as their culture. If it is well known that Chinese compradors were spread from Southeast Asia to Japan, we have hardly yet begun to investigate whether Straits merchants of Chinese origin or Babas could also have acted as intermediaries for Europeans, or even whether they had taken advantage of the new circumstances to set up in China to do business for themselves. It is certainly not easy to determine this matter because Western sources provide little information on the partners with whom European firms did business. Thus it is often difficult to follow Chinese merchants, and those of Chinese origin, in time and space. Yet it can hardly be doubted that they travelled a lot on business.

Ng Chin-keong has shown that, after the Manchus had occupied Taiwan and removed the ban on overseas trade (1683), south Fujian merchants immediately spread along the Chinese coast. In 1684 they were at Ningbo where, by 1728, four of them figured among its principal merchants; they also emigrated in the direction of Suzhou, Shanghai, and Tianjin, where their guilds date from at least the first decades of the eighteenth century. Ng Chin-keong notes that those who settled at Shanghai very quickly put down roots in the local population and had themselves registered there. Simultaneously, the Fujianese extended their commerce towards Canton and the “Southern Seas”; and, indeed, we know that a number of Hong merchants had had their roots in south Fujian. For the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries it is not easy to follow the movements of the Chinese merchants, or those of Chinese origin, who

1 This article was published by Claudine Salmon, “Sur les traces de la diaspora des Baba des Détroits : Li Qinghui et son « Récit sommaire d’un voyage vers l’Est »” Archipel, 56-56 (1998): 71-120.


4 Hao yen-p’ing notes: “The Chinese comprador was not only an intermediary in Sino-Western trade but also a commercial middleman between East and West at large, since his activities extended far beyond China’s treaty ports and reached other parts of Asia.” [Ibid, p. 55] In support he cites an 1878 article entitled “John Comprador” by Thomas Knox, an American merchant, wherein it was stated that Chinese compraders were also active in Japan, Cochinchina, Bangkok, Rangoon, Penang, Malacca, Singapore, Java and Manila, and that their influence could be felt as far away as India.


6 The Ningbo fuzhi 當波府志, 4th year of Qianlong (1739), juan 10, 8a, notes that in the 23rd year of Kangxi (1684), after the removal of the ban on navigation, the merchants of Fujian and Guangdong came in numbers to Ningbo and that they clubbed together to restore the temple dedicated to Tianhou 天后, the Queen of Heaven (the goddess of seamen), who had many times given them aid at sea.

7 See Jiangshusheng mingqing yilai beike ziliao xuanji 江蘇省明清以來碑刻資料選輯 (Selected epigraphic materials of Jiangsu for the Ming-Qing period) (Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 1959), p. 659 and Shanghai beike ziliao xuanji 上海碑刻資料選輯 (Selected epigraphic materials for Shanghai) (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1980), p. 233; Ng Chin-keong, Trade and Society, p. 95.

8 Ng Chin-keong, Trade and Society, p. 183.
lived in the South Seas. We only know that several Chinese captains and *shabandar* living in Banten, Batavia, and in the towns of the Northern coast of Java, notably at Cirebon and Semarang, maintained close ties with their places of origin, where they had shipping at their disposal which they sent to trade at various ports. We also know that certain merchants returned to their home provinces after sojourning for some time in the South Seas. Given this, it can hardly be doubted that merchants who lived in Southeast Asia also used the networks along the China coast set up by their compatriots who had remained at home.

This fact is obvious for the second half of the nineteenth century, when we find Babas, often natives of Malacca, Penang, or Singapore, in the ports of southern China, but also in colonial ports such as Rangoon and Calcutta to the west, Saigon to the east, and even to the north-east, in the treaty ports of Japan. Luckily, the account of Li Qinghui 李清輝 himself a Baba of Malacca, has been preserved. Along with his brother Cheng Yan 清淵, two friends, and two servants, he undertook a voyage of more than two months (from 7 May to 25 July) in 1888 during which he visited Hong Kong, Shanghai, Kobe, Osaka, Kyoto, Nagasaki, Fuzhou, Xiamen, Canton, and Saigon. At each stop he met friends and acquaintances from the Straits and jotted down some notes, with Singapore readers in mind, which can give us a glimpse of the Baba network. His account, entitled *Dongyou jilüe 東遊記略* (Summary account of a trip to the East), appeared in 1889 in the only Chinese-language newspaper in Singapore at the time, the *Lat Po 刊報*. For a long time it was forgotten. We owe its rediscovery and republication to Leung Yen Sang in a Singaporean journal. Denys Lombard became interested in this text as part of his research on Asian merchants and travel accounts, something we undertook to study together.

Before turning to the translation, let me first provide a few points of reference about the author and his family, to highlight the historical roots of this current of Baba migration and to reveal the Baba commercial network as it appeared in the 1880s.

**Li Qinghui and his relatives**

The history of the Lee (Li) family of Malacca remains very obscure. It may possibly have descended from the Malacca captain Li Weijing 李為經 (1614-1688). We only really know it after several of its members came to settle in Singapore, where some of them distinguished themselves. But to judge from the economic links and kinship bonds that some maintained with the great Baba families of Malacca, we can deduce that the Lee family had been established in the town for a very long time. The role the Lees played after the 1875 foundation in Malacca of an association for people originating from Yongchun 永春 Independent Department (Fujian), then later in the

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10 We do not discuss here migration to the west which was connected with Penang.

11 The *Lat Po* was founded in 1881 by See Ewe Lay 薛有禮, a fifth generation Baba from Malacca who was born in Singapore where his grandfather had settled down in 1828. The newspaper however was run by a newspaperman born in China who had previously worked in Hong Kong for the *Chung Ngai San Po 中外新報* (found in 1860); cf. Chen Mong Hock, *The Early Chinese Newspapers of Singapore 1881-1912* (Singapore, University of Malaya Press, 1967), pp. 18, 24-25. The travelogue appeared in 1889 (issues n° 2162, 2d month, 12th day to n° 2180, 30th month, 5th day).


13 I have transcribed personal names in Mandarin and written them in *pinyin* whenever the Western sources do not give the Minnanhua transcription of the time.

The figure of Li Qinghui nevertheless remains very hazy. He was born in 1830 in Malacca, and passed away around 1896. Judging by his literary style, he had received a solid education. He liked to cultivate his mind since, during his stay in Shanghai, he went to Dianshizhai or the “Lithographic studio” to buy “books [and] drawing manuals as well as a map of the world.” He also wanted the children of his compatriots to devote themselves to study and several times he made contributions towards developing Chinese-language education in Singapore. We find his name in a very high position among the donors who contributed to the 1896 enlargement of the school called Cuiying shuyuan that had been founded in 1861. He was close to Tan Keong Sum, another literate merchant from Malacca who also established himself in Singapore and had travel accounts published in Lat Po.

Li Qinghui is very discrete about his business affairs. We do not know if he owned his own business or if, on the contrary, he travelled on the account of his father-in-law, Tan Kim Seng, an eminent businessman and philanthropist whose family had also originated in Yongchun (Fujian), but who had been born in Malacca and was very close to European circles. Some time before 1840, Tan had set up the firm Kim Seng and Co in Singapore. After his death, the company was managed by his oldest son Tan Beng Swee, then by the latter’s son, Jiak Kim, with whom the Lee family was closely connected. Li Qinghui briefly speaks about his son, Sek Long, whom he visited in Shanghai. Sek Long was the local manager of a firm called Hong Hing, whose founding branch in Malacca had been set up by the grandfather of Tan Kim Seng.

Li Qinghui must have had many brothers, as he said that he travelled with the eighth of them, Cheng Yan, who was the best known. Cheng Yan was also born in Malacca and went at a very young age to establish himself in Singapore where, in 1858, he and his brother Cheng Gum set up the firm Lee Cheng Yan & Co (chop Chin Joo 振裕, originally at number 143 Telok Ayer Street)

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15 See Xinjiapo huawen beiming jilu 新加坡華文碑銘集錄, ed. Chen Ching-ho 陳靜和 and Tan Yeok Seong 陳育誠 (A Collection of Chinese Inscriptions in Singapore) (Singapore: Xianggang zhongwen daxue, 1972), p. 211, which says that the initiative was due to two individuals, one of them Lee Cheng Yan, whose subscription appeared second and was followed, in sixth place, by our author. We also find there the names of two of their nephews.


17 The Dianshizhai also offered a wide choice of publications, often illustrated, among them the autobiography of a Manchu noble, which appeared in 1884, and novels and travelogues to the West and to Japan by the pioneer of modern journalism, Wang Tao 王鶴, which were very successful.

18 For this school, see Chen and Tan, Xinjiapo huawen beiming jilu, p. 254.

19 See Ye Zhongling, Chen Xingtang wenji, p. 121. In Archipel 43, 1992: 131-66 there is an article about his first travelogue about Vietnam (1888) by David K.Y. Chng, and a presentation and translation of this account by Claudine Salmon.


21 Tan Beng Swee was born in Singapore; from 1852 he worked for Kim Seng and Co and, after the death of his father in 1864, took over its management which he continued to do until his own death. He maintained close links with Malacca and for seventeen years was the president of its main temple and the chief administrator of the Yongchun association, along with Lee Que Lim 李桂林, who seems most likely to have been a brother of our author. In addition, he was president of the hospital founded by Tan Tock Seng (1798-1850) and amply funded the creation of the school known as the Kim Seng Free School. See Song, One Hundred Years’ History, p. 91 and Franke and Chen, Chinese Epigraphic Materials, 1, p. 407.

22 In 1886, Tan Jiak Kim became a municipal counsellor.

23 According to Song Ong Siang, Sek Long was one of the five sons of Lee Quee Lim. One Hundred Years’ History, p. 242.

before relocating to Malacca Road in 1891). After first specialising in business with Europeans, the company rapidly extended its activities into shipping and then into finance and property.25 In 1883, Cheng Yan made a business trip to visit the main English industrial towns. He was accompanied by Tay Geok Teat (1832-1893), a merchant who also originated from Malacca but who had settled in Singapore in 186326 (and whom our travellers found some six years later in China27). Another brother of our author, Lee Cheng Tee (1833-1901), married a sister of Tan Kim Ching (1828-1892), one of the greatest merchants of the Baba era. Lee Cheng Tee was at one time principal partner in Cheng-tee Watt-seng & Co., Shipowners (chop Chin Joo 振裕).28 One of his sons, Lee Peck Hoon, lived for about ten years in China after being named agent for the Singaporean shipping company Bun Hin & Co29 before finally becoming the joint manager of the Straits Steamship Co.

The Chin Joo House 振裕園 in Singapore. This house owner was Li Qinghui's brother Cheng Yan 清渊 who travelled with Li Qinghui. Source: Han Shanyuan, "李清渊故居振裕園" (The Chin Joo House, former residence of Lee Cheng Yan), in 大出击 (Singapore: Nanyang, Xingzhou & Lianhe wangbao congshu, 1984), p.33.

The other members of the Lee family who played important economic roles in the region, and about whom we have information, were the five sons of Lee Quee Lim 李桂林, probably an older brother of our author but who seems to have remained in Malacca.30 Keng Yong 慶鏞, Keng Kiat 慶吉, Keng Liat 慶烈, Keng Yam 慶炎, and Sek


26 Song Ong Siang says that Tay Geok Teat was the son of Tay Song Quee, a native of Zhangzhou (Fujian) who migrated to Malacca at the beginning of the 19th century. Song then recounted the story of Geok Teat & Co as follows: "In 1863 the firm of Geok Teat & Co was established in Battery Road as Warehousemen and Commission Agents. The partners were Tay Geok Teat, Tan Kim Tian, Tan Sam Chie and Chia Ann Siang, with Chia Ann Lock as an assistant in the firm. Two years later, the goodwill came to be acquired by two outsiders, Low Tuan Locke and Yeo Hong Ghee, who carried on the same business in Raffles Place under the style of 'Locke Hong Ghee & Co'. This firm, however, had only a mushroom existence, for in 1868 we find Mr Tay Geok Teat reappearing as sole proprietor of Tay Geok Teat & Co in Battery Road." One Hundred Years’ History, pp. 122-23.

27 Ibid., p. 123. This voyage of economic prospecting is said to be the first such trip ever undertaken by a Straits Chinese.

28 See Ibid, p. 131, where Song stated that from 1871 they also owned the gunpowder magazine "Alexandra" located in Tanah Merah Keel and, on p. 165, that Chee Teng had first done business in Brunei and Labuan and then later in Java, which explains why one of his three sons would be sent to this island. The company also owned a steamship which plied the route between Malacca and Penang.

29 Ibid., pp.66, 165, 201.

30 Lee Quee Lim appeared as the co-founder of the association of people from Yongchun along with Tan Beng Swee, the son of Tan Kim Seng. This shows that he had quite high social standing in Malacca. He
Long, all of whom went together to establish themselves in Singapore. Keng Yong was in partnership with his brothers and owned ships;31 Keng Kiat (1851-1917), after having worked in Keng Yong’s firm, became deputy-director of the Straits Steamship Co until 1911.32 Keng Yam was born in Malacca in 1839 and died in 1888, in his residence in Telok Ayer in Singapore. His life is not completely known to us, but we do know that, for thirteen years between 1872 and 1885, he lived in Shanghai with his family and that, after his return to Singapore, he took control of its opium revenue farm along with several others in the Dutch East Indies, probably in the Riau archipelago; furthermore, two months before his death he acquired the opium farm of Hong Kong for three years.33

Although incomplete, the foregoing presentation does show that the Lee family was “plugged into the networks”, like all the other great Baba families of the Straits.

The Straits merchants in the European sphere of influence
From the 1830s, we see Babas going to China with the intention of sojourning there for long periods on business. One example is Choa Chong Long 蔡滄浪 (alias Baba Cheng Lan, c. 1788-1838), a son of the captain of Malacca, Choa Su Cheong 蔡士章, who lived in Singapore and took the trouble of announcing his departure in the local press there.34 His plans would be cut short, however, as he was murdered shortly after his arrival in Macau. Choa Chong Long was very close to the Europeans and Earl notes in his regard that he was the most intelligent and perhaps the richest among the Chinese born in Malacca, and that every now and again he would host lavish Western-style receptions for the best European society in Singapore in his splendid residence at Kampung Glam.35

In 1842, the opening of certain ports to foreign commerce further encouraged Straits merchants to establish themselves in China. The English, who had already largely appealed to the Babas of Malacca to establish their commerce in Singapore, wanted to use them in the same way to gain a foothold in China. Following the difficulties encountered by a Baba working as supercargo on an English ship when it called at a Chinese treaty port, in 1844 it was decided that henceforth the authorities in Penang, Singapore, and Malacca should provide their “naturalised British subjects” with a certificate of nationality whenever they asked for one.36 This measure would allow the Straits Babas to travel and to establish themselves in China without coming under the jurisdiction of the Middle Kingdom. Further, it equally placed those who were going to set up in Japan, Siam, or in other European colonies under the protection of...
the British consuls. In this we see the advantages from which these merchants and businessmen of Chinese origin could benefit, if they wanted to invest outside their country of adoption.

In the following years, magnates from the Straits installed themselves in the great ports. At some time which we do not know precisely, but which was probably before 1850, Tan Kim Seng 陳金聲 who, since 1840, had been one of two "Chinese" merchants in Singapore who belonged to the Chamber of Commerce, and who as a businessman worked closely with Europeans, opened a Shanghai branch of the Hong Hing 豐興 Co which he had inherited from his grandfather. In the 1850s, it seems that it was already being managed by a relative of our author, a certain Li Zixi 李自西. More or less in the same period, the all-powerful Tan Kim Ching 陳金錘 (1829-1892), son of the merchant and benefactor Tan Tock Seng 陳/csssn (1798-1892), who was himself Malacca-born and enjoyed close links with the king of Siam and the sultan of Perak, opened a branch of his firm Chin Seng 振成 in Shanghai. Its success was quite dazzling. When the association of merchants from the prefectures of Quanzhou and Zhangzhou (in Fujian) was restored there, his firm appeared first among the donors whose names were recorded at the bottom of the 1857 commemorative inscription. This gesture shows how Tan Kim Ching, while remaining a sincere British subject, felt himself at the same time very close to his compatriots. In 1877, he would lend his financial support to the Chinese government.

Alongside these great merchants, others, a little less well-to-do, also threw themselves into business in China. One such was Tay Ho Swie 戴河水 (1834-1903), born in Singapore in 1834. While still very young he had some five or six sailing vessels in his possession and began to traffic wooden planks to Shanghai and even further north to Tianjin, utilising for his trade the solid network of the seagoing merchants of south Fujian. Later he would buy a steamship and hold shares in the opium farms operated by his brother Tay Han Long 戴漢良. Also in the 1850s we see merchants of Malaccan origin setting up in Xiamen (Amoy). One of the first, See Eng Wat 薛榮楨, a fourth generation Chinese descendant, remained for many years and died there in 1884; his second son, Ewe Boon 有文 (died 1909), who had been educated at the Institution St. Xavier in Penang, equally did business in Xiamen before finally returning to Singapore to become comprador for the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank. Some were compradors in Xiamen, like Tan Cheng Kee 陳慶直 who from 1850 represented the English firm Jardine, Matheson & Co which, as we know, specialised in the opium trade. He was one of the original Xiamen founders of the secret society called Xiaodao hui 小刀會 or "Small Knife Society" which would enjoy great success in Shanghai at the time of the Taiping rebellion.  

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38 The second was Seah Eu Chin, a Chinese entrepreneur and literatus who came from Shantou (Guangdong) in 1863. Ibid., pp. 19-20.
39 His name appeared among the donors who took part in the restoration of the association of people from the prefectures of Quanzhou and Zhangzhou. See Shanghai beike ziliao xuanji, p. 240. Li Qinghui tells us that his tablet and that of his parent Li Zixi were still being honoured in the association's temple in gratitude for their good offices during the revolt of the Dagger secret society (1853-55).
40 Ibid., p. 239.
41 Ng, Trade and Society, pp. 134-137, 158-59, 183, 198.
42 Song, One Hundred Years' History, p. 119, Chng, Collected Essays on Chinese, pp. 42-43.
43 Two other sons of See Eng Wat are still well known: See Ewe Lay who, after also having worked as a comprador, put out the first Chinese-language newspaper in Singapore (see above note 10), and Ewe Hock 有福 who was sent from China, where he did his schooling, to further his studies in the United States in 1874. Recalled by the Chinese government in 1881, he served in the imperial navy and was killed in the Franco-Chinese war of 1884. See ibid., pp. 103-04; Chen, Early Chinese Newspapers, pp. 24-28; and Chng, History of the Chinese in Singapore & Malacca, pp. 89-100.
In parallel with these activities of the 1850s and 1860s in China, others were occurring in the direction of Saigon. There can be little doubt that the Straits Babas had longstanding contacts with Saigon, at the time called Gia Định 嘉定. Yet it is only after the French occupation that we catch sight of their role in commerce and in urban occupations. For the newly arrived French, they were the ideal partners. We find them represented among bidders for public works contracts as well as in opium revenue farming and the large-scale rice trade. Elsewhere I have shown that they were already well established from the start of the 1850s, with Singaporean-born men like Tan Keng Sing 陳慶星 and his brothers, Tan Keng Hoon 陳慶雲 (died 1877) and Tan Keng Ho 陳慶和, who traded in wood and also acted as consigning and commission agents for shipping. Later Tan Keng Hoon worked in the opium trade while his brother, Keng Ho, carved out a leading place for himself in the rice trade. In the 1870s, those who were employees of European firms, like clerks or compradors, would form associations that grouped them simultaneously along professional and geographical lines. Their status as British subjects allowed them to get quite speedy approval for this from the French authorities. The compradors association was presided over by Tay Chow Beng 鄭昭明, Singapore-born but from a family originating in Yongchun in Fujian. It is recorded that he spoke fluent English and French and that for a time he was even naturalised French. Some of these businessmen were equally well known for their charitable works, like the rich opium farmer Cheang Hong Lim 章芳林 (or 琳) (died 1893), Singapore-born but from a family originating in Changtai 長泰 in Fujian who, at the request of the bishop, E. Gasnier, was awarded a medal by the French government. This businessman had elsewhere acquired opium farms, like that of Hong Kong in 1879, in partnership with “Gan Swee” and “Keng Ho”.

Finally, from the 1880s at least, they possessed their own temple, the Fengshan si 凤山寺 which, it seems, was an off-shoot of the one in Singapore in the sense that it was under the patronage of people from the same family, the Ang 洪. Ang Choon Seng 洪俊成, born in Malacca in 1802 and deceased in Singapore in 1852, had created the firm Chin Seng 振盛 which owned two ships that traded in rice in Saigon and Bangkok. His son Teow Goan 兆元 (1863-1899), who married a daughter of Tan Keng Ho, also owned property in Saigon.

In regard to Japan, it is more difficult to know when naturalised British subjects arrived there, although it seems that the first such merchants may have gone there around the end of the 1860s or in the early 1870s. Song Ong Siang writes of a certain Tan Beng Teck 陳明德 who, after having lived for a while in Japan, returned to Singapore where he opened one of the first shops selling Japanese goods, but without too much success since he was forced to close in 1881. He had also travelled to India and China and was one of the first Babas to join the reform movement.

The Baba network in the 1880s, according to travellers’ accounts

The first to tell us of the Babas settled along the China coasts was Datuk Bentara Luar (1841-1915), a Sinophile Malay official – he had even learnt Chinese – who had visited them during a voyage he made in the company of Sultan Abu Bakar in 1883. If he tells
us nothing of the owners of the firm Hong Mong Thiam Kee in Hong Kong, whom he went to see, he is a little more loquacious on the Babas that he met in Shanghai, some of whom were old acquaintances, including the nephew of our author, Lee Keng Yam 李慶炎, with whom he maintained a correspondence.\footnote{See Amin Sweeney, \textit{Reputations Live On. An Early Malay Autobiography} (Berkeley, Los Angeles & London: University of California Press, 1890), pp. 101, 104.}

Friday 11\textsuperscript{th} May. (...) Met two Chinese merchants from Penang, one named Loo Yin Yu, and the other Seet Tee Wang, at the Chop Kee Chiang house. (...) The son of this Loo Yin (Yu) is a member of a syndicate opening estates in Selangor and Perak.

Tuesday 15 May. (...) Visited Baba Keng Yam at the Chop Hong Hing house. Afterwards went to his house and had some cakes.

Li Qinghui proceeds in exactly the same way, with the only difference being that he gives us a lot more information. Certainly, he does not always specify if those whom he visits are originally from the Straits, but that very often seems the case, judging by the number of individuals we have already been able to identify.

At Hong Kong, Li Qinghui goes to visit his old friend Cai Ziwei 蔡紫薇 and his family, who manages a sugar refinery which is most likely English owned. Now, it appears likely that Cai Ziwei was originally from Malacca and was the grandson of a brother or cousin of Choa Chong Long\footnote{See Chng, \textit{History of the Chinese in Singapore and Malacca}, p. 48, which reproduces a simplified genealogy of the family.} who, we have seen, was one of the first Straits merchants to establish himself in China. Cai Ziwei must have been in Hong Kong for a long time as, in 1888, he owned a secondary residence in the vicinity of Canton and, it seems, also a pharmacy. As for Wu Liqing 吳理卿, who managed the Hong Kong shop called Wanyuanlong 萬源隆 and was also an acquaintance of our author, everything suggests that he had also originated in the Straits.

At Shanghai Li Qinghui was met by his son Sek Long who, as we saw above, managed the Hong Hing firm 豐興 which had long been owned by Tan Beng Swee 陳明水, a son of the magnate Tan Kim Seng. Sek Long also had a family and already possessed a son. His father-in-law, who appears to have been Huang Zhenzhuan 黃振篆, the owner of a firm called Qichang 启昌, could very well have originally been from the Straits. During his stay, Li Qinghui was to meet a whole series of people who were his relatives, old acquaintances, or simply fellow countrymen. To begin with, there was his nephew Lee Keng Yam (died Sept. 28, 1888) who, after having managed the Hong Hing firm for thirteen years (1872-1885), would return to Singapore and, by all accounts, was on a business trip. The author would see him again some weeks later, this time when he went to Hong Kong. Li Qinghui also met another traveller from the Straits, Tay Geok Teat, who was found to be a friend of his brother Cheng Yan and with whom he would travel on the Yangzi, almost certainly to study how the shipping companies and river commerce operated. Li Qinghui also met a compatriot from Malacca, Xiao Pilie 蕭丕烈, two from Singapore, Qiu Wenchuan 邱文川 and Gan Shiliang 甘時兩, and finally one from Penang, Huang Ruyu 黃如玉. His old friend from Malacca had a teashop as well as a billiard hall and they discussed business together. Nothing was said about the profession of Gan Shiliang who had, even so, been established in Shanghai for more than ten years, nor about that of Huang Ruyu, who had been in China for more than twenty years. Probably they worked for English companies, just as had done Huang Ruyu’s brother, Huang Ruyun 黃如雲, who had plied the route between Singapore and Japan. As for Qiu Wenchang, who had a good command of English, he worked at the British consulate.

At Kobe, Li Qinghui met mostly merchants from Fujian but at Nagasaki he apparently found a compatriot in the person of Xiao Yangzhai 蕭養齋, at whose home
he stayed and with whom he enjoyed the most cordial relations. At Fuzhou, Li Qinghui found once again his old friend Teo Ku Ko 張九皋, originally from Amoy, who was also a partner of the magnate Tan Kim Cheng. He was a long term resident of Singapore and did business with the Straits, Taiwan, and Japan. Then yet again, at Xiamen, he found relatives and friends who were business owners and with whom in all likelihood he had work relationships.

Finally, at Saigon Li Qinghui lodged in a firm called Fujiheji 福基和記, most probably owned by a Baba for that same year Tan Keong Sum 陳慶三, who had also arrived from Singapore, equally went to stay there. In his account, this latter added, quite interestingly, that about twenty or thirty Baba families were living outside the Chinese town in Saigon, in rue du Fujian. Li Qinghui, just like Tan Keong Sum, would go to visit the Chin Seng 振盛 steam-driven rice mill, newly constructed by Tan Kim Ching and almost about to begin operations. The mill was managed, he said, by Huang Jinshou 黃錦壽 who, without a doubt, was from the Straits, and other rice mills were mentioned which could quite well also have belonged to Babas. Finally, he would go to see the son of the deceased Singaporean entrepreneur Tan Keng Sing 陳慶星, whom we discussed above, who owned landed property in both Singapore and Saigon. Invited to dinner, Li Qinghui would meet still two more compatriots.

As recounted by Tan Keong Sum, who never went further north than Saigon, and above all by Li Qinghui, our merchants’ voyages along the South China Sea coast might appear, at first glance, as if they were pleasure trips, even tourism. Certainly our travellers took their time, went to see the sights, discovered the history of China through visiting temples, and, on occasion, feasted regally. We see that benevolence was also a constant concern for Li Qinghui and those near him, and that they did not fail to visit various Chinese and European charitable institutions, whether in Shanghai, Fuzhou, or Hong Kong. But visibly, their main aim was to do business, even if Li Qinghui’s account, like that of Tan Keong Sum, remained very discreet about such matters, as was customary in any case. If the opium trade had enabled some Babas to play an important role in regional Southeast Asia, as we have seen, our researches are not yet sufficiently advanced for us to understand the Babas’ involvement in this trade in Shanghai or in the other Chinese treaty ports. In any case, the second half of the 1880s was marked, virtually everywhere in the region, by the sensational bankruptcies of the great opium farmers and the progressive abolition of the system.

From reading Li Qinghui, it seems rather that the Baba merchants’ main interests to a large extent were involved in the setting up of factories and manufactures and above all in the establishment of Western-style shipping companies, an arena in which they would succeed remarkably a few years later. Readers will see for themselves Li Qinghui’s interest in the factories of Shanghai and in the great enterprises partly funded by the state, which included certain shipping companies as well as arsenals. He gives a strong hint that, “considering what he has seen in China”, Shanghai, which was then in the full thrust of modernisation, was its most prosperous and best administered city and the place where new values were to be found. Li Qinghui was a good representative of the progressive merchants of the Straits, and we will better comprehend their desire to have “westernisation”, and especially technical progress of the sort they widely enjoyed in their adopted land, spread from the south to the north. These Baba businessmen were thus the forerunners of the overseas Chinese who, from the start of the 1890s, would serve as counsellors for the Qing and as bankers and entrepreneurs, not to mention of those who would support the revolutionary movement.

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55 In 1903, the Hong Kong English press affirmed that the Baba shipowners of the Straits far surpassed those of Hong Kong. See Song, One Hundred Years’ History, p. 349.
56 Examples include Liang Biru 梁碧如 (1859-1912) and Zhang Bishi 張弼士 (1840-1916), the latter a Hakka born in Guangdong who migrated to island Southeast Asia.
Summary account of a trip to the East, by Li Qinghui (1889)\textsuperscript{57}

Long voyages ought to be the subject of accounts that aim to make reality known and which can be preserved as witness to it. My young brother Cheng Yan 清淵 and I decided that we would go together to the Middle Kingdom, so as to contemplate its cultural relics (wenwu 文物) and famous places and thus to increase our knowledge.

In the year wuzi of Guangxu, on the 3\textsuperscript{rd} day of the 4\textsuperscript{th} month (7 May 1888), at the hour of chen (between 7 and 9 a.m.), we embarked on a German liner. With us were our friends Mr Zhong Ruiji 鍾瑞吉 and Mr Chen Youguan 陳有寬,\textsuperscript{58} and two servants. We learned that the ship, which was called “Erjiao 儿胶”, had a capacity of 3,200 tonnes and that its 3,250 horsepower engine allowed it to travel at 12.5 English miles per hour. At night, the ship was illuminated by electricity which made it as light as day. During dinner and afterwards a European orchestra played, with its instruments changing their rhythm and making the listeners feel like they were sailing on a celestial barque. There were also several Western singers whose pleasant voices harmonised with the music, so much so that we no longer thought of our tiredness and took pleasure in forgetting sleep.

What is more, on the ship with us were two Japanese, a certain Kura[s?]aku (or [?]tsukuru) 倉辜作\textsuperscript{60} and a certain Nakajima Noboru [shimesu or Sen] 中島宣 who were going to Tokyo together. The former was quite remarkably brilliant; he understood Chinese and was in the Army Medical Service. He made a note of some verses by Su Dongpo 蘇東坡\textsuperscript{61} that he had read and showed them to me; he had beautiful calligraphy. We conversed in Chinese and I learned that he had been to study in Germany and spoke German. He was going back to Tokyo and was happy to be with me. I composed a four line poem for him:

生平有志欲壯遊 Each man aspires to travel,
今天何期得共舟 For a time we share a ship.
訂交文字恨見晚 By written words we communicate, but why so late?
我懷更切到瀛洲 I feel as if I’ve attained the immortals’ islands.

Kura read it and was quite delighted and showed the verse to his friend.

Such was the start of the trip. We quickly lost the islands from view, all around us we saw nothing but the immensity of the deep green sea. On the morning of the 4\textsuperscript{th} day, we noticed an island whose name I know not; on the morning of the 5\textsuperscript{th} day there were two or three birds, sometimes gliding, sometimes diving. A passenger told us that it was a sign that we were nearing the coast of Annam and that the Paracels Sea would come afterwards. On the 6\textsuperscript{th} day, we saw an island; towards evening, one of the German mechanics on the ship caught a high fever; he lost consciousness, with his teeth chattering and eyes closed, his life only hung by a thread. The ship’s doctor hurried to take care of him. Not managing to have him swallow some medicine, they were only able to put a quantity of ice on his head and chest and to have him taken out into the fresh air. Westerners say that, when this fever appears, the head and chest dry out and the only remedy is to apply cold. About an hour later, the sick man returned to himself. They put him inside five or six covers which wrapped him up completely so as to warm him up again while still leaving him in the open air; they let him sleep. Seeing him cured the next morning, I thought that this was a very strange treatment and extremely different from our Chinese practices.

\textsuperscript{57} Subtitles have been added in order to facilitate the reading of the travelogue.

\textsuperscript{58} As discussed above, Lee Cheng Yan had migrated at a young age from Malacca to Singapore, where he set up his own business in 1858. While his main residence was in Telok Ayer, from 1882 he also owned a Western-style country house. An oil painting reproduced in Lee Kip Lin, The Singapore House 1819-1942 [Singapore: Times Editions, 1988], p. 176] gives a good idea of his lifestyle.

\textsuperscript{59} Neither has yet been identified.

\textsuperscript{60} There is seemingly a mistake in the second character of the name, which is not identifiable in Japanese.

\textsuperscript{61} Su Dongpo (1037-1101) was a famous poet who lived under the Northern Song.
Hong Kong

On the morning of the 7th day we passed close to Hainan 海南 Island, without however seeing it. On the morning of the 8th day we reached Hong Kong. From Singapore to here, we had covered 1,437 miles, the crossing had been calm and, thanks to heaven, we had suffered neither major storms nor huge waves. At the beginning of the year, Wu Liqing 吳理卿, owner of the Wanyuanlong 萬源隆 firm, had invited us to visit him in his store and it was agreed that we would dine together in a Hainanese restaurant.

Well before the appointed hour, I accompanied my old friend Cai Ziwei 蔡紫薇 to his home and met his sons, all very outstanding. At the hour shen (between 3 and 5 pm), we went to visit the Nuolin sugar refinery 喃磷糖局 at Tanglung Chau 燈籠州, which employed some five or six hundred workers. Each day they produce upwards of two thousand piculs of white sugar from Chinese sugar 中糖, which represents a big task. Cai Lizhi 蔡立志 and his wife, whose house is nearby, came to see us. Cai is employed at the refinery. At the hour you (between 5 and 7 pm), we went to a banquet: at the hour xu (between 7 and 9 pm) a fire broke out from north to south. At the hour hai (between 9 and 11 pm), we returned to Tanglung Chau to sleep. On the water we could see thousands of lamps, arranged in good order, that corresponded to the places where small craft were moored.

On the morning of the 9th day, we went to have a drink in Cai Ziwei’s pavilion. The place was quiet and clean and the flowers were delightful. We poured out our feelings to each other so much that we all rejoiced. At 4 that afternoon, we rejoined the ship and crossed the open sea to Yaumati 油麻地; then we encountered three German warships which followed; our vessel hoisted the flag, had some music played and fired a salvo; the warships also hoisted the flag as a sign of thanks; such are the customs in Western lands.

On the morning of the 10th day, we were sailing along the coast of Taiwan; that evening, although there had only been a mild breeze, we felt the cold. I looked at the thermometer which read 77 degrees [Fahrenheit]. That night we saw a lighthouse; the ship’s people said it was the one situated near Fuzhou and was called Fushilan 福詩蘭. On the morning of the 11th day it was still cool and around midday the sky was filled with a dense fog; the ship sounded its siren and moved forward slowly; the surface of the water was quite dark and we had to avoid meeting another ship; the thermometer fell to 76 degrees.

Shanghai and its surroundings

On the morning of the 12th day, we approached the Wusong 吳淞 River and saw a string of small and large islands; the temperature had become even colder and the thermometer said 67 degrees. The colour of the water, which had been white that morning, became yellow around midday. It is most likely that the white colour corresponded to shallow waters and the yellow was characteristic of the current of the Huangpu 黃浦 River. At this place the colour of the water was quite different. At 3 that

62 I have not yet identified this refinery. According to La Mission lyonnaise d’exploration commerciale en Chine, published by the Lyon Chamber of Commerce in 1898 [vol. II, p. 188] in 1895 here were three large refineries in Hong Kong, including the Taikoo 太古 Sugar Refining Co. Hao Yen-p’ing reports that modern sugar refineries were all installed in Canton and Hong Kong. He says that the first attempt to set one up occurred in 1869 in Whampoa, near Canton, but that it failed due to the opposition of local sugar producers. It was tried again in 1877 by the same company and renamed the China Sugar Refining Co. It was managed by Jardine, Matheson & Co; as for the one of the Taikoo 太古 Company, it was set up in 1881 by Butterfield & Swire, with partly Chinese capital. See Hao Yen-p’ing, The Commercial Revolution in Nineteenth-Century China. The Rise of Sino-Western Capitalism (Taipei: SMC Publishing Inc, 1986), p. 255.

63 It is not easy to identify this place. In the 19th century there was a place with this name on Hong Kong island, a little to the east of North Point; but there was also an islet of that name to the east of Hong Kong, at the northern extension of Taiyu Shan 大嶼山 Island. The first place name seems to be the one in question.

64 Yaumati is still the name of a neighbourhood located at the point of Kowloon peninsula.

65 This appears to be a transcription of a foreign word.
afternoon, we dropped anchor at the mouth of the Wusong and went by small boat up the Huangpu; on each side of the river, the countryside was magnificent and the trees were coloured from green to yellow. From Hong Kong to here, we had covered more than 800 miles. When 5 hours sounded, we reached the French concession at the Jinhliyuan 金利源 Quay. My son Sek Long 陳朗 had come to meet us and took us in a carriage to his firm; Hongxing 豐興, his wife, born a Huang 黃, my grandson Shenmu 深木 and my nephew Keng Yam 慶炎, 66 as well as his wife and children, came to greet me and to hear my news. After dinner, we went to the Dangui yuan 丹桂園 theatre in the company of my eighth younger brother, Zheng Yujian 鄭玉健 67 and some other people. This theatre was very grand and it had tea and cakes in abundance; we returned around midnight.

On the 13th day, we went by carriage to the Jing’an si 靜安寺 temple. 68 To its west there is a teahouse called Shenyuan 申園 where visitors were squeezed in like mice. The building was cool and tea and cakes were plentiful there; on its side there was a billiard hall, that is, a place where visitors played “phochi” 彼脂. 69 The proprietor, Xiao Piliie 蕭丕烈 70 came out to welcome us with a show of haste and respect.

In the afternoon of the 14th day, we went to have photographs taken in a Japanese studio; all five together; me with my eighth brother, my son Sek Long, Zheng Yujian, and Zhong Ruiji. Afterwards, we visited the “Zhang family garden” or Zhangjia yuan 張家園, which was some sixty mu in area; in the middle of a sheet of water they had erected small pavilions where one could enjoy the coolness in three or four spots. The owner, uncle Zhang, received us with great courtesy, accompanied us on our walks among the plantings of flowers of all sorts, the dike of weeping willows, the paths among the pines and cypresses, the fishpond and the artificial mountains, all of which seemed not of this world; while the turtledoves with their brocade plumage and the white coloured cranes seemed out of the ordinary. Then we went into a bamboo kiosk before going to rest in a pavilion where they served tea. Inside, the tables and chairs were tastefully organised; on the side of the pavilion there grew a very rare thorny tree which was full two zhang in height. 71 At midday on the 15th day, we went into the city; the shops were jammed one next to the other and the comings and goings of the passers-by made one think of the operation of a loom. After having entered the Chenghuang miao 城隍廟 or “Temple of the City’s God” 72 and burned some incense, we saw two women from Fengyang 凤陽, 73 one old and one young, who were

66 He is discussed in some detail in the introduction. He had spent 15 years in Shanghai in the firm of Tan Keng Seng & Co before returning to Singapore in 1885.
67 We may wonder if here, and in the two following occurrence, 鄭玉健 is not a mistake for Zheng Yujie (Tay Geok Teat 鄭玉健), a name which appears below (see note 97).
68 The Jing’an si is still found in Shanghai in Nanjiing xilu 南京西路. People say that it was created at the time of the Three Kingdoms during the Chiuwu era 赤烏 of the Wu (238-251) and that it was then called Hudu Chongyuan si 滬瀆重元寺. It took its current name under the Northern Song in 1008. Originally located on the north bank of the Huangpu, it was reconstructed in its current site under the Southern Song in 1216 due to the risk of flooding. The current building dates from the 19th century. See "Zhangyou mingsheng cidian 中國名勝辭典 (Shanghai: Shanghai cishu chubanshe, 1981), p. 220.
69 Perhaps this is a transcription of the English word “billiard”. We know that at this time billiards was a fashionable game in the open ports of China. Datuk Bentara Luar Johor, who visited Shanghai in 1883, said that he played billiards in the Chinese Club in the town. See Sweeney, Reputations Live On, p. 103.
70 Originally from Malacca, he appears again below. It is interesting to note here that the Babas took their taste for billiards with them to China. Around 1869, a large billiard hall existed in Singapore, as well as two bowling alleys. See Song, One Hundred Years’ History, p. 155.
71 In the 19th century, the great merchants of Shanghai, like those of Guangdong, took pleasure in constructing beautiful gardens in the Suzhou tradition. A zhang (10 chǐ) may be equated to 3.3m.
72 This temple still exists, towards the north-east of the old town. Its foundation goes back to the Yongle era of the Ming (1403-1424). See Liu Yanong 劉燕農, Shanghai xianhua 蘇州閒話 (Taipei: Shiiji shuju, Minguo 54, 1965), pp. 25-28.
73 This district in Anhui province seems always to have been known for its wandering beggars. In the mid-19th century, Rev. William C. Milne mentioned them in connection with the town of Ningbo. See La vie réelle en Chine, trans. André Tasset (Paris: Hachette, 1858), p. 60. In 1888 these mendicants even went to Germany.
performing acrobatics with tables, weights [supplied with handles], and ladders; all of it was accomplished with such ease and precision that it was worth watching. In the afternoon, we returned to the Xujia yuan 徐家園, or the "garden of the Xu family"; although it was near the market, this garden also possessed artificial mountains and ponds full of fish, pavilions, terraces, and very well designed floral parterres, without however causing the pleasure we felt being there to be quite as great as that afforded by the Zhangjia family garden. That same day, uncle Zhang and the Taotai came to visit us and towards evening we went to the "Foreign Languages School", the Tongwen (shujuan 同文書館).74

In the afternoon of the 16th day, we visited the “Profitable Bank” or Youli Yinhang 有利銀行, five storeys tall, whose director, a certain Tuan Bi-kan 蘆柏坎, received us most courteously and took us up to the top floor where he had us taste three sorts of wine. On the way back, we called on the boss of the Qichang 启昌 firm, Huang Zhenzhuan 黃振寰; in the afternoon we went to see a silk cocoon unwinding factory, the Gongheyong 公和永, which employed three hundred workers; the machines were very ingenious. Apart from this establishment there exist another two factories of this sort in Shanghai. On our return, we went to see the publications of the Dianshizhai 點石齋, the “Lithography Studio”,76 and we strolled through the American concession of Hongkou 虹口, 77 which was on our way.

On the 17th day, we went back into Shanghai city and looked at the yamen of the Taotai, the Office of Military Affairs of the Right, or Youyingya 右營衙, and visited the Wemeniai 文廟,78 the Wumiao 武廟 and the Huoshen miao 火神廟; after completing our devotions, we left by the Western Gate to go and see the Renji tang 仁濟堂, the "House of Benevolent Assistance"). This charitable institution dispenses medicine and care and looks after [abandoned] babies; this excellent set-up is the work of private donors. In the heart of the town there is also another institution called Qingjie tang 清節堂, or “House of Purity”, which is a haven for poor and virtuous women; 79 alongside this latter institution also stands the Shanjia tang 善濟堂 or “House of Universal Assistance”, a hospice for poor old men without family. This morning the temperature was 72 degrees and in the afternoon it rose as high as 76.

On the 18th day we travelled 3 li in a carriage and reached Hongkou where we visited a mechanical paper mill in which several dozen iron rollers turned on themselves as if being powered by water; the paper thus produced was about four chi in width and several hundred zhang long; it was then cut by a mechanical cutter; the


74 The first school for the study of Western languages was set up in Beijing in 1862, within the new Office of Foreign Affairs or the Zongli geguo shiwu yamen 總理各國事務衙門, which had been created the previous year.
75 This was undoubtedly a European whose name is preceded by the Malay title Tuan, which means Mister.
76 The Dianshizhai was founded in 1884 by the English merchant Frederick Major. He was publisher of an illustrated Chinese daily, the Dianshizhai huabao 點石齋畫報, which lasted until 1898. See Roswell S. Britton, The Chinese Periodical Press (Shanghai, Hong Kong, and Singapore: Kelly & Walsh Ltd, 1923), pp. 63, 64, 67, 68, 69, and 74. For selected texts in German translation, with illustrations, see Briessen, Shanghai - Bildzeitung 1884-1898. Also see Julia Henningsmeier, "The Foreign Sources of Dianshizhai huabao, a Nineteenth-Century Shanghai Magazine," Ming Qing yanjiu 明清研究 (Napoli) 1998: 59-91.
77 This area is located to the north of Shanghai central railway station.
79 According to Milne, La Vie réelle en Chine, p. 57, most of the large Chinese cities had several such institutions to support unfortunate women and widows. He visited the one in Ningbo and described it as follows: "The Tsing-Kiehtang, of "House of Purity", is a retreat for poor widows who have lost their means of existence. This building, with government approval, was built in Ningbo by private donations. It also accepts young women whose intended husbands died before marriage and who, being thus abandoned, had to make a vow of eternal virginity."
paper itself is very white and really excellent; when compared to hand-made paper, there is truly a gulf between them. The shareholders in this company are Cantonese merchants and its capital is 200,000 yuan. The paper is made from rags, old hemp sacks, mohua (?), and sugar cane refuse; the paper mill employs one hundred female workers and only ten or twenty men. Not very far away there is a waterworks, reliant on the Ministry of Public Works but set up with capital belonging to the China Merchants’ Company or Zhaoshangju 招商局; this plant was established about five or six years ago. Initially, each share was twenty-five pounds of silver; when they had been collected, their value rose to twenty-nine. The plant operates mechanically; they have built reservoirs into which they bring river water; as it rushes in, it is purified and then run through a narrow channel that takes it to the English, American, and French concessions to supply the users. This is a very useful enterprise for the general population.

That evening we went to the Taihe 泰和 restaurant where we were regaled at a banquet given by the owner of the Qichang 啟昌 firm, Huang Zhenzhuan 黃振篆. Singing girls came with the alcohol and the sound of drinking games alternated with the songs. In the room, beautiful women responded to the wine and the perfumed flowers. Such are the customs of Shanghai.

On the 19th day, I went to wash in the public baths. In the middle of this establishment is a salon where they serve tea and tobacco; the chairs and tables were very clean. The upstairs bathing cabins cost seventy wen per person, as against thirty-five on the ground floor; there was also a communal bath with a large pool where individuals only paid eighteen wen. That afternoon, I planned to take the air along the docks of the Taikoo 太古 and Zhaoshangju 招商局 or China Merchants’ Steam Navigation Company and watch the steamers used for river shipping: the Haichang 海昌, the Haiding 海定, the Jiangyu 江裕, the Taiwan 臺灣, and the Huangpu 黃浦. Their decks are on three levels and are sixty chi wide; as the cabins are clean and the boats spacious, their voyages ought to be comfortable.

On the morning of the 20th day, the thermometer stood at 77 degrees and by noon it had risen to 88. As there was a light southern breeze, it was cool when we went for a walk in the Pudong 浦東 area. We were accompanied by Nie Shenzhai 倪審齋, the owner of the Xiedefeng 協德火柴廠 match factory. In earlier times, there had lived at Pudong a certain Xu who had grown rich through transporting sand by boat and who had built a magnificent garden. The man is now dead and his fortune has vanished; only a grandson remains, with the garden and his residence abandoned. A short while later we came upon a village where we saw the country people spinning and weaving cloth; it was pleasing to contemplate how ingenuity causes the looms to move up and down. In the afternoon we went to Shenyuan 申園, played ball and took tea. That evening, we went to Xiaoguanghanlou 小廣寒樓 to listen to the singers declaiming their stories while we drank; their voices were nice and it was pleasant.

80 Hao, Commercial Revolution in Nineteenth-Century China, p. 256, says the China Paper Mill Company was founded in 1882.
81 The Shanghai Waterworks Company was founded in 1881. Ibid.
82 These games were played by two parties making finger gestures; the loser had to drink.
83 The China Merchants’ Steam Navigation Company was founded in 1872. It was the first shipping company entirely managed by Chinese. For its history, see Albert Feuerwerker, China’s Early Industrialization, Sheng Hsuan-huai (1844-1916) and Mandarin Enterprise, reprint (New York: Athenum, 1970) for multiple references, see index. This company also had branches in several Southeast Asian ports, notably in Saigon and Singapore. A chi may be equated to 33 cm.
84 The text gives a transcription that seems to mean “ball”; perhaps this time it was bowling rather than billiards.
On the 21st day, my eighth brother returned from Zhenjiang on the steamer Beijing; it seems that, fearing the heat, he had not gone as far as Hankou 漢口. Apparently at Zhenjiang there is a sanctuary called Ganlu si 甘露寺 or the “Temple of the Ganlu [era]” which is located where the ancient emperor Liu 劉 of the Later Han, going to be married, had met the empress to be who was native to the state of Wu. Furthermore, on a mountain there is still a huge rock split into two; people say that it was cut when the former emperor Liu and the king of Wu 吳 invoked heaven. A little further on stands the Jinshan si 金山寺 or “Gold Mountain Temple”; there are historical vestiges there that are over one thousand years old, and which stand so majestically that when gazing on them one cannot stop dreaming of the past.

In the afternoon, we took a carriage and, after going about three miles, reached the Southern Association of Quanzhou and Zhangzhou, the Quan-Zhang nanhuiguan 泉漳南會館. They venerate the statue of Guanyin and on the left of it they also venerate the tablet of my deceased father-in-law, Tan Kim Seng 陳金聲 (1805-64) as well as that of a deceased member of my family, Li Zixi 李自西. The association’s lands cover an area of 50 mu; in the middle is a stretch of water and artificial rockeries which together form a tranquil and pleasant place. During the Xianfeng period (1853 to 1855), brigands attacked Shanghai; the French, under the pretext of helping the Chinese authorities, wanted to seize the Association’s land for a military camp. Tan Kim Seng ordered Li Zixi to intervene in his name and thus the Association was preserved it its entirety; their compatriots were grateful to them and consequently venerate their tablets twice a year, in spring and autumn. On the right...

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85 According to the Zhongguo mingsheng cidian 中國名勝辭典, p. 338, the Ganlu is located on summit behind the Guigan shan mountain. According to tradition, it was founded under the Three Kingdoms during the first year of the Ganlu period (265). It fell into ruin before being reconstructed under the Tang and again later under the Song.

86 This tradition was fabricated; but Ibid, p. 339, reports the legend according to which the widow of Liu Bei 劉備 venerated her dead husband in a pavilion close to the temple.

87 According to Ibid, p. 340, the Jinshan si still exists; it is located on Jinshan hill and was built under the Eastern Jin (317-419). It was originally called Zexin si 菜心寺. Under the Tang it received its present name, after gold was found in the mountain.

88 The association and the shrine—dedicated to Tianhou 天后 that it sheltered were created in 1757 by merchants from the two prefectures, and most especially by men from the districts of Longxi 龍溪, Tongan 同安, and Haicheng 海澄. The buildings took 6 years to complete. See Shanghai beike ziliao xuanji 上海碑刻資料選輯 (Shanghai: Shanghai bowuguan, 1980), pp. 235-38. One of its two buildings was in the south of the Chinese city, in a street called Xiangua jie 飛瓜街. The buildings no longer exist.

89 Tan Kim Seng, like his father, was Malacca-born. In Singapore his firm, Kim Seng & Co, was located at Boat Quay and in 1840 he was one of only 2 Chinese merchants in the Chamber of Commerce. Song, One Hundred Years’ History, p. 46.

90 His name also appeared on the restoration stele. See Shanghai beike ziliao xuanji, p. 240.

91 Arthur Millac [Les Français de Changhai en 1853-1855. Épisodes du siege de Changhai par les Impériaux (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1884), p. 19] who saw these events from the Imperial forces’ side, reported several facts which, without always agreeing with those noted by our author, show very well that there had been a real conflict between the French and the Fujianese. He noted that “the principal leaders of the Small Knife marriage and, after going about three miles, on stands the Jinshan si 金山寺 or “Gold Mountain Temple”; there are historical vestiges there that are over one thousand years old, and which stand so majestically that when gazing on them one cannot stop dreaming of the past. In the end, the rebels lost: the Cantonese chief was killed “and only the Fujianese one succeeded in escaping” [p. 47].
side is a building where they leave coffins, with about ten of them there. The administrator Zeng Jintai 曾金台 received us courteously and offered us tea, tobacco and jams.

After that, we went to visit the Rongchang 荣昌 match factory. It is huge and, every day, can produce more than ten crates of matches; there are 67 workmen and some 300 female workers; it is a great enterprise. That evening, after dining, we went to the Yongnishang 永霓裳 theatre to see a piece called Yuancheng yu Zhang Xiu 宛城遇張繡, or “Meeting Zhang Xiu in the town of Yuancheng”;

92 pleasures behind brocade curtains almost brought about failure and nearly cost the hero his life; this is what people call being blind to the point of risking your life for passion, or being the author of one’s own misfortunes.

On the 22nd day, we took a small boat for a pleasure trip on the Huangpu River; the breeze was so light that the mountains reflected in the water. That evening we went to the Tianxian yuan 天仙園 to see a piece called E you ebao 惡有惡報, or “Evil is repaid by evil”. We can thus report that Heaven’s net is large and well made, its stitches are loose but nothing can pass through.

On the 23rd day, there was a dense fog. The thermometer stood at 76 degrees; in the afternoon, we went to visit the Shenbao guan 申報馆 or office of the “Shanghai Journal”, then we went to the Dianshizhai 点石齋 to buy books, design manuals, and a map of the world.

On the 24th day, we went to a large tearoom to hear a female storyteller tell a tale; her voice was convincing and resounded harmoniously.

On the 25th day, we took the train to Shihuigang 石灰港 and went a little more than four English miles to visit the Jiangsu Arsenal,93 the Jiangnan jiqi zhizaoju 江南機器製造局. This is a large complex with a series of factories; among them are a foundry for big cannons, a factory for Western guns and other munitions, a workshop for warships and docks; all the machines were operating, and it was difficult to count them all. The artillery shells were long with a pointy end; the biggest, weighing 700 English pounds, were for use on iron ships; there were still lots of other sorts, large and small, into the details of which we cannot enter. All of the workshops together employed about 3,000 workers. Inside the complex there was also a military school called Wubei shuyuan 武備書院, quite remarkable and which had cost the State a pretty penny.94 These workshops are even more extraordinary than the arsenal at Fuzhou.95

On the morning of the 26th day, I did not feel very well and lay in a hot bath for about a quarter of an hour; in the end, I started to perspire and felt better. That afternoon, I went for a stroll in the Shenyuan 申園 garden where, seated on a swing, I let the wind push me where it willed. That evening, we went to the Jiuxiang yuan 九香院 theatre.96

On the 27th day, we took a stroll to the Northern Association of the Prefectures of Quanzhou and Zhangzhou.96 There they venerate the protectrice of sailors and seagoing merchants, 天后 Tianhou and, in the back, Guansheng dijun 關聖帝君; they still have a horizontal panel that had been offered by the academician Wang

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92 This play was based on an episode of the Three Kingdoms novel.
94 The Wubei shuyuan, generally called Wubei xuetang 武備學堂, had only been built in 2 years before (1860).
95 The Fuzhou arsenal (located in a place called Mawei 馬尾) was founded with the assistance of the French naval officer Prosper Giquel (1835-1886). See Steven A. Leibo, Transferring Technology in China. Prosper Giquel and the Self-Strengthening Movement (Berkeley: University of California, Institute of East Asian Studies, China Research Monograph 28, 1985).
96 The Shanghai beike ziliao xuanji, pp. 233-34, also speaks of these 2 seats called north and south. The association owned numerous buildings, whose names are listed in the inscription of 1831.
Renzhan[kan] 王仁湛 [塔] and, on either side, two others offered by military academicians.97 This association was founded a hundred years ago. Its communal property, rented out, returns more than 5,000 taels per year; once the annual costs are defrayed, there is still a sum remaining for the communal cashbox.

On the 28th day, Tay Geok Teat 湯玉瓞98 arrived from Hankou 漢口 on the ship called Jiangyong 江永; he recounted how, that morning, they had encountered a strong wind and how the mooring cable of the steamer Yihe 怡和 had broken. The ship had begun to drift and smashed into the prow of the Jiangyong and damaged a paddle-wheel ship of the Taikoo Company. The Jiangyong was badly damaged and people thought it would sink. Such are the hazards of travelling by water. That evening we went for a stroll in Changchun tang 長春堂 and visited the classroom of [Madame] Shu Yushen 書玉身 at the Gusu 姑蘇 Girls' School;99 the pupils were very diligent; it was charming to see.

On the 29th day, Qiu Wenchuan 邱文川 came to visit. Having been born and raised in Singapore, he understands English perfectly; at present, he is working in the British consulate where he is regarded as very trustworthy. Gan Shiliang 甘時兩, another Singaporean, also came to see me in the shop; he told me that he had been in Shanghai for more than two years.

On the 30th day we went five miles by carriage to the Catholic church of Zie-ka-wei (Xujia hui 徐家匯); a Chinese priest, father Huang Shang 黃裳, personal name Zhishan 志山, came to meet us and showed us around the place;100 the school comprised several rooms and had an area of more than 100 acres (mu 畝); at the centre is an observatory nine stories high in which there is a sextant, and instruments for measuring the temperature and for predicting wind and rain; the equipment is very sophisticated.101 The boys' school102 comprises about twenty pupils and the infants' school has two or three hundred little girls; there are also workshops,103 such as ones where they print books, where they prepare firewood, where they sew, where they make shoes, paintings, sculptures, maps and plans; for security reasons, each of them disposes of its own room. The whole lot together is resplendent and you can hardly turn your attention away, the equipment is so advanced. The holdings of the library

98 Tay Geok Teat was born in Malacca in 1832 and died in Singapore in 1893. His father Tay Song Quee, from Zhangzhou in Fujian, had come to trade in the Straits in the early 19th century and had settled in Malacca. Tay Geok Teat went to Singapore and, in 1863, set up the firm Geok Teat & Co in Battery Road. In 1883 he toured the main industrial towns of Europe with his friend, Lee Cheng Yar, before they also visited Japan and China. Song, *One Hundred Years' History*, pp. 111, 122-23.
99 Gusu is the literary name of Suzhou 蘇州. This passage seems a little corrupted.
100 For another description of this place, see C. Imbault-Huart, “Une visite à l'établissement religieux et scientifique de Si-ka-oué près Changhai,” in “Miscellanées chinoises”: 538-43. After remarking that this is one of the most interesting places to visit in the environs of Shanghai, he states clearly that the Catholic mission is 6 kilometres from the town on a vast plain where are situated the main establishment, the observatory and the orphanage.
101 According to Imbault-Huart, the observatory dated from 1872 [Ibid]. He says it was “established in the centre of a garden, about 200 metres from the main building. Its altitude is about 6 metres above sea level, and it dominates all the neighbouring houses.” The observatory has all the instruments required for the study of meteorology and for making magnetic observations (which the author enumerated one by one) plus an astronomical telescope, a transit theodolite, and a large theodolite. The observations made there were published in *Bulletin de l'observatoire de Si ka Oué*.
102 That is to say, the orphanage, which Imbault-Huart reported was founded in 1847 [Ibid].
103 As appendages to the orphanage there were “carpentry workshop where religious items were made, workshops for sculpture, shoe repairing, painting (of pious images), engraving, tailoring, wood turning, etc”. In regard to the printing press, Imbault-Huart said it was founded in 1873 and “possessed a pretty collection of European fonts and mobile Chinese typefaces of various dimensions”. He added: “It is from here that there recently came the first two volumes of a superb course of Chinese language and literature, encompassing all styles and eras…” [Ibid: 542].
occupy three rooms well furnished with works in Chinese and English. The "natural history museum", qingwu yuan 情物園, was full of birds, quadrupeds, insects and fish, all well preserved; there is a whale’s skull about eight or nine chi long, which allows us to judge the size of its body. In the school, those who learn to read and to practice manual crafts are all Chinese children of impoverished families; when they turn twenty, they finish their studies and leave the school to establish themselves; this is a means for China to educate its talents and is of great benefit to poor children. Then Qui Wenchuan 邱文川 invited us to Wantongchun 萬同春 for a Western meal, which I thought delicious; after which we went to drink tea at the Changchun tang 長春堂.

On the 1st day of the 5th month, we took a boat going in the direction of Wuxi 無錫 in order to go to Longhua 龍華 where we found a solid bridge one hundred bu in length. There was a seven story pagoda there, about forty chi high, inside which we ascended via a circular staircase. At the top, I leaned over to look towards the base, holding my fear in check. All those who had climbed up here wrote their names and dates on the wall; inside the temple there were five altars dedicated respectively to Rulai 如來, Guanyin 觀音, Wenshu 文殊, Puxian 普賢, and Mile 弥勒, to the four heavenly guardians, and to the eighteen arhats; their pictures were two zhang high. People say that under the Han, when out strolling, the queen mother of the State of Wu, Wu guotai 吳國太, perceived a small light which allowed her understand that the site was propitious and she had this seven storey pagoda built there to venerate Buddha effigies. The monks attached to the temple number 120 and they perform orderly communal prayers; they have a santron, small bronze bells, a larger bell, and a big drum as well as a sonorous metal plaque; on the first floor is the library with scores of bookcases, undoubtedly containing some ten thousand volumes. It is one of the great temples of China.

On the 2nd day, I talked with Mr Huang Ruyu 黃如雨 who said that he was a British citizen (Yingji ren 英籍人), originally from Penang, and added that he had come to establish himself in China more than twenty years ago; his brother Huang Ruyun 黃如雲 had previously been in Singapore with the Limazhenlai firm (Hokkien: Latbetinlai) 姊妹珍來; later he had plied the route between that town and Japan.

Japan
That evening, at 6 pm, we boarded a small craft which took us to Wusong where we embarked on a French ship for the eastern crossing; it cast off the same night at about 10 pm. This ship, called "Shayaliankan 沙牙連堪", had a capacity of 3,800 tons and went at 13 nautical miles (shuili 水里) per hour.

On the 3rd day, we saw no islands, only the sea in its vast immensity. A thick fog obscured the sun. The passengers felt cold. In the afternoon, the ship sounded its siren so as to avoid colliding with oncoming vessels and to give them time to change course.

On the 4th day we espied numerous islands, large and small. On one of them there were terraced rice fields, but trees and houses were rare. People had built a lighthouse there. Another large island, called Xinmiannusha 心棉怒沙, also had a lighthouse; near a seaside village there was a steamer, three or four kapal 甲板, and about ten commercial junks. There was also a small port.

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104 Imbault-Huart described it as follows: “The main establishment comprises the fathers’ extremely well fitted out living quarters; a fine library containing most of the European books published on the Chinese empire and a number of others (about 15,000 volumes) with a quantity of works in Chinese (about 10,000 volumes).

105 The settlement of Longhua is located in the southern district of Shanghai (itself dependant on the municipality of Shanghai) not far from the west bank of the Huangpu. Its pagoda, which is located on the west bank of the river, was built in 1064, alongside the Longhua si, whose creation goes back to the Tang. See Zhongguo mingsheng cidian, pp. 281-82.

106 In fact, it was under the Three Kingdoms during the chiwu 赤烏 period of the Wu. Ibid, p. 281.

107 Kapal is a Malay term for a boat, undoubtedly here designating local craft.
Kobe
On the 5th day, in the morning until midday, we intermittently spotted large and small islands, then two long islands in a line. The sea was calm; when we reached port, it was 4 pm; they fired a canon; our ship had reached Kobe 哥嗎, that is Kobe 神戶; we drew alongside the dock and everyone went to check in at the French-built Hotel Helandi 和蘭地; its rooms and dining room were clean and the furnishings nicely arranged; this was definitely a superior hotel. That evening we took a rickshaw, dongyang che 東洋車, to the Jianji 建記 shop, located in 70th Street; the owner was a Fujianese named Bai Meijian 白梅建 who traded in sugar from Taiwan. There were between thirty and forty shops run by Fujianese in the town compared to three or four hundred run by Cantonese merchants. That evening we went to see a Japanese theatrical production; its story examined the injustice of officials; tickets for first class seats cost one and a half silver jiao 角; second class cost one jiao; the show lacked animation and was hardly worth watching.

On the 6th day, we went for a stroll in the streets and bought a few things; that night the temperature fell to 70 degrees.

On the 7th day, we paid a visit to the English consulate, so they could authorize us to visit the interior of the country; they gave us each a safe conduct in return for seven and a half jiao; we went to be registered at the office of the governor-general of Kobe and in exchange we received a pass for which we each had to pay an extra two silver jiao. Furnished with this piece of paper, it was possible for us to travel through the country. A little after midday, we returned to the Jianji 建記 shop intending to ask the employee Huang Qi 黃奇 to be our guide so that we could go and see the waterfall on Buyinshan 布引山 Mountain.

This mountain is very high and in large part it is made up of rocks; along the path leading to the summit are tea houses, cafes where they serve alcohol, cakes and pipa 批杷 or loquats. Half way up, we saw the waterfall which cascades out from the summit down the rocky walls and makes a pond in which one can bathe; on going higher, you get the impression that the waterfall is enormous and, although it was summer, there was a pleasant sensation of coolness. We felt good and opened our dusty jackets. On the way back, we visited the Ikuta-jinja 生田神社, a temple dedicated to a loyal general of a previous dynasty who courageously died fighting to defend his country. This sanctuary is maintained by a monk dressed in a white kachâya with a black hat on his head; inside they venerate a statue of the dead general; outside the alcove, on the side, are statues of two generals; the sanctuary is flanked by doors; above them are suspended ten pairs of iron lanterns the size of our small ceremonial lanterns; as well, there are ten pairs of dressed stone lanterns on the ground between the entrance and the sanctuary; further away on the outside were columns and stone arches. In the main doorway of the sanctuary there was a small bronze bell attached to a cord that hung down to ground level; when the faithful reached this spot, on their knees, they clapped their hands then rang the bell, so as to let the spirit know that they were coming to make their devotions; this was a practice that we had never seen before. According to the local people, this temple is famous for its great efficacy. All around the temple are old trees which rise up to heaven, hiding the light of day; people go walking there in great number to enjoy the shade.

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108 According to Chen De-Ren, “On Chinese Society in Kobe,” Sociological Review of Kobe University 7 (1990): 9-10 [in Japanese], in 1888 the Chinese population of the town was 887, a good number of whom were employed in making matches which were exported to China. The author clearly states that among the Chinese residents of the town there were British subjects, that is to say, Babas from the Straits.

109 This is the famous national hero Kusunoki Masashige 楠木正成 (born in 1294), who committed suicide in 1336 after being defeated in the battle near the Minatogawa 湊川 River where he fought for the emperor against the shogun. Before World War II, his story appeared in all Japanese history texts. Thanks to Pierre Souyri for this information.
On the 8th day, the weather was still cold, partly rainy and partly fining up, but we never saw the sun. The thermometer fell to 68 degrees. It was not good to go walking so we stayed sitting in the hotel, idling about.

Osaka
On the 9th day, the weather was still cold, we took the train to Osaka; we passed through [Ashiya], Nishinomiya, [Amagasaki] and at 11 am we reached Osaka station where we got off and then took a rickshaw to Ziyou keguan or “Freedom Hotel”; this hotel was very large and the Western-style meals there were very good. That afternoon we went to a park to see an all-female show; their voices and faces were extraordinary; their dances were varied, they were walking in simple clogs, playing with the two ends of their scarves, extending them out or bringing them back towards themselves, rolling them up or unwinding them, sending them forward or back, endlessly changing and giving proof, one could say, of real talent.

Kyôto-Osaka
In the morning of the 10th day, we took the train to Kyôtó, that is to say, the “western capital of Japan” (Riben xijing 日本西京); we visited the remains of the former royal palace and we went into the walled town. The streets are full of shops and the population is more than 100,000; temples are very numerous there and shelter a great number of monks, from one to two hundred each. Previously this town was the capital; after troubled times, the sovereigns moved to the Eastern capital, Dongjing 東京, pronounced in Japanese Tôkyô 東京. In the afternoon, at 4.30, we took the train to return to Osaka. The journey of thirty English miles was accomplished in an hour and a half; the train was neither fast nor slow; we were very well able to look at the mountains and fields along the way without fear of being jolted about. The Japanese pronounce the two characters Daban 大阪 as “Osaka” 烏沙朶. This town contains more than 100,000 people; there are many streets and about seven hundred bridges; the markets are lively and commerce prosperous; it is certainly one of the great towns of the country. There are some rich merchants there whose surname is Mitsui 三井; local people estimate their fortune at more than ten million and they manage the country’s banks. At Osaka there is a man without any hands who is able to prepare ink, control a brush, and paint animals, all in a very pleasing manner, with his feet; his writing is very popular; it is something quite extraordinary.

On the 11th day, we went to visit the workshops where they make the silver coinage (yinlei 銀銅) of the country; they are very big and all the work is done by machines; there are about three hundred workers. They operate in the following way: they put large lumps of silver in the furnace; when molten, the liquid is pour into long bars and, after being pressed by ten machines in a row, it comes out as quite thin leaves which form the base of the silver pieces; they send them through a machine which cuts them, then through another which makes them into circular shapes, and then to yet another which mints them into Japanese money; all is done very quickly so that one must watch the process without looking away even for a while; it is truly extraordinary and unimaginable.

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110 The text seems corrupted at this point: if it is easy to reconstruct Nishinomiya, the same is not true for Ashiya 廣島 and Amagasaki 尼崎, the two other train stations, whose written names are 自潔 and 賛岐 respectively.

111 The last element of the phrases seems to have been corrupted and is incomprehensible.


113 The expression lei 銅 is used to transcribe the Malay duit (from the Dutch doel), which literally means “copper coin” and also money in general.
The striking of copper duit is similar to that of silver coins; there are three pieces: one of two cents, of one cent, and a half cent; a piece of silver is worth one hundred cents, as in Singapore. As for silver coins, there are half dollars and pieces worth two and a half jiao. Every day they can strike up to ten thousand dollars (of silver) and five thousand duit of copper; sometimes they also strike gold dun 盾. Silver coinage is so abundant that it circulates throughout the whole country in great quantity. At noon we went to the old town in order to view the Exhibition of products: the objects made of copper, iron, cloth, paper, and wood were all excellent; their prices were clearly displayed, so that you could buy with full knowledge of the facts; the products were for the most part Japanese. That evening at 6 we returned to Kobe by train; the first class fare was seven and a half jiao, and the third class seven jiao. People say that the population of Kobe is more than 100,000; there are about four to five hundred Cantonese there and about one hundred Fujianese.

Nagasaki

On the 12th day, we went for another stroll in the streets. That evening at 7 pm, we boarded the English packet boat that would take us to Nagasaki; it was called “Ke (or ba) jiaofeikan 岐脇船”; its capacity was 3,000 tons and its speed was twelve nautical miles per hour.

On the 13th day, the temperature was especially cold and the thermometer stood at 72 degrees. At 4 in the afternoon, we reached Shimaoshaqi 士毛沙崎 [Shimonoseki 下關], a small port where there were both Western and Chinese merchants established. It was not as lively as Kobe.

On the 14th day, at 3.30 am, we reached Nagasaki 長崎; at dawn we boarded six small craft to land and we lodged in the Taichang 泰昌 firm. The owner, Xiao Yangzhai 蕭仰齋, hurried to welcome us and after eating breakfast we went to the Fuji si 興福寺, one of three big Chinese temples in the town. See [Japanese: Fukusai-ji 福濟寺], a large temple; at its centre they venerate the statues of Guanyin, Tianhou, and Guandi; to the side is a statue of Huang Bogong 黃伯公, a doctor at the end of the Ming who renounced his career, became a Chan monk, and came to Nagasaki to retire. He was admired by the ruler of Japan who contributed to the construction of this temple, just as to that of other temples. Next, we went into the town near a bridge where there is a canon that belonged to Zheng guoxing 鄭國姓; it weighs two hundred pounds; at its sides there are stone bases some two hundred years old. We went to the museum; some of the items on display could be purchased. At the hour wei (between 1 and 3 pm), Xiao Yangzhai 蕭仰齋 invited us to have a meal in a Japanese restaurant; there were no chairs; we had to sit on mats as we Chinese used to do in the remote past; each guest had his own table; the crockery was essentially lacquer; the dishes were good although different from Chinese cuisine. At 6 that evening, we took a ship of the Mitsubishi Company (三菱)
called the Tôkyô Maru 東京丸 to return to Shanghai; its capacity was 1,800 tons and its speed twelve nautical miles per hour.

On the 15th day, the wind joined the waves, the immense sea was coloured green, and we saw no islands; I was seasick like all the other passengers and could only lie down.

Return to Shanghai
On the 16th day, we saw a great number of fishing boats; someone said that we were in Ningbo waters. At the hour weì (between 1 and 3 am), we entered the Wusong River and entered the Huangpu River. As the water is not deep and the current swift, big ships are required to proceed very slowly; when 3 hours sounded, we reached the quay and disembarked on land.

At the hour you (between 5 and 7 am), from our firm Hongxing we saw seven to eight hundred soldiers advancing in line along the road, very orderly and armed with Western rifles; each platoon was preceded by a band; the flags of various colours put one in mind of clouds. An informed person told us: “They belong to the former military governor of Hubei, Wang Wenshao 王文韶, and they are going to board the Haian 海安 to go to Tianjin at the quay of the China Merchants’ Steam Navigation Co, or Zhaoshang ju 招商局.” A moment later, we saw civil and military officials with red, blue, and white buttons accompany his Excellency to the ship, while it fired several canon salvos to which several hundred rifle shots responded. This magnificence in Shanghai allowed us to judge the majesty of China.

In the evening of the 17th day, we went to see the Liuchun ban 留春班 Peking theatre troop.

On the 18th day we went to visit the opium smoking establishment called NanChengxin dayanguan 南誠信大煙館, large and beautiful, in which visitors and their companions pushed to get in, smoking, drinking tea, and talking loudly; the long halls and galleries endlessly followed each other. In front of the opium den was a glass-works built by a Cantonese which produced exquisite glass objects of very elegant colours. 119

On the 19th day we went to the English concession, to the International Court, to assist in a case being judged by a Chinese magistrate and English assessor. 120 The plaintiff would stand on one side while the representative of the accused and the accused stayed on their knees before answering; when the two officials had heard the case they would reach an agreement on how to separate truth from falsehood and would hand down a sentence of imprisonment, wearing the cangue, or being beaten. There were two individuals locked in cangues who were placed behind a barrier under an awning. On the sides of the building were two prisons, one for women and the other for men; they contained about a hundred criminals.

On Saturday, the 21st day, we went to see the Dangui yuan 丹桂園 theatrical troupe. It was already summer in Shanghai; each morning, day broke at 4.30 and the evening dusk lasted until 8.30; this meant that the day lasted fifteen and a half hours; from this we can see that the days are very much longer than those in Singapore.

On the 22nd day, the heavens were dark, rain fell intermittently and, although it was fine, we never saw the sun at all.

118 Wang Wenshao (1830-1908) was native to Hangzhou in Zhejiang. He passed the metropolitan examination in 1852. In 1889, he was named governor general of Yunnan-Guizhou where he helped repress local minority rebellions.
119 Twentieth Century Impressions of Hong Kong, Shanghai, and Other Treaty Ports of China: Their History, People, Commerce, Industries, and Resources, ed. Arnold Wright (London: 1908), p. 548 confirms that the Cantonese had widely invested in glass making by creating, in 1882, the Chinese Glass Works Co.
120 The rules governing this International Court (although the French had their own Mixed Court in their concession) changed on several occasions from its establishment in 1864. For more details, see Westel W. Willoughby, Foreign Rights and Interests in China, revised edition (reprint, Taipei: Ch’eng-wen Publishing Co, 1966), vol. I, pp. 529-42.
On the 23rd day, the weather improved. After lunch, we went for a walk and rested at the Changchun tang 長春堂, where songs resounded in a pleasing way; towards evening, having sated our pleasure, we went back to our lodgings.

On the evening of the 24th day we ate some really delicious mutton; then with our friends we sang same strange songs to musical accompaniment, then poems extracted from the Qianjiashi 千家詩, 121 each responding to the other; we enjoyed ourselves so much that we forgot our tiredness and did not go to bed until the middle of the night. To listen without cease to the singing of poems awakened the feelings of the traveller and, once returned to Singapore, those feelings would still live in his emotions.

On the 27th day, we went again to see the Catholic church of Zie-ka-wei. The priest Li Wenyu 李問漁 showed us everything in detail; in the art salon, the Western paintings were technically sophisticated, like the one of [the president of] the bureau of astronomy, Qiantianjian 欽天監, Nanhuairen 南懷仁 122 in Manchu court dress, and the one of Matteo Ricci 利瑪竇, in Ming era clothing, seated and conversing with Xu Guangqi 徐光啟, 123 so animated that they seemed alive; there was also an oil painting of a priest holding a vessel containing water with which he was anointing the head of a black man; this latter was kneeling with his head bent; the picture was very lifelike; they have techniques of painting which are quite extraordinary. That evening we ate at the Shenyuan restaurant and discussed some specific matters with Xiao Pilie, Malacca-born and the younger brother of Pimou 不謀. Upon investigation, it appeared that Xu Guangqi had been born in Shanghai, that under Wanli (1573-1615) he had worked in the Hanlin Academy, that he had converted and was close to the Italian Matteo Ricci, whom he encouraged to help the office of astronomy to correct the calendar, and that he carried out astronomical research in order to correct inaccuracies in the calendar. Zie-ka-wei is where he lived; his tomb is still there. 124

At 8 on the 28th day my nephew Keng Yam arrived from Hong Kong on the Messageries maritimes ship. After chatting, he shook my hand and left. At 10.30 I took the ship of the Taikoo called the “Wulijiao 烏禮號” which went to Fuzhou and that night we were at sea off Ningbo.

Fuzhou

On the morning of the 1st day of the 6th month I saw innumerable islands in the sea off Fuzhou. At 11, we dropped anchor near the pagoda of Luoxingta 龍星塔; 125 then we took a small boat into the port; at noon, we were on the quay at Fuzhou and we went to eat some congee (plain rice gruel) in the Fulihao 複利號 restaurant. As I did not feel very well, I went to rest in the hotel and our relatives’ doctor, who was well versed in Western medicine, was sent to take my pulse. I took the powder and potion that he gave me and my dizziness and feeling of suffocation disappeared.

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121 There are several anthologies that bear this name. The oldest contains poetry from the Tang and Song, compiled by Liu Kezhuang 劉克莊 (1187-1269).
123 Matteo Ricci (1552-1610) first lived in Guangdong from 1583, then went north in 1595. From 1604 to 1607, he worked with Xu Guangqi (1562-1633), a Christian literatus from Zie-ka-wei in the outskirts of Shanghai) to translate works of mathematics, astronomy, and geography. See his biography in Goodrich & Fang, Dictionary of Ming Biography, vol II, pp. 1137-44; Dehergne, Répertoire des Jésuites, pp. 219-20 [notice 684]; Pfister, Notices biographiques et bibliographiques sur les Jésuites, vol I, pp. 22-46 [notice 9]. For Xu Guangqi, see Hummel, Eminent Chinese of the Ch’ing Period, vol I, pp. 316-19. Our author returns to Xu below.
124 The tomb of Xu Guangqi still exists. It is in the Nandan yuan park 南丹園, located along the edge of Nandanlu Road. It was restored in 1957. See Zhongguo mingsheng cudian 中國名勝詞典, p. 279. According to Imbault-Huart, “Miscellanées chinoises,” p. 539, note 1, the family cemetery, already more or less in ruins, was located to the right of the religious establishment. At the time it comprised five burial mounds.
125 This means that the author’s ship berthed not far from the port of Mawei gang 馬尾港, itself situated 21km south-east of Fuzhou. The pagoda stands on the summit of the hill of the same name.
On the 2nd day, at 8 am, Teo Ku Ko 张九皋126 arrived from the countryside; we had a long conversation together and that comforted me. After breakfast, we went with him to visit the mission school where there were about ninety Chinese students reading Chinese and Western books with equal ease; some of them were very intelligent. Then we headed for Teo Ku Ko’s residence, whose facade was in the Chinese style but its rear was Western; it was spacious and arranged very pleasingly. The furniture, the bric-a-brac, the antiques, the pictures, and the calligraphy were all of very high quality. When we went inside it felt cool, despite it being summer. Alongside the salon was a small pavilion where the sons of Teo Ku Ko studied. As I was feeling dizzy again, I stretched out there to rest and spoke a little with their tutor about world events. Then my younger brother, his friends, and our old friend Ku Ko left to see the Gushan 导 or “Temple of the Gushing Spring”. On this mountain there is a gushing spring which passes through a grotto and can in principle strike a bell, hence its name. The mountain is very high and there are cliffs everywhere upon which the ancients have engraved countless inscriptions. Master Zhu,128 has traced the character shou 潤 “longevity” there, at a height of more than one zhang on the wall of a grotto. Apart from the inscriptions left by prominent people,129 there is still a lot to see; this mountain is one of the finest sites in Fuzhou and it delights everyone.

On the morning of the 3rd day I took a boat named Fuli 複利, passed beyond the Shipping Office and reached the Luoxingta pagoda, where we embarked on a ship of the Taikoo Company. My old friend Ku Ko accompanied me, overflowing with feeling and thus showing the tenderness of his longstanding friendship. When 10 pm sounded, the ship set off towards Xiamen.

**Xiamen**

At 6 am on the 4th day I arrived at Xiamen port. I disembarked on the quay and went to the Fuchang 福昌 firm where I was warmly welcomed by one of my relatives, Biyan 碧岩. After finishing breakfast, I went for a stroll in the town. I passed by the De’an 德安 firm, where I chatted with Mr Lin Deyi 林德義; after a short time I went to have a stroll in the banian tree (榕树) forest, then went to the pavilion where people enjoy the cool air in the Huang family’s country house, which is located at the top of a hill in amongst greeneries. I made a detour past the Tiger Stream Cliff, Huxiyan 虎溪岩 to contemplate the White Tiger Cave (or Baihu dong 白虎洞), then returned passing by the wild grasses Lake. At 4 pm, I took the Taikoo ship once more, going to Hong Kong.

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126 According to J. A. Bethune Cook, *Sunny Singapore: An Account of the Place and its People with a Sketch of the Results of Missionary Work*, 2nd ed. (London: Elliot Stock, 1907), p. 61, “Teo A. Hok or Ku Ko, as he was called, was a typical Chinese. He began life as a ‘house-boy’ in Amoy, his native place. He served his European master so satisfactorily, that the latter gave him a handsome bonus, with which he traded and grew rich. He had business relations with Japan and the Straits (where he had as his partner the Siamese Consul, Mr Tan Kim Cheng), as well as with Formosa and in China. He was the founder of the earliest Anglo-Chinese College in China, at Foochow, by the gifts of a large house and a considerable sum of money.” Thanks to Mr U. Kratz who procured this text for me.

127 Gushan Mountain lies on the outskirts of Fuzhou, on the north bank of the Minjiang River. There are many Buddhist temples on it, the most famous of which is the Yongguan 导 which was founded in 908. It burned down twice, in 1408 and 1542, and was rebuilt in 1627, then enlarged under the Qing. See Lin Lin 林麟, *Fuzhou shengjing* 福州勝景 (Fuzhou, 1980), pp. 21-30.

128 Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130-1200) was the celebrated philosopher of the Song, himself Fujianese, to whom we owe a reinterpretation of Confucian thought.

129 According to a guide to present-day Fuzhou, the mountain still boasts more than 300 rock inscriptions, the oldest going back to the 6th year of the Qing period 慶寛 of the Song (1046). It was written by the famous Fujianese calligrapher, Cai Xiang 蔡襄 (1011-1066) who was prefect of Fuzhou at the time. See Lin Lin, *Fuzhou shengjing*, p. 27.
Second stop in Hong Kong

On the morning of the 5th day, we perceived fishing boats in the distance. We were probably in the seas opposite the district of Chaoyang 潮陽. At 6 in the evening, we landed at Hong Kong. As I had a relative with me, I could not hasten to the quay. I waited a moment on the ship, leaning against the railing, gazing upon the lights that twinkled in the port, like ten thousand lapis lazuli lamps, spreading silver fire; they were the lights of Hong Kong shops, whether higher or lower depending on their location in the tortuous streets that followed the mountain slope. It's because of this that seeing the port at night is worth the trouble it takes. As we were arriving at the hour hai (between 9 and 11 pm), my eighth brother hired a small craft and we came alongside at Tanglung chau and stayed with Cai Ziwei where we were at ease.

At noon on the 6th day, after breakfast, I went with friends to stroll on the Peak (here called Taipingshan 太平山); this mountain is 1,850 feet high. You ascend it by a cable-car. After nine minutes you reach 1,300 feet and the passengers pay a fare of 23 jiao. It is as if you were being carried up in a chair; it took an hour to reach the top, as the cable-car had to go down again so that another could come up; at the summit, there is an installation [a rack-rail] which allows a train to be drawn straight up on an iron rail, which is very clever. As it was raining we could not linger and went back down immediately. We then took a rickshaw to see the Tung Wah Hospital 東華醫院, which is very large; people have told me that it currently houses one hundred sick people; there are four doctors who also care for external patients when requested. That night there was a storm.

At 8 am on the 8th day, I boarded the Henan 河南 heading for Bocca Tigris; we went alongside the island of Lianhuashan 蓮花山, on which there is a light house, Huang Pu 黃浦, and Changzhou 長洲 and reached Guangdong [that is Guangzhou]. At 3 that afternoon, we docked and went in a palanquin to Yuqingtang 余慶堂, residence of Mr Cai Ziwei, located in a new street in the village of Rongguili 荣桂里, in the Xiguan dadi 西關大地 district; a moment later we were being carried in a chair to Liuyizhai 刘詒齋 and into the shop of Cai Tongsheng 蔡同生 to buy Chinese medicine pills and some oil called Ruyi 如意油, "as you like". Cai’s residence was cool and clean, all was as you would wish there.

Canton

On the 9th day, we went to the Pearl River to see the pleasure boats (huating 花艇); we praised one of the boats of the type called “Purple Caverns” (zedongting 紫洞艇) on which we had a meal and passed some time in singing and enjoying the coolness of the river. In regard to pleasure boats, they had more than ninety of them, of various sizes; those called “Purple Caverns” also came in different sizes; the large ones cost eight yuan for a day and night, the intermediate ones are five, and the small ones three.

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130 This is an anemometer, a device for measuring wind speed and pressure.
131 The two characters minglü 冥律 (Hokkien: milut) are used to transcribe the term “minute”.
132 The oldest building in the Tung Wah Hospital was planned in 1869 and completed in 1872. It is located in Po Yan Street in the Taipingshan quarter of Hong Kong Island. Apart from its medical functions, the hospital also played a political role serving as a link between China and the diaspora. See Tung Wah Board of Directors, One Hundred Years of the Tung Wah Hospital 1870-1970 / Donghua sanyuan bainian shilüe 東華三院百年史略 (Hong Kong, 1970), 2 vols; and Elizabeth Sinn, Power and Charity. The Early History of the Tung Wah Hospital (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1989).
133 This is the author’s old friend, also Malacca-born, whom we met above.
Their cabins are huge, beautiful and clean; in the evening, the reflection of the moon answers the lights from the lamps. The music and songs that resounded until the middle of the night delighted us while also keeping us awake.

On the 10th day, we went for a walk south of the river in the Huadi 花地 quarter.

On the way we visited the Haichuang si 海幢寺, which is an immense temple with several hundred monks. As the spot is close to the town, a lot of loafers and walkers gathered there, so the place is not very clean. That evening at 6 we took the boat to Baoan 保安 to return to Hong Kong where we arrived at 3 am.

In the morning of the 11th day we berthed and then took a small carriage to Tanglung chau, to Cai Ziwei's house; my nephew Zhiyan 值炎 had arrived from Shanghai two days before.

Saigon

At noon we were taken to the Messageries maritimes ship called “Shayalian 沙牙連” to go to Saigon. At the time of departure, my old friend Cai Ziwei shook my hand warmly, as if he never wanted to let it go. With me were my eighth brother and Zhong Ruiji, as Chen Youquan had earlier gone to Xiamen.

On the 12th day, we sailed past the Paracel Islands; the sea was agitated and its blue colour turned black.

On the 13th day, we intermittently perceived the land of Annam, sometimes high, sometimes low.

On the 14th day at 5 am we put in at the port of Annam [that is, Saigon]. As the water was not very deep, we dropped anchor for a moment. At 9 am we entered the river under the guidance of a pilot. At 12.30 we came alongside the north quay, where the offices of the French Messageries are located. We hired a horse-drawn carriage to take us to our lodging in the Fujiheji 福基和記 firm.

That afternoon at 4, we took a carriage to go and visit the French Botanic Gardens, in which there were tigers, panthers, bears, deer, wild cats, otters, orang-utans, monkeys, and other animals; they also had cranes, gulls, peacocks, and all sorts of strange birds; although they had nothing similar in respect of flowers or trees, when we went into the greenery we nevertheless felt the coolness.

At 5 pm, we got back into the carriage and went for five English miles to Zhaijun 宅郡 to the Fujiheji 福基和記 company; then we went straight away to visit the Chin Seng 振成 mechanical rice mill which was managed by Huang Jinshou 黃錦壽; he told us that building had started in the first month of dínghai (1887), that it was about to be completed and would soon begin operations and that it would be capable of processing three tons of paddy daily. As for the Wanxing 萬興 and 合德 Hede rice

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134 The Haichuang si was built under the Qing, during the reign of Kangxi, on the site of an older temple dating from the Southern Han. It is one of the four great temples of Canton, with the Guangxiao 光孝寺, the Hualin si 華林寺, and the Changshou si 長壽寺.

135 It seems that the first character of the personal name is incorrect. Rather the person in question is Keng Yam 慶炎 who, we saw earlier, was in Shanghai while the author was passing through.

136 This company was probably owned by a Baba from Singapore. See Salmon and Ta, “De Batavia à Saigon”:

137 At the time, the Botanic Garden seemed so modern in its conception that all foreign visitors went to see it.

138 To designate Cholon, the author uses the name Zhaijun (Taignon) which is an old Chinese notation for Saigon. We know that the Vietnamese name of Cholon, meaning “big market”, does not seem to have appeared until the end of the 18th century. The name Zhaijun disappeared from Chinese circles and that of Tián 堤岸 “the quay”, previously only a Cantonese usage, replaced it.

139 The firm Chin Seng had been founded in Singapore (26 Boat Quay) by Tan Kim Ching 陳金錫 (1829-92), oldest son of the famous businessman and philanthropist Tan Tock Seng 陳鴻生 (1798-1850). Song writes that, “On his father’s death, the firm of “Tan Tock Seng” was changed to “Tan Kim Ching” and business was carried out on the River-side (now Boat Quay) from 1851 to 1859 by Tan Kim Ching as sole owner. In 1860, the firm was known as Tan Kim Ching & Brother, chop Chin Seng Ho, Tan Swee Lim, a brother, having been admitted as a partner, but a few months later Tan Swee Lim left the firm. The business, which finally became known as Kim Cheng & Co, chop Chin Seng, attained considerable success, owning rice mills at Saigon, Siam and elsewhere.”
mills that stood on the right side of the road some little way off, they could also process three tons. The other rice mills in the southern outskirts are four in number.

That evening, Tan Hin Long 陳興龍, son of the deceased Tan Keng Sing 陳慶星, took us into his shop at the northern Quay where we had dinner; after having invited Zhu Renchun 朱仁春, who lives at the French Bank 法蘭西夢, and Chen Rongmu 陳榮睦, who had inherited from his parents; he had family income and owned a lot of real estate.

On the 15th day, after breakfast, we went to the different markets, including the vegetable markets, which are around the northern Quay. In the quarter are four French banks; the Bank Huifeng 滇豐夢 is quite big and it is run by two merchants, Majindimeng 嗎近地夢 and Chajiaomeng 查礁夢. Bank notes are exclusively circulated by the Bank of France 西夢 [Banque de l’Indochine]. The Chettys (Qizhi fan 齊智番) offer loans at interest; there are sixty-seven of them who are grouped into two houses. The big businesses, Western shops, and the hotels are all together at the northern Quay; the Chinese and the bosses of shops live for the most part in Zhaijun, which is a few English miles beyond. In regard to the Chinese, the Fujianese and Cantonese are the most numerous, followed by people from Chaozhou 潮州, the Hakkas from Jiaying 嘉應, and the Hainanese; counting those in the interior of the country, there are several hundreds of thousands. The Hokkiens, the Cantonese, and the Chaozhou have their own associations and their own administrative offices (gongsuo 公所). There are two railway lines; one which goes from the northern Quay to Zhaijun and the other which goes into the interior of the country and is about ten English miles long; the return trip takes about three hours. That same day we rejoined the ship in order to return to Singapore.

On the 16th day we left Annam waters; we saw nothing more than an endless green sea.

In the morning of the 17th day, we passed by Tiuan and the Aur islands; the sea was calm, there was no wind and we felt relaxed. At the hour wu (between 11 and 1 in the afternoon) we went by Pedra Blanca, then a series of small islands: Luolima 羅裡嗎, Fuluoding 浮羅丁, Yiniu lang 宜牛郎, Mingdan 明旦, Zhigang 直剛, and at the hour wei (between 1 and 3 pm) the ship arrived at Dachikan 大赤嵌 and Xiaochikan 小赤嵌; at 4 o’clock we reached the port of Singapore.

The Author’s Reflections

In regard to China and especially Shanghai

From what I have seen of China (zhonghua difang 中華地方), only Shanghai is really good. This town is prosperous, attractive and without equal. The provincial seat of Guangdong passes for being very busy; but the streets there are too narrow and in mid-summer, when they cover them with hangings fixed to bamboo, if two palanquins come together the streets are blocked. It is the same in Fuzhou. As for Xiamen, the streets there are even narrower and the passers-by suffer very much from it; they are so full of people that, if you are not careful, you very much risk falling; if by chance a

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140 Tan Keng Sing, Singapore-born, went to set up business in Saigon where he traded in construction timber as well as acting as a maritime commission and consigning agent. These activities seem to have developed mainly in 1865. For more information, see Tan Keong Sum, “Récit d’un voyage au Vietnam,” Archipel 43 (1992): 164, note 54. The author uses the character ya (Hokkien nga) 雅 to transcribe the French term “quai” (quay).

141 L’expression Qizhi fan ou Qizhi ren 賢智人 to designate the Chettys was at that time very common in the South Seas; we found it when reading the Lat Po dated March 9, 1888 in a short article in which the Chettys of Singapore were presented as merchants of gems but especially as moneylenders. Tan Keong Sum in his travelogue (Archipel 43, 1992, p. 153) also alludes to their presence in Saigon, stating that in 1888 they numbered about twenty there. L’Annuaire de l’Indochine française de 1890 (p. 498) provides a nominative list of “banquiers chettys”, all of whom were settled in the Rue d’Adran; there were said to be 35 of them.
fire breaks out it is very hard to intervene; although they have hoses to bring water, there is little chance of extinguishing the fire; if one house catches fire, a dozen in a row will be burned. All this derives from the fact that when the towns were created the streets were made too narrow, so that at a later date no means exist to remedy it. The roadside houses go to the edge of the street and the shops spread out their goods there, all hindering the coming and going of passers-by; this make it difficult to see. Furthermore, the authorities concerned do not forbid it, not feeling themselves in any way responsible for the population; we see from this that the important people interest themselves neither in what is locally profitable nor in what is locally injurious.

The provinces of Taiwan and of Xinjiang are presently making some improvements: the width that is [now being] given to the roads will be the same for generation to come; I do not know if the authorities have paid any attention to this point or not. The great crossroads and large lanes make the place like a paradise, like the grand avenues of the English and French concessions of Shanghai which are three-to-four times larger than the streets normally built in China; moreover, they are constantly being maintained and repaired and they do not let people monopolise the verge; passers-by are comfortable and when fire breaks out, not only does it fail to do a lot of damage but, as the street is wide, in case a fire breaks out it is easy to arrange the hoses and to extinguish it.

The population of Shanghai is really very large, but you rarely see people in dispute. I stayed in this town a little over a month and walked about almost everywhere without ever seeing anyone in a fight with someone else. If some difference arises, those involved go into a teahouse and discuss the matter with an intermediary in order to identify who is wrong and right and each explains himself in a pleasant manner without reaching a quarrel; this corresponds well to the practices of ancient times.

However, one exception is that women and girls of good families go to the teahouses and to the theatre, mixing with members of the masculine sex without it engendering jealousy. Similarly, they are carried about in chairs, which here are generally not covered, thus exposing their faces to everyone when they go out and take the air. This custom seems acceptable here, although it completely turns its back on the maternal precepts according to which girls should not leave the women’s quarters.

As for invitations, they are simply made for restaurants; each invited person takes with him one or two courtesans who accompany him in drinking and singing before leaving after a short while. A banquet costs between thirty and forty yuan, which seems normal and not at all extravagant. The old enjoy these celebrations greatly, finding everything acceptable; they say that we have to die one day, that we are not long here on Earth and that it is appropriate to take advantage of the pleasures here below, without being concerned about the years of life that remain; as for the young who are already well off, they have to be disciplined and work diligently to improve their old age. I did not know that old people could have such desires; or what the young must do. We remain speechless....

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143 After the Franco-Chinese conflict, the empress-regent decided to transfer the governor of Fujian to Formosa, by a decree of the 6th day of the 9th month of the 11th year of Guanxu (13 October 1885), with orders to set up his residence there, as “the position of Taiwan, doorway to the South China Sea, [was] so important”. See C. Imbault-Huart, L’île de Formose, histoire et description (reprint, 1893, Taipei: SMC Publishing Inc, 1995), p. 172, note 1. According to the same work [p. 307], after the first governor, Léou Ming-tchouan 刘铭传 (1836-1896) had organised the defences of the island, “he turned his attention to repairing and improving the island’s means of communication, while developing its resources and commerce and, among other things, he had a small railway built in the southern part. At the start of 1888, he inaugurated a postal service for the transmission of official and private letters to all territories occupied by Chinese colonists, to that end he devised a type of primitive postage stamp that contained only the date and the name of the receiving office and, before being affixed on envelopes by the outgoing office, a receipt was also given for each letter sent.” Further, from 1885, he had the town of Taipei reconstructed in the Western style, causing the roads to be paved and lit by electricity. See Hummel, Eminent Chinese of the Ch’ing Period, I, pp. 527-38.
What we can be envious of, is that the merchants of that place are in general very honest; if they have a debt, they come in person to repay it, without anyone being obliged to go and recover it; when the term is up, it is enough to send an associate to give notification and the borrower comes in person carrying the money. As for the sums borrowed by shops from moneylenders, they have to be repaid at the end of the year as nothing at all can be owed any later. When business resumes at the start of the year, they speak of “new accounts”.

In that way, merchants and shopkeepers are thrifty and bankruptcies rarely happen. If, by chance, a merchant cannot maintain his commerce, he is then obliged to liquidate his business in order to repay his creditors; it is not as in Singapore, where you can negotiate to obtain a discount [on your debts]. Where large merchants are involved, each wants to appear to be the foremost, which is very different from the way commerce was practiced in previous times when each gave way to the other; but in those times, debts were small.

In regard to Japan

Japan has beautiful landscapes. The mountains are made of rock mixed in with earth which explains why the inhabitants are intelligent, their natures solid and robust. They have been Westernising very much for some time. They copy Western products like those made from iron, leather, and glass, and those who do not know take these copies for things come from the West. The products they make in this way have fine exteriors but are poorly conceived; these imitations compete with the true objects because their price is not high, but they do not last.

The streets and crossroads there are not very broad, yet it is convenient to circulate on foot or in palanquins there. The towns of Kobe, Osaka, Kyôto, and Nagasaki have no horse drawn carriages. Carried chairs are at the disposal of the public for a price. The porters are strong and agile; you pay only seven or eight cents per hour.

Shops and private houses, as well as tearooms and cafes, are all clean; however it is a pity that their construction lacks solidity. They are made with pine wood (song 松 and shan 杉); the wood of the doors is thin; they are covered with a frame onto which paper has been stuck; although the houses are full of commodities, you rarely hear of theft; this is because the baojia 保甲 system does not exist, so people watch each other and thus thieves have disappeared. The houses have neither tables nor chairs; people eat sitting on a mat; I have taken part in a banquet at a restaurant and tried the dishes which are often cold and extremely different from those in Chinese cooking.

In this country, women are much more numerous than men; they do not cultivate the rules of the women’s quarters any more since they do not value chastity; men and women bathe naked; women of good society enjoy illicit pleasures without anyone regarding them as disreputable; one woman might venerate the cults of several [dead] husbands, anything is possible and no one ever speaks of lost virtue. Probably in this country people mock poverty but not licentious behaviour. It is by no means surprising then that a great number of Japanese women go abroad to engage in the flesh trade. At Nagasaki, they come on to the steamers to carry goods and bring coal; I have seen several dozen of them who were working with the men; they are very sturdy; their pay is very low, one-third of that in Singapore. One can see from this how difficult it is to get rich in this country.

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144 This was a system of local defence. Under the Qing, a jia comprised 100 households, with a jiazhang at its head, while 10 jia formed a bao under the control of a baozhang.

145 Notably in the ports of Southeast Asia like Semarang and Singapore, as well as in Padang and Sandakan where one could still see their tombs in the 1970s, certain of them dating from the Meiji period (1868-74). See Yamazaki Tomoko 山崎明子, Ai to senketsu. Azia josei kôryû shi 愛と鮮血，アジア鮮血女性交流史 (Tokyo: Shôwa 45), pp. 15-46.
Banknotes circulate throughout the country. Those who have gone to study in foreign lands bring back Western clothing. The secretariat of the governor general of Kobe, public notices, the press, all are written in Chinese characters among which are intermixed Japanese characters, although the latter are little used. The shop signs are equally in Chinese characters; this is likely to be an old usage.

**In regard to urban transport**

Of all the places that I passed through, it is Shanghai which is the most magnificently equipped, being all in the Western style and uncovered; there are also palanquins and rickshaws in profusion. As for Japan, Kobe, Osaka, Kyôto, and Nagasaki all have rickshaws, but I hardly ever saw any palanquins and there are no horse drawn carriages; Hong Kong has both rickshaws and palanquins; for the latter, they are of two sorts: the *yang* 陽 or “masculine” with a rectangular base and open on four sides and which allows for air flow, and the *yin* 陰 or “feminine” with a square base, and closed on three sides to protect against wind and rain. In Annam there are only horse-drawn carriages; there were rickshaws there for a time but they have vanished.  

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146 In the original version, Mme Salmon thanked Yang Baoyun 杨保筠 for helping her resolve some philological difficulties in the travelogue.