The Languages of Early Republican Fiction in the Context of Print Media

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In 1916-17 Hu Shi wrote of the literature in the early Republican period that it could be summed up in the statement, "Style over substance." In one of her important discussions of twentieth-century Chinese novels, Milena Dolezelova translated Hu Shi's dissatisfaction in a very felicitous and useful way: "The reason for the decay of contemporary literature is the overemphasis on style at the expense of spirit and reality." (Dolezelova-Velingerova, 1988, 4) That is the proposition I wish to address. It is well known that the chief objects of Hu Shi's contempt were contemporary poems. He devoted but few words to the fashionable novels of the early 1910's, most notably Yu li hun 玉梨魂 (Spirit of the jade pear flower, 1912) and Xue hong lei shi 雪鸿泪史 (Chronicle of great tears of bygone days, 1914-15) by Xu Zhenya 徐枕亚 and Duan hong ling yan ji 断鸿零雁记 (Lone Swan, 1912) by Su Manshu 苏曼殊. These and other novels of the period and much short fiction were written in classical literary styles. Hu Shi pointed out that the style of Yu li hun was a

* For the limitation of pages, the latter part is mitted. The editorial board has to appologize to you.

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result of the excesses of Liang Qichao’s New Style 新文体 in his more florid moments. (Hu Shi, 1922; 1986: 93) Su Manshu’s fiction was dismissed as verbose and depraved. (Hu Shi, 1917; 1986: 43) Though Xu and Su not the first to employ these styles in novel-length fiction, these writers published at almost the same time serially in the commercial press, achieved great popular appeal, and created an unprecedented wave of imitations, making them worthy of exemplifying all that Hu Shi and his colleagues despised in contemporary literature. Virtually all of Hu Shi’s “Eight Don’ts” in his “Tentative Proposal for Literature Reform” 文学改良刍议 in 1917 address features adopted by these novels. Milena Dolezelova, in taking her turn to explain why these authors separately yet simultaneously undertook their unusual and ambitious projects in archaic prose, made some sound observations: “The focus on the subjective, intimate experiences is, in my opinion, the major reason why Xu Zhenya’s and Su Manshu’s lyrical, introvertive fiction was written in the classical language; in Chinese cultural tradition this language was assigned to the description of the human psyche... they could find no other expressions of emotions and passions than the language of the classical past.” (Dolezelova-Velingerova, 1988, 20)

The balance of this paper will explore why at this moment in history the Chinese novel took this stylistic turn. Given that a new kind of novel was appearing, there had, after all, been lyrical and introvertive moments in Chinese fiction before, and yet fiction had remained overwhelmingly written in vernacular styles. Of the more than seventy sixteenth-and seventeenth-century scholar-beauty romances examined by Wang Qingping, only one was written in classical style. (Wang Qingping, 1998, 21) As for models in the sort
of parallel pianti prose employed by Xu Zhenya and his colleagues, there were few. *You xian ku* 游仙窟 (The Dwelling of Playful Goddesses) is valued today as much for its Tang dynasty vernacular style as its parallel prose, and its eroticism with no heartstrings attached. The recondite if uninspired nineteenth-century romance novel *Yan shan waishi* 燕山外史 (The tale of a Yanshan scholar) by Chen Qiu 陈球 could only stand as a warning that even in a heyday of parallel prose revival, such a novel remained but a curiosity, and the market for this ambitious form of innovation was limited. From the haunting intimacy of *Dream of the Red Chamber* to the impassioned, internal monologue in Liu E’s *Travels of Lao Ts’an* authors used vernacular laced with lines of poetry. When Wu Woyao resurrected sentiment, *qing* 情, and reinvented scholar-beauty romances in *Hen hai* 恨海 (Sea of woe, 1905), credited by A Ying with initiating the very Mandarin Duck and Butterfly fiction that Xu and Su may be said to exemplify (A Ying, ), Wu wrote in vernacular. Thus, while it stands to reason that a “focus on subjective and intimate experiences” would prompt a classical style, the question remains why such a result appeared when it did.

First and most obvious to consider are the translations of foreign novels by Lin Shu, beginning in the late 1890’s with *Bali chahuanü yishi* 巴黎茶花女遗事 (La dame aux camélias) by Alexander Dumas. It is not true, as some have asserted, that Lin Shu was the first person in Chinese history to offer a novel, let alone the translation of a novel, in classical Chinese style, but it might as well have been true. His timing was excellent, capturing the attention of the imperial and common readership alike as China faced a new relationship with Western powers following 1900. And that this translation in classical
Chinese was a signal event in the history of Chinese literature has also been noted, as in the remark by Qian Zhongshu: "The translations of Lin Shu, first of all the famous adaptation of Alexander Dumas’ work, had a great effect on the rise of the status of fiction in Chinese literature and society. " (Qian, 1981, 53; Wei Shaochang, 228) No doubt Lin Shu sought cultural status for his translation of foreign literature through classical Chinese style. His success in this regard has been widely noted, and is confirmed by his appointment to the faculty of Chinese letters at the new Peking University by no less a figure than the last great Tongcheng stylist, Wu Rulun. Inevitably, there were imitations of his style in fiction by Chinese authors. (Wei Shaochang, 228)

Style is most often determined by a perception of a category or genre to which the writing belongs. To achieve distinction in a field of cultural production there is always a choice between demonstrating excellence in a recognized style or in breaking away to innovate. Given that fiction was supposed to be written in a vernacular or semi-vernacular style, Lin Shu was obviously an innovator in this regard. It might have had something of the effect of making his translations appear more Chinese than Chinese novels themselves, save for the repeated textual reminders that there was much that was unfamiliar. In using classical Chinese to produce novel-length fiction, Lin obviously followed the example of Yan Fu in non-fiction prose, and shared this practice with Su Manshu’s translations of poetry. But since Yan Fu and Su Manshu chose to excell in styles already recognized for their respective genres, it was Lin Shu who turned writing in a new direction.

Of course, Lin was more engaged in an innovative use of style
than an innovation in style itself. Alongside the classical guwen of Lin and other prestigious writers, new styles were being forged. By the beginning of the Republican era writers were practising a greater range of styles than ever before, including innovative styles. In theory there was a “new style” 新文体, promoted by Liang Qichao and Huang Zunxian. Its distinguishing features were the use of vocabulary coined by Meiji-era Japanese to translate Western texts and a set of grammatical phrases and rhetorical devices, also largely derived from Japanese. These features set it off from the guwen classical prose of Yan Fu and his followers, and it, rather than Yan Fu’s style with his own coinages from English, rapidly was adopted in the press for reportage and modernized educated discourse during the last decade of the Qing dynasty. There were also a notable number of grammatical innovations indigenous to Chinese appearing in guanhua Mandarin vernacular, the style of most fiction, which also employed a number of innovations in rhetoric and cohesion derived from foreign fiction. There was a hybrid style of semi-vernacular 半文半白, which mixed guwen classical with Mandarin vernacular, and also made use of the new terminology of Japanese loanwords. Most eye-catching was a fashion for writing fiction dialogue in Wu dialect. Features of Wu were common to tanci ballads and folk verse collections, but aroused attention as a style in novels in the 1890’s and continued in a dozen or more novels up into the early Republican period.

In theory these were different styles, but in practice they amounted to different features, used in varying amounts, largely according to a category or genre of writing. In other words, there was a constant process of both refining categories and then
abandoning definition. Lin Shu could be both a master of guwen classical style and a purveyor of “direct translation” that made no sense in any version of Chinese, as Qian Zhongshu pointed out in several examples, the following one from chapter 5 of Chahuanti:

自念有一丝自主之权[利],亦断不收伯爵。

I believe I have a right to some shred of self-determination, and will assuredly not receive the count [resu-le comte].

(Lin Shu, 1981: 43; Qian Zhongshu, 1981: 41.)

Qian’s point is that Lin’s direct translation of “receive the count” as 收伯爵 is unintelligible in Chinese. Another point is that the original text of the Chinese which Qian was using apparently renders “right” as 权, whereas the text published in 1981 reads 权利, which in the late Qing was a Japanese coinage, making Lin also a New Style writer.

Similarly, semi-vernacular styles have their clear and not-so-clear examples. Here is a nomination for a clear example:

如今尔最好是回英国。余问其故。

“The best thing for you now is to return to England.”

I asked why.

(《阿尔洛斯案被伐[The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes] Shiwu bao 时务报 No. 29, June 1897:16a. )

Here there is a regular mix of what would and would not get a passing grade in a test of how to write either classical or vernacular Chinese. But just as common are the texts which are more or less one or the
other, but only more or less:

老人及其妹已为星姐威严所逼。躲在房门外。与人及仆从喧哗之声。

如潮而起。

The elder and her younger sister were so intimated by Sister Xing's manner that they retreated outside the house, where the clamorous voices of passersby and servants swelled like a tide.

(Xue Lian Nü shi 雪莲女史, author; Li Hanqiu 李涵秋, editor, "Xue Lian riji" 雪莲日记 [The diary of Xue Lian], Funü zazhi 妇女杂志 2. 7, July 1916; 12.

In this example the text is overwhelmingly classical, but every few sentences a vernacular expression will appear, like the phrase 在房门外. Perhaps this does not qualify as semi-vernacular, but just guwen classical interspersed with vernacular.

Parallel pianti 骈体 prose in the four-six style was also increasingly popular by the very end of the Qing and the early Republic. The introductions to the inaugural issue of Xiaoshuo congbao 小说丛报 (Fiction anthology) in 1914 all celebrated this style, beginning with Xu Zhenya's mournful lines:

嗟嗟。江山献媚。狮梦重酣。笔墨劳形。虫丝自绕。冷雨凄风之夜。

鬼唱新声。落花飞絮之天。人消旧泪。

Alas. Beguiled by our fetching land, the lion of China dreams on deep asleep. Writers toil on, silkworms wrapped
in their own words. On nights filled with cold rain and desolate wind, devils herald the new. On days of falling blossoms scattering in the breeze, humans weep for the old.

The fiction of Xu and his colleagues is famous for being written in pianti prose, but it is more accurate to say that they employed pianti prose, rather than composed strictly in that style, in the manner of Yanshan waishi. Thus, just as Napoleon’s sleeping lion could find a place in Xu’s prose, so too could both the vocabulary and rhetoric of New Style prose, such as:

自由自由。余所崇拜之自由。
Freedom, freedom. My cherished freedom.
(Xu Zhenya, Yu li hun, 1912; 1914; 123)

Here Xu Zhenya has employed both the vocabulary of New Style, “freedom”, and its rhetorical inventions, such as the repetition of a word or phrase following the intervention of a modifying phrase or clause, known in Latin as conduplicatio. Granted, this quotation is presented in his best-seller as the outburst of a young woman under the influence of foreign education, it points to the way features of New Style prose, as the discourse of modern education, were virtually unavoidable.

Finally, among the vernacular styles the local language style could be engagingly distinctive, as in this passage from the 1910 novel Nine-Tailed Tortoise, in which a Shanghai brothel customer mildly reproaches a prostitute committed to one customer for collecting others:
Qiugu smiled, and patting Zhang Shuyu said, “Isn’t he a successful official? Here you still want to go looking around for somebody else.

That’s really preposterous, isn’t it? Shuyu couldn’t help smiling at what he said, and answered, “I am bad, so don’t be so stupid.” (Shu-liu-shan-fang 激 六 山 房, [Zhang Chunfan 张春帆], Jiu wei gui 九尾龟 [Beijing: Xinhua, 1989] Ch. 15: 114.

On the other hand, pursuing the use of many Shanghai features, such as the translation of “bicycle” as 脚踏车 and perhaps the choice of characters to translate the name of the British manufacturer below, as a basis for labeling a style as local language descends to the pedantic:

天下最佳之脚踏车
启者英国亨勃电脚踏车其货最佳在中国销售最大……

The World’s Finest Bicycle

Announcing the British Hengboer Bicycle, the finest quality product with the largest sales in China…

(Advertisement in Dongfang zazhi 东方杂志 [Eastern Miscellaney], 1911)

Here is the essence of Chinese advertising in its day. Practicality
demands the use of some Shanghai vocabulary. Rhetoric calls for the Chinese line emphasizing sales to parallel the previous clause on quality and to conclude with 最大 “largest”, to give it emphasis, which in turn shifts the place of “in China” to a previous less emphasized position in the sentence, and this determines the use of the vernacular 在 for “in ”. Otherwise the advertisement sticks stubbornly to the formality of classical guwen prose expected of advertising in general as a category of writing.

Thus, as much as simple analysis can reduce the definition of any style of the era, styles still were defined according to a preponderance of features that were used. While reportage and educated discourse moved to New Style and advertising retained as much guwen classical style as practicable, fiction offered the most pluralistic field of writing. However, choices were most often consistent with the category of fiction being written. Again, there is much well-founded, amused disbelief in the increasingly complex categorizing labels with which fiction was introduced in the periodicals of the times and later discussed by critics. Nevertheless, categories had a certain cognitive reality at least for writers and editors. Short stories had a variegated tradition, and were written in the widest variety of styles because of that. By the opening of the Republican period novel-length fiction, however, had a more finely conceived set of practices. Hence, the sentimental romance novels were largely written in classical styles, guwen or pianti, mixed with New Style. The growing body of detective fiction was seen as derived from foreign fiction-rather than Judge Bao-and had no stylistic convention. Consequently, its styles ranged from vernacular and semi-vernacular to classical and even use of pianti prose. Historical fiction, martial arts and action-adventure
novels were largely in vernacular. The category of social fiction, perhaps taken as descended from *Rulin waishi* (The Scholars) was also largely written in vernacular.

It is in one type of what were categorized as social novels that Wu local language appeared, those portraying the world of prostitution in Shanghai. This trend, noted by Hu Shi and A Ying (A Ying, 1937 [1980]: 169), continued sporadically into the early Republican era, but lost its appeal after the 1910 publication, *Nine Tailed Tortoise*, and gave way almost entirely to Mandarin as Standard Chinese in the 1920’s and 30’s. Probably the most important reason for the demise of Shanghai local language in print was the success of Shanghai newspapers and magazines in expanding the market and their pool of writers beyond the local social circles of the late Qing, appealing to more and more readers and writers who were not prepared to make themselves literate in Wu dialects.

What is interesting about the use of Wu local language style in novels is its close connection with gender and regional, as well as status and commercial issues. Whether a novel made all its characters speak Subai dialogue, as in *Haishang hua liezhuan* (Lives of Shanghai prostitutes), or had male customers speak Mandarin and female prostitutes speak Subai, as in *Nine-Tailed Tortoise*, the result was a language specific to what was portrayed as a feminized, commercial subculture. While the language itself was a status language only within the local hegemony of the region, and the world of prostitution equally equivocal in status, the act of bringing them together in print in the context of fiction gave some of these novels great esthetic status in the view of a range of writers, from Lu Xun to Hu Shi to Zhang Ailing. Nowhere so much as here was style
employed of itself to engage social tensions over gender, sexuality, and social order. Despite the early promotion of vernacular by some as a vehicle to engage women further in social affairs, once Mandarin became the National Language there was no further effort to use style to distinguish gender as a topic. Particularly among women themselves, or those who wrote and edited, the overwhelming emphasis was on demonstrating facility with what was promoted as the language of cultural status. The association of local language with inferior status, whatever its esthetic successes in the context of courtesan novels of the late Qing, doomed its use as much or more than purely commercial considerations. Thus the movement for women's liberation unequivocally moved in the direction of identifying with male culture and suppressed feminism as difference. When in 1916 *Funti zazhi* (Women's magazine) was turned over to a female editor, Hu Binxia 胡彬夏, her own writing and the contents of the magazine show her determination to maintain the literary standards of the day, which remained rooted in guwen classical Chinese.

Difference was, on the other hand, the property of other items in the commercial print media. It is easy to see the progressive change taking place in the graphic layout of newspapers, as well as magazines, over the course of the late Qing up to the founding of the Republic. The pages of *Shen bao* 申报 in Shanghai during the 1880's appear as an almost undifferentiated mass of print, broken only occasionally by an illustrated advertisement (Plates 1 and 2). This is in obvious contrast to the daily press in Japan at the time, as well as other, Western countries. After 1900, on account of growing competition within the burgeoning press and investment by Japanese publishers and advertisers accustomed to greater graphic stimulation
in the newspapers of Japan, papers like Shen bao and Shanghai Shibao moved to a much more varied graphic layout. The variations in size, boldness, and style of characters became much more pronounced. Sections were added with well-defined formats, and through much more ambitious illustrations, pages became intriguingly varied visual territory, inviting exploration. (Plates 3 through 10).

Despite the active role Japanese entrepreneurship played in publishing and especially advertising in addition to the stylistic role its vocabulary and grammar played and the ubiquitous discussion of things Japanese in the print media in general, the major Chinese newspapers did not follow the Japanese model in adopting a vernacular style in the press, as the Japanese had since the late 1880's. To be sure, numerous vernacular newspapers and magazines were launched during the late Qing, but none achieved notable success in the marketplace, and even the Japanese for the most part adopted the local practice of using classical and New Style in their advertising and publications in the Chinese media. Again, as the example of the bicycle ad above suggests, the style of Chinese reportage and advertising were unavoidably hybrid, yet they never strayed for long from the formality of classical writing, and in doing so honored the last vestige in the print media of something distinctively Chinese with cultural status.

In the daily press, and in many magazines, as with much of the reportage and much of the fiction offered, much of the advertising was also foreign. (Plates 11-15: Doan's Pills, Chujoto Liquid, Yokohama Bank, Dr. Williams' Pills; German newspaper ads) Against the status of foreign products, it is small wonder that a
number of Chinese ads appealed explicitly to a sense of Chinese nationalism. In the year 1912 one can find such ads as the one for Kwongsang Company’s Shuangmei (Twin Sisters) cologne with the characters 土产 “domestic product” prominently displayed at the top of the ad. In 1915 as the producers of Taihedan 太和丹 medicinal cure-all struggled with what was by then a household word for cure-alls, Jintan 仁丹 from Japan, Taihedan was not only introduced as a national product 国产, but discussed in a brief essay, beginning with the appeal; 爱国同胞尔知今日商业竞争乎 “Fellow countrymen, you know the competition in today’s commerce.” The essay goes on to enjoin the reader: “盖以本国之药治本国人之病 Therefore use the medicine of our nation to cure the ills of our nation’s people.” (Plates 16-17)

The classical Chinese of cultural status was thus increasingly if not totally enclosed in a commercially driven world. The confusion attending this is reflected in various comments by scholars about whether one or another was commercially driven or “sincere,” an opposition which may not hold up well but is instructive. Lin Shu’s devotion to issues of sentiment and morality may be the focus of one critic’s attention (Lee, 1973: 44-51), while another critic may conclude summarily that Lin’s “translation activities appear to have been strictly a business concern.” (Compton, 1971: 76) Xu zhenya possessed psychological sensivity and “a peculiar kind of genius” as a creative writer, yet however “far from incompetent” he was as a stylist, he was “far from abandoning the profit motive”. (Link, 1981: 51-2) Or perhaps, as C. T. Hsia has asserted, Xu began with genuine conviction and talent, and gradually slid into commercial hack work: “Far from being a commercial product exploitative of the
sentimental clichés of the past for the amusement of the public. Yu-li hun owed its tremendous popularity to its astonishing emotional impact upon the educated readers of its time, and its equally astonishing literary virtuosity. ” (Hsia, 1982:201) The omnipresence of the commercial environment made it difficult to distinguish what was to be taken cynically as a commodity and what was to be accorded the status of high culture transcending commercial concerns.

As the media appropriated the signs of status culture of Confucian educated elite through the use of classical Chinese, the composition of this elite was of course also changing. An increasingly foreign-educated cultural elite had at the least no more use for classical Chinese as the sign of their status. Many ads prominently displayed the foreign, romanized words of the new status languages, a feature which acknowledged the existence of two distinct claims to cultural status among their readers, nowhere better exemplified than in the ad for The Commercial Press Bookstore in Shanghai, flawlessly worded in formal English and Chinese classical styles. (Plate 18) While the end of the Confucian civil service examination in 1905 severed the organized link between educated and political elite status, the social need to maintain the existence of an elite Chinese cultural status and the belief among enough of the educated elite that political change would continue to benefit them meant that there was but weak commitment to the idea of abandoning the writing styles which formed the basis of their fields and their status. It was precisely after the early republic progressed along a course that proved so unpromising to these anticipated benefits that those of the educated elite who claimed their status on the basis of their knowledge of
foreign discourse could seek and find support for abandoning classical Chinese as the lever to take leadership of Chinese culture. It was also precisely because this new cultural elite remained so few in number and the majority of the reading public so equivocal in acknowledging their status that newspaper and aspects of some magazines, seeking to acknowledge the majority of readers as well as the new minority, retained for decades more the New Style classical prose for reportage.

There were, to be sure, tensions within the commercially driven world of the press as well as between it and the new elite. One of these was between the appeal to status culture through classical Chinese and the purely commercial need for attracting the gaze of the reader. The tension is reflected in the graphic variety discussed above that increased competition brought to the print media, while the language struggled to remain uniformly at the elitist level. This does not imply that there was no variation in the style, but that is much more severely limited in its rhetorical rang than the illustrations it accompanied. For example, Zhang Xiujue of the Army Medical Corps tried out a scientific approach based on Western expertise to advertise his Jingshenwan pills in Shen Bao, 1912. (Plate 19) By 1915 this product was known as, or another product had appeared as Jingxuenwan “supplement”, and the style in Funü zazhi was distinctly more to the immediate point of what the medicine was good for and verges on parallelism in its list of afflictions. (Plate 20) Nevertheless, the verbal matter of most pages was a sea of classical-like prose. A number of ads sought attention by imitating fiction, but here too, the distinctiveness was largely in the illustrations. The classic example of this may be Jintan (Plate 21) with its spacious illustrated design suggesting many story situations in which its
persona in the form of a thoughtful, dedicated officer, whose mustache became a household term, comes to the aid of afflicted characters. Dramatic illustrations that would otherwise accompany fiction appeared in both newspapers and magazines. A bankrobber holds a bank officer at gunpoint under the words “who can resist?” (Plate 22) The text, however, is only about a cold remedy. In another large, eye-catching illustration a gowned writer seated before brush pen and copybook grasps in his head in misery. Below the text asks, “When my brain is at the point of snapping, can Sannatujin help me?” (Plate 23) Despite the various appeals to the possibilities of storytelling, advertising largely refused to take up the vernacular style which so much fiction offered. The possible reasoning behind the few exceptions in which vernacular was used varied. There is an ad for a theatrical handbook with one eye-catching line in vernacular: “哈哈！！！ 戏曲考又出版了” (Hoho！！！！！ The Theater Companion’s out again). (Plate 24) Such an ad confirms the eye-catching appeal a prominently printed line of vernacular could be expected to have, and yet the rest of the ad is in classical prose, so that the appeals is limited, and perhaps carefully justified because the topic is theater. The ads that employed any sustained use of the vernacular may have been limited to those from Japanese firms, like the manufacturers of Qingkuaian pills. (Plate 25) This may have been based on the practice of using the vernacular in the Japanese press, but is presented as part of a dialogue between an ailing gentleman and his benefactor. The overwhelming conformity of ads to the convention of using classical Chinese styles suggests that expectations of maintaining links with status culture outweighed commercial benefits of publishing an announcement in which the
visually distinctive features extended to the verbal text.

To be sure, there were writers within the commercial literary circles of Shanghai who urged greater use of the vernacular prior to the May Fourth movement intellectuals. Liu Bannong’s sympathies in this regard are a standard feature of his biographical notes, and Zhang Yihan 张毅 is credited with similar sympathies. (Zheng Yimei, 1987: 281) But these gentlemen perhaps lacked both the timing and the status claims that Hu Shi, Chen Duxiu, and others had. Zheng Yimei’s anecdotes of the early Republican literary world note that the influential editor Wang Yunzhang 王永章 overlooked the draft of a novel of social fiction by Li Hanqiu 李涵秋 because it was written in vernacular. (Zheng Yimei, 1987:234) C. T. Hsia is probably right to have noted links between style, culture status, and geographic regions, as well. It has always struck me as a matter of curious significance that the earliest promoters and practitioners of the new bai-hua literature should come from Anhwei and northern Chekiang rather than from Soochow, Wusih, Changshu, and other cities of southern Kiangsu, which had been the bastions of literary and artistic culture during the Ming and Ching and had produced the largest number of scholars with the chin-shih degree. It would certainly seen that precisely because southern Kiangsu had been identified with literary culture, so many of its youths, if denied the opportunity to study abroad during the late-Ching and early Republican years, would be content to serve as editors and authors for literary supplements and magazines. Thus the great majority of old-style novelist hailed from this region. (Hsia, 1982:205)

Certainly the Republican Revolution signaled a moment of supremacy for southern Jiangsu as the cradle of literary culture,
whether it was the displacement of Lin Shu and other so-called Tongcheng School writers from Peking University by Zhang Taiyan and his Jiangsu-Zhenjiang followers, or the prestige of southern Society. But more to the point was the dominance of the Shanghai print media, within which a defeated Lin Shu or a dispirited Liu Shipei were still culturally or commercially as valuable as Zhang Taiyan or Liu Yazi.

In terms of the print media, its chief editors and writers were largely men of southern Jiangsu. As noted above, they were certainly content to let local language disappear from their pages as the market for their text expanded beyond the local readership, since it had no status for them next to their command of classical Chinese. These were the men "denied the opportunity to study abroad" and "content to serve as editors and authors for literary supplements and magazines." Their status depended on that of classical Chinese.

To be sure, their status also depended upon their competence with written forms of Mandarin, whether because it was the traditional lingua franca of oral communication among the educated elite, or because it was the accepted style of most categories of fiction and drama. Both functions implied a place for Mandarin, but a place hierarchically beneath classical Chinese. The increasing use of classical Chinese style in the fiction of print media suggests that, as in advertising, Mandarin could have its own attention-getting visual properties. The inaugural issue of *Xiaoshuo xinbao* (March 1915) provides an example of this. The contents pages presents an array of classical-looking titles tend to all replay familiar terms of introduce obscure ones, whereas the title of one story appears in striking contrast, offering the sentence, (You got something to eat today).
Yet, the status of classical Chinese outweighed whatever commercial value Mandarin might have had.

However, as the market and the pool of potential writers for Shanghai press expended geographically, they also included foreign-educated intellectuals who would not be so content to be subsumed under the homegrown leadership of commercial serials and place their knowledge at the service of this form of culture status. The unprecedented subsuming of the scholar under the commercial editor is graphically suggested by the ad for a book featuring the names of such scholars as Zhang Taiyan, buried among the ads for medicines, insurance, and theaters. (Plate 17) To achieve distinction in such a burgeoning, competitive, and culturally unprecedented environment was a formidable challenge by the time of the Republican Revolution.

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