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Original Article

Travel and Social Changes in Modern Jiangnan

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ABSTRACT

Obviously the speed of dissemination of new, modern ideas in Jiangnan was closely related to the development of transportation. Looking back at the history, the backwardness of transportation in the early modern Jiangnan restrict the dissemination of new ideas in this region and then the situation changed a lot since the 1890s, when the spatial distance between Shanghai and Jiangnan was remarkably shortened, the dissemination of new ideas was accelerated, and the new ideas in return significantly influenced the Jiangnan society. It was the constantly improved transportation that facilitated the diversification of channels disseminating information and made the dissemination itself faster. As a consequence, the new ideas, knowledge, and things were rapidly disseminated and popularized in Jiangnan, thereby giving impetus to the social changes in this region.

Key Words: Jiangnan, Travel, Late Qing, Diaries

I . Introduction

The new ideas cannot come out of nowhere. To put it another way, the dissemination of new ideas depends on the human activities. For this reason, the sphere of human activities is the space in which information is transmitted and received. As we know, the humans' spatial displacement rests with the transportation. Thus, the dis/advantage of transportation is one of the factors determining the dissemination of information. Generally speaking, the advanced transportation prepared the basic conditions whereby the new, foreign ideas could be introduced to a certain region and people living there could accept them. Conversely, if a region was closed, there would be very few opportunities to apprehend and accept the new, foreign ideas and at the same time the residents were increasingly firmly entrenched in the old way of life. Speaking in terms of the process of disseminating information, the sphere of information dissemination is proportional to the spatial distance of transportation. An example is the lower reaches of the Changjiang (Yangtze) River (hereinafter referred to as Jiangnan) in modern times. There, the development of transportation was obviously relevant to the speed of dissemination of new ideas. In the early modern Jiangnan, the backward transportation restricted the dissemination of new knowledge and new ideas. As time went on, the gradually modernized transportation such as steamship and train greatly shortened the spatial distance between different parts of Jiangnan and consequently accelerated the dissemination of new ideas, which in return exerted significant influence on the Jiangnan society. The present paper examines this phenomenon and draws some conclusions open to discussion.

II . To and fro, we are attending banquets by Night Boat

Jiangnan is renowned for its abundance of rivers and lakes. At this point, an observer says: "In Jiangnan, there are over two kilometers of river in each area of one square kilometers and moreover there are large and small lakes scattering here and there."¹⁾ Some go further, pointing out that in

1) See: Fan Yijun 范毅军, "The Distribution of Cities and Towns and the Regional Development: A Bird's-Eye View of the Southern Jiangsu since Mid-Ming" (市镇分布与地域的开发: 明中叶以来苏南地区的一个鸟瞰), *The Continent Magazine* (大陆杂志), vol. 102, no. 4 (2001).

Jiangnan boat is the most basic transportation and rivers are the transportation arteries.²⁾ The two observations shed light on the two elements determining Jiangnan's transportation. Boat was an important transportation interconnecting Jiangnan's cities, towns, and countryside. From very early times there were commuter boats busing to and fro in Jiangnan. It was precisely the well-known Night Boat (hereinafter referred to as *Yehangchuan*). *Yehangchuan* had quite a long history. As early as Song (960-1279), some had mentioned that there were songs specially composed for *Yehangchuan*.³⁾ Then a scholar living in the transition from Yuan (1271-1368) to Ming (1368-1644) penned: "The business of Night Boat is that the boatmen go to the crowd downtown, where they can solicit passengers and then carry all of them in the night by boats."⁴⁾ In the late Qing (1644-1912), Jin Wuxiang, who was from Jiangyin (of present-day Jiangsu), mentioned *Yehangchuan* in one of his poems, which read:

[Thanks to Night Boat] the variety shops sell myriad things such as rice and salt.

To and fro, we are attending banquets by Night Boat.

Village boys are so naughty that they skip classes at times.

In contrast, the aged peasants till the land by themselves.

Jin even added notes to this poem, saying: "The commuter boats keep running day and night in my hometown. These boats are known as messengers, which go by the name of ferry among Guangdongese (Cantonese). These boats go back and forth as scheduled, carrying written messages, commodities, and passengers. ... They are precisely the Night Boats from ancient times."⁵⁾ Herein a vivid picture of intercity transportation connecting entire Jiangnan unfolds before us. At that time, there were local commuter boats in all parts of Jiangnan. A Japanese researcher, consulting *Annals of Beixin Pass* (北新矣志), enumerates over seventy boats on the Grand Canal, most of which were named after Jiangnan cities such as Zhenjiang, Songjiang, Hangzhou, Huzhou, Pinghu, Ningbo,

2) Wang Jiafan 王家范, *Leaping Up and Down in a Century and Moving Back and Forth in a Millennium* [百年颠沛与千年往复] (Shanghai: The Far East Press), 214.

3) "Chapter Seven: Facts," Wu Zeng 吴曾, *Random Notes in Study of Self-Correction* [能改斋漫录] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1960), 192; "Chapter Four," Gong Mingzhi 龚明之, *Anecdotes of Suzhou* [中吴纪闻] (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1986), 89.

4) "Chapter Eleven," Tao Zongyi 陶宗仪, *Miscellaneous Collections in Leisure Time in Southern Village* [南村辍耕录] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1959), 137.

5) Jin Wuxiang 金武祥, *Five Pieces of Memoirs* [陶庐五忆] (The block-printed edition of Suxiang Studio in the Guangxu reign [1875-1908]), 8-9.

Wuxi, Wujiang, Changzhou, Jiaxing, Danyang, and Nanxun.⁶⁾

Nevertheless, the service of *Yehangchuan* was too slow, even though it was really convenient. Speaking in terms of speed, commuting within a certain area by the conventional boats was tolerable, whereas going to a different city by them became intolerably time-consuming. One piece of records in *The Summary of Government Files of Song* (宋会要辑稿) corroborates this. As indicated by the record, in 1142 (the twelfth year of the Shaoxing reign), the Ministry of Finance stipulated the distance and time limit in regard to the commuter boat service between Lin'an (in present-day Hangzhou) and other cities of Jiangnan. For example, departing from Xiuzhou, it would take the boat 4 days and 4 hours to sail 198 *li*; from Pingjiang Prefecture, 8 days to sail 360 *li*; from Huzhou, 8 days and 4 hours to sail 378 *li*; from Changzhou, 11 days 8 hours to sail 528 *li*; and from Jiangyin Garrison, 16 days to sail 738 *li*.⁷⁾ These numbers shed light on how long it took a traveler's time when commuting between different parts of Jiangnan. Akira Matsuura, the aforementioned Japanese researcher, consults a 1765 travel guide entitled *A Tour Around All-Under-Heaven* (天下路程示我周行) and calculates that, in Qing, under normal circumstance it would take a civil boat 4-5 days to sail over 100 kilometers from Suzhou to Shanghai. It is thus clear that, due to the lack of advancement of power technology, the speed of boat in Qing was not very different from that six or seven hundred years ago. To make matters worse, something unexpected such as tidewater, climate, and varied emergencies would have the departure of commuter boats delayed.

In 1884 (the tenth year of the Tongzhi reign), Jin Wuxiang, a Jiangnan scholar, for the first time went to Shanghai by boat. He recorded in detail his trip (see table below).⁸⁾

Date	Voyage
The 8 th day of 8 th month	Departing at the time of <i>wei</i> (1-3 pm), the boat sailed twenty <i>li</i> to Qishuyan and another ten <i>li</i> to Henglin, in which it lay at anchor.

6) See: Akira Matsuura (松浦章), *History of Traffic on Inland Waters in Qing* [清代内河水运史研究] (Nanjing: Jiangsu renmin chubanshe, 2010).

7) "The 1st Part of the 48th Treatise on Food and Commodities" (食货四八之一) *The Summary of Government Files of Song* [宋会要辑稿] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1957), 5623.

8) "Items penned from the 8th to the 13th days of the 8th month," Jin Wuxiang 金武祥, *Diary of Jin Yansheng* [金淮生日记] (The edition collected by Shanghai Library).

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Date	Voyage
The 9 th day of 8 th month	Departing at <i>wujing</i> (approximately 5 am), the boat sailed twenty <i>li</i> to Luoshe, another twenty <i>li</i> to Gaoqiao, the Baita Lake, and Jiangyin; and another ten <i>li</i> to Wuxi County, where my nephew named Peicheng went ashore and entered the downtown. The boat sailed around the city. Then we resumed our journey. The boat sailed ten <i>li</i> to Laoyaotou; another thirty <i>li</i> to She'an; another ten <i>li</i> to Beiwangting, where there was a pass for tax collection; and another twenty <i>li</i> to Hushuguan, in which it lay at anchor.
The 10 th day of 8 th month	Departing at <i>wujing</i> (approximately 5 am), the boat sailed twenty <i>li</i> to Fengqiao, wherein a tax-collecting pass was seated, and another ten <i>li</i> to Changmen, where it passed the water gate and anchored at the river bank.
The 11 th day of 8 th month	Departing at <i>wujing</i> (approximately 5 am), the boat, passing successively the Gate of Wulizhai and the Gate of Wulilou, sailed ten <i>li</i> to Huaigubang; another twenty <i>li</i> to Weiting; another fifteen <i>li</i> to the inner part of Zhenyi Bridge, that is, the Jinxian Town; and another fifteen <i>li</i> to Kunshan County, where it anchored at the Southern Gate.
The 12 th day of 8 th month	Departing at <i>wujing</i> (approximately 5 am), the boat, along the inland waterway, sailed approximately twenty <i>li</i> to the exit. The inland waterway was short. Nevertheless the bridge was too low and the water was too wide to cross straightly. Thus the boat sailed again twenty <i>li</i> to Jianjiabang and another twenty <i>li</i> to Huangdu. The waterway was circuitous and the wind capricious. Sometimes the boatmen had to tow the boat ahead. The journey was thus seriously delayed. The boat came by two tax-collection passes. But I had no time to make sure the place names. There were almost one hundred shops at Huangdu, which was under the jurisdiction of Qingpu County. The ferry at Huangdu was ten <i>li</i> off the downtown. The boat was temporarily berthed there, waiting for the fall of tide. Then it sailed another twenty <i>li</i> to Zhangjiangjing, in which the boat lay at anchor.
The 13 th day of 8 th month	Departing at <i>wujing</i> (approximately 5 am), the boat sailed ten <i>li</i> to Yejidun; another fourteen <i>li</i> to the temple dedicated to Taibo of [the Western] Zhou; and another twenty-six <i>li</i> to Shanghai County.

We can deduce from above table that it took the traveler one day from Changzhou to Wuxi, two days to Suzhou, three days to Kunshan, four days to Qingpu, and five days to Shanghai. It thus can be concluded that the speed of the commuter boats was almost the same as that over seven centuries ago on the grounds that the power of ship was not yet increased considerably. As late as 1885 (the eleventh year of the Guangxu reign), when a candidate, who just took the state's civil service examination held in Shuntian (present-day Beijing), went back to Changzhou by boat, the

speed of ship was still very slow. The candidate recalled that, his water journey from Shanghai to Changzhou was constantly delayed by the tidal water, the low bridge, the strong west wind, and the shallow water. Either the boat sailed extremely slow or it was completely blocked. The candidate left Shanghai on the fifth day of the twelfth month. After sailing a day, he reached only the temple dedicated to Lord Zhou, which was actually located in Shanghai. In the next day, the candidate arrived at the ferry of Huangdu. On the eleventh day, he finally returned to Changzhou.⁹⁾ Obviously the reason why at that time people could by no means travel easily as we do today should be mainly ascribed to the slow speed of ships and the circuitous waterways.

Then, how did the land transport in Jiangnan? The landway consisted mainly of *tanglu*, which was originally built by boat trackers with silt and used exclusively by them and later was broadened to be the public road. *Tanglu* was essentially same as the postal roads and the official roads. For this reason, it was also known as *guantang* (the official *tanglu*). Generally, *tanglu* was parallel with the main rivers and used to deliver official documents and carry public servants on official travel. Aside from *tanglu*, there were generally no available roads in this region. If there was a road, it must be the muddy path across open field. Even *tanglu* was not in good shape. Not only was *tanglu* bumpy but it would become extremely tough in rainy and snowy days. An example is abovementioned Jin Wuxiang's trip from Nanjing to Jiangyin in the twelfth month of 1872 (the eleventh year of the Tongzhi reign). Then Jin was going back to Jiangyin by *tanglu*. Inasmuch there were heavy rain and heavy snow and the road was muddy and sloppy, the mounted Jin had to try his best to simultaneously grasp the saddle and hold an umbrella. In fact, he would fall of his horse at any time. It took him two days to arrive at Jurong, a country that was not far from Nanjing. Jin helplessly sighed: "The condition of the road is unbearably miserable!"¹⁰⁾ The condition of other parts of Jiangnan was not better.

9) "Items penned from the 5th to the 11th days of the 12th month of the 11th year of the Guangxu reign (1885)," Zhuang Baoshu 庄宝澍, *Diary of Zhuang Baoshu* (庄宝澍日记), in *Four Diaries of Renowned People of Changzhou in Late Qing* [晚清常州名贤日记四种] (Nanjing: Fenghuang chubanshe, 2013), 342-343.

10) "Items penned on the 10th and the 11th days of the 12th month of the 11th year of the Tongzhi reign (1872)," Jin Wuxiang, *Diary of Jin Yanshen*.

III. Magic vehicles riding the wind and waves gallops a thousand miles a day

There were ships with mechanical power in the wake of the Opium War (1840-1842). The 1842 *Nanjing Treaty* demanded China to open Guangzhou, Fuzhou, Xiamen, Ningbo, and Shanghai as the treaty port. China was forced to recognize the foreign powers' right to freely navigate in the coastal (treaty) ports. In 1844, three Anglo-American steamboats known as *Medusa*, *Corsair*, and *Midas* respectively started to sail to and fro between Guangzhou and Xianggang (Hong Kong). It was the earliest regular line operated in the Chinese waters. The 1858 *Tianjin Treaty* forcibly opened the waterways of the Changjiang River and the ports along the River as well. One year later, the Shanghai-based foreign firms such as Yihe (Jardine Matheson) and Baoshun (Dent & Co.) began running the shipping business along the Changjiang River. In March, 1862, Qichang (Russell & Co.) pooled 1,000,000 *taels* of silver and set up the first foreign shipping company in Shanghai, namely, Shanghai Steam Navigation Co., a. k. a. *Qichang lunchuan gongsi*.¹¹⁾

In the third month of 1864 (the third year of the Tongzhi reign), that is, two and half a year after the debut of Qichang, Jin Wuxiang, for the first time, boarded the steamer *Huguang* run by Qichang and started his journey from Jiujiang to Changzhou, his hometown. On that very day, the steamer passed Hukou, Pengze, and Dongliu. In the next morning, Jin arrived in Anqing and then sailed past Songyang, Wuhu, Nanjing. When night fell, he had reached Zhenjiang. It costed Jin 2.8 tael of silver to take the steamer. In Zhengjiang, he hired a small boat to carry him back to Changzhou. But, due to the tide and shallow water, the trip was delayed one day. It took Jin two days to arrive at the downtown of Changzhou. Then he had to spend another night getting back home. Jin paid 450 coppers for this short trip. In comparison with the journey by steamer, the conventional trip by boat was not a good bargain. It was true that steamer was much more expensive; but it was also true that it was greatly time-saving. In 1871 (the tenth year of the Tongzhi reign), Jin, departing from Shanghai, went to Xianggang by taking *Mongolia*, a British steamer. He paid 8 silver dollar for the two-day journey, just as those who sailed from Tianjin to Shanghai by steamer paid.¹²⁾

11) Fan Baichuan 樊百川, *The Rise of Shipping Business in China* [中国轮船航运业的兴起] (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2007), 88, 91-92.

12) "Items penned from the 17th to the 22nd days of the 9th month of the 3rd year of the Tongzhi reign (1864) and on the 17th day of the 5th month of the 10th year of the Tongzhi reign (1871)," Jin Wuxiang, *Diary of Jin Yanshen*.

For those who took both steamer and sailing boat, the answer to which one was better between the two types of ship was crystal clear. Precisely for this reason, *Shenbao* (Shanghai News) published a treatise on steamer in the fourth month of 1872 (the eleventh year of the Tongzhi reign), suggesting the country adopt steamers in the inland waterways. The treatise comparatively examined the speed of steamer and sailing boat commuting between Suzhou and Shanghai. Speaking in terms of the waterway, the distance between the two cities was roughly 300 *li*. Sailing at the lowest speed (50 *li* per hour), steamer could reach Suzhou on the very day. In contrast, it would take the fastest boat two days to reach Suzhou and three days for slower ones. If there were delays, the trip by boat would be much longer. In addition, the treatise compared Shanghai-Hankou voyage by steamer and that by sailing boat. By steamer, the cost was 7 *tael* of silver (amounting to over 12,000 coppers) and the time was three days. By the sailing boat, the cost was half of that by steamer, but the time spanned twenty days or so, during which steamer could go there and back thrice.

Nevertheless, the vast majority of people living in Jiangnan were unable to enjoy the efficiency and convenience brought about by steamer. As a consequence, the dissemination of new knowledge and new ideas from Shanghai was restricted. The aforementioned treatise on steamer suggested that the transmission of information could be done by steamer, even though it was not as quick as telegram. In the final analysis, steamer was ten times faster than the rapid boat.¹³⁾ Yao Gonghe, a gentry, recalled that, in the time spanning from 1890 to 1891, his uncle (Yao Yuewang), who had worked for Qing's embassy in London and then returned to Changzhou, met Gonghe's father in the family school, where he suggested the young generation of Yao clan purchase and read modern newspapers for current affairs after study and specially discussed the image of Guo Songtao, Qing's ambassador to Britain and France, that was published in *Shenbao*.¹⁴⁾ This indicated that, as late as the Yao brothers' time, few people living there could obtain *Shenbao*. It was in 1893 (the nineteenth year of the Guangxu reign) that Jiang Weiqiao, an educator, and his comrades for the first time read the Western books translated by Jiangnan Arsenal. When the old-style scholars there was informed that Jiang and his comrades were studying the Western knowledge, they severely rebuked them and denounced their work heterodoxy. In his diary, Jiang discussed for what reason Changzhou was so intellectually closed that it could hardly accept new ideas, contending that the reason might lie in the poor, inconvenient transportation, which was embodied in an embarrassing fact that the Changzhou-

13) "A Treatise on Steamer," *Shenbao* (申报), April 24, 1873.

14) Yao Gonghe 姚公鹤, *Shanghai Gossips* [上海闲话] (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1989), 29.

Shanghai voyage was still dependent on sailing boats.¹⁵⁾

The channel of distribution of *Shenbao* and *The Chinese Scientific Magazine* (格致汇编, hereinafter referred to as *Gezhi huibian*), both of which played an important role in disseminating new ideas in China, also corroborated this. Take *Gezhi huibian* for example. The eleventh issue of 1877 published the sales offices, which were in Beijing, Yantai, Wuxue, Shanghai, Shantou, Wenzhou, Tianjin, Dengzhou, Jiujiang, Suzhou, Fuzhou, Xianggang, Yichang, Niuzhuang, Hankou, Nanjing, Xiamen, Guangzhou, Ningbo, Zhenjiang, Wuchang, Ji'nan, Danshui (Tamsui), Kobe, Yokohama, and Singapore, respectively. It is evident that most of these offices were seated either in the treaty ports or in the provincial cities. Many prefectures and counties of Jiangnan and the secondary central cities such as Changzhou, Jiaying, and Huzhou in particular did not have the sales departments of modern newspapers.¹⁶⁾ In 1880, *Shenbao* first recorded the sales outside Shanghai in Beijing, Tianjin, Nanjing, Wuchang, Hankou, Yangzhou, Anqing, Jiujiang, Suzhou, Hangzhou, Fuzhou, Ningbo, Nanning, Chongqing, Changsha, Guangzhou, and Xianggang, among which most were treaty ports and provincial cities.¹⁷⁾ Regardless of the reason why these cities constituted the distribution channel of modern media, the fact itself demonstrated 1) that the sales of the modern media in these cities was adequate and 2) that there were smooth, unimpeded channel of information dissemination, by which the modern media could be easily sent there from Shanghai. The volume of sales and the channel of information dissemination were inseparable. Once there were unblocked channels of information dissemination, there must be a satisfying volume of sales. Likewise as soon as the volume of sales was large enough, the channels of information dissemination would definitely be made easier and more smooth. The present author thus concludes that, at least in the 1880s, the treaty ports and the provincial cities were the areas in which the information was disseminated most easily and most smoothly and new ideas were accepted most rapidly; whereas the inner parts of Jiangnan obviously lagged behind in these respects.

As a matter of fact, steamer appeared very early on the waterways of Jiangnan. An example was Weng Tonghe's 1877 trip from Shanghai to Changshu, in which a boat was towed ahead by a small steamer.¹⁸⁾ But it must be pointed out that such a type of operation must get permission from

15) "1893," Jiang Weiqiao 蒋维乔, *A Self-Compiled Chronicle of Jiang Weiqiao's Life* [竹翁自订年谱] (The edition collected by Shanghai Library).

16) "List of Sales Offices of *The Chinese Scientific Magazine*" (各口寄售《格致汇编》), *The Chinese Scientific Magazine* [格致汇编], vol. 11 (December, 1877).

17) *Shenbao*, January 1, 1880.

18) Weng Tonghe 翁同龢, *Diary of Weng Tonghe* [翁同龢日记] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2006), vol. 3, 1304.

the government and be strictly restricted, as it was stipulated that “[the steamer and boat are only] allowed to sail on the inland waterways and carry the official articles and at the same time carrying goods and passengers for commercial purpose are strictly forbidden. By doing so, they can be distinguished from the commercial ships.”¹⁹⁾ In fact, the official operation of steamer on the inland waterways of Jiangnan had never been approved by the authorities. In 1882, *Shenbao* pointed out: “If the small steamer is allowed to sail on the inland waters of the regions of Suzhou and Hangzhou, it will be very efficient and convenient. For years the foreign and Chinese merchants have realized the potential profits in this service and eagerly look forward to the official permission. The reason why this service is always pigeonholed and cannot get permission may lie in the fact that it grabs the small boatmen’s business and impeded the collection of taxes.”²⁰⁾ But on the other hand, some changes did take place. Precisely in the same year, China Merchants Steam Navigation Company (hereinafter referred to as *Zhaoshangju*) started to run the commuter steamer—*Xiangfu* (Soaring Heron)—sailing between Shanghai and Jiashi (via Jiaxing). It was the earliest passenger liner interconnecting Shanghai and the inner parts of Jiangnan.²¹⁾ In 1889 (the fifteenth year of the Guangxu reign), Kang Youwei, a reformer-turned-conservative-thinker, boarded *Xiangfu* and went to Jiaxing. This trip took him only half a day.²²⁾ Kang’s trip was a special case. Generally, there was an astonishing compromise plan respecting the operation of steamer service. To be specific, the steamer towed a boat and sailed on the inland waterways of Jiangnan. What a spectacle that was as marvelous as the horse-drawn railway! In 1884 (the tenth year of the Guangxu reign), that is, merely two years after the operation of *Xiangfu* in Jiangnan waters, *Shenbao* set up Shenchang Book Studio selling modern publications such as newspapers. In April, 1885, the Changshu branch of Shenchang debuted. Seven months later, Shenchang could be found in different Jiangnan cities such as Changzhou and Huzhou, which were usually the seats of the prefectural administration. Nevertheless, due to the strict restriction imposed on the steamer service operated on the inland waterways, the dissemination of new knowledge was confined in urban centers at the prefectural level. As far as counties and countryside were concerned, they were still almost immune from the new knowledge. An example was Yao Zujin and his brothers.

19) The Editorial Board of *History of Transportation, History of Transportation: The Shipping Administration* [交通史航政编] (Nanjing: Ministry of Transportation of Republic of China, 1935), vol. 1, 482.

20) “The Trial Implementation of Steamer Service” (轮船试行), *Shenbao*, May 23, 1882.

21) The Editorial Board of *Annals of Jiaxing, Annals of Jiaxing* [嘉兴市志] (Beijing: Zhongguo shuji chubanshe, 1997), 1093.

22) Kang Youwei 康有为, *Diary of Kang Youwei* (康有为日记), in vol. 119 of *Primary Sources for Study of Modern Chinese History* [近代史资料] (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2009), 49.

The Yao family lived in the countryside of Changzhou and none of its members could directly obtain and read *Shenbao*. Even for those who were exposed to *Shenbao* in the downtown of Changzhou, they were still unable to read the latest issues but instead intensively digested the packaged old news. It is thus evident that, inasmuch as the efficient, convenient modern transportation was inaccessible to the majority of people living in Jiangnan, the dissemination of new ideas was limited to a small circle of elite scholars.

IV. Flooding in are fire-breathing ships and fire-breathing vehicles

Under no circumstances can the wheel of history be stopped. In 1890, the Qing government finally gave permission for the private and public firms run by the foreigners and Chinese to operate commuter steamers on the inland waterways. On the one hand, Qing allowed the relevant firms to temporarily run their business while it was preparing special stipulations; but on the other hand, it prohibited the firms from carrying goods and passengers and towing cargo boats. In the second half of 1890, a few small shipping houses were open for business. In 1891, Daishengchang Steamship Company (hereinafter referred to as Daishengchang), which was founded by Dai Siyuan and his son Dai Yushu, launched lines extending to Suzhou, Hangzhou, Jiaxing, and Huzhou.²³⁾ The emergence of these small shipping houses marked the beginning of shipping business on the inland waterways of Jiangnan. Take Xu Zhaowei, who was going to take the civil service examination held in Beijing in 1894 (the twentieth year of the Guangxu reign), for example. He departed from Changshu by boat and arrived in Suzhou in the next night. Xu stayed overnight there and left for Shanghai at the time of *xu* (7-9 pm). Thanks to the steamer—albeit it was small, he reached Shanghai at the time of *wu* (11 am-1 pm) of the next day.

Prohibitions were entirely repealed in the wake of the War of Jiawu (the First Sino-Japanese War, 1894-1895). In 1895, the Japanese empire, a nouveau riche of the imperialist bloc, forced China to sign the *Maguan Treaty (Treaty of Shimonoseki)*, which demanded China to allow foreign ships to enter Wusongkou, the Grand Canal, Suzhou, and Hangzhou from Shanghai. Three years later, the Qing government promulgated the *Regulations Governing Inland Steam Navigation*, which

23) Fan Baichuan, *The Rise of Shipping Business in China*, 159-160.

extended the range of navigation to the inland waterways of all provinces wherein the treaty ports were located.²⁴⁾ From then on, the Shanghai-based foreign steamship companies running exclusively the business of inland navigation were set up one after another. In May, 1896, that is, four months prior to the designation of Suzhou and Hangzhou as treaty ports, a Japanese merchant founded a firm known as Daito Shinri Yoko in Shanghai.²⁵⁾ As soon as Suzhou and Hangzhou became treaty ports in September, this Japanese firm started its Shanghai-Suzhou commuter ship service with two small steamers. Then in the next January, the third small steamer joined the firm. After that, the firm won support from the Japanese government. In October, 1898, it was reorganized into a steamship corporation bearing the name Daito Kisen Kaisha (DKK), which began running the lines interconnecting Suzhou, Changzhou, Wuxi, and Zhenjiang since 1902. Consequently, DKK played a leading role in Jiangnan's inland commuter steamer service.²⁶⁾

It was in the same year when *Regulations Governing Inland Steam Navigation* was promulgated that the authorities officially declared that the small steamers of both Chinese and foreign firms were all allowed to sail on the inland waterways of the provinces having treaty ports in the hope that by doing so the commerce would be made more prosperous and the collection of taxes be increased.²⁷⁾ In Shanghai in 1896, there had already been four steamship companies running 38 small steamers travelling to and fro between Shanghai and Suzhou. In Suzhou, four shipping firms had the Shanghai-Hangzhou lines and additionally three small steamers shuttled back and forth between Wuxi, Changzhou, and Huzhou. In 1899, Daishengchang opened up new routes extending Zhenjiang and Qingjiangpu. One year later, its steamers could reach more places such as Suzhou, Wuxi, and Changzhou. In 1901, Daishengchang expanded its business to Zhenjiang. Then, *Zhaoshangju* set up a company devoting itself to the inland navigation. At first, its service focused exclusively on Shanghai. Then, it expanded very rapidly by merging Daishengchang. As a consequence, *Zhaoshangju*'s inland navigation service extended to Qingpu, Nanxun, Huzhou, Yixing, Liyang, Jiangyin; and at the same time, its steamers could sail westward from Suzhou to Zhenjiang via Wuxi and Changzhou, and then move northward to Yangzhou and Qingjiang, where they were able to sail further northward to

24) Wang Tieya 王铁崖 ed., *A collection of Old Sino-Foreign Treaties* [中外旧约章汇编] (Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 1957), vol. 1, 616, 786.

25) The name of this Japanese merchant was 白龙岩平 (literally, Hakuryu Iwahira).

26) Fan Baichuan, *The Rise of Shipping Business in China*, 278-279.

27) "The Imperial Department Superintending Foreign Affairs' Memorial in regard to the Permission of Inland Navigation by Small Steamers" (总署奏请准内河各埠行驶小轮船), in Chapter 130 of *Primary Sources respecting Diplomacy of Qing in Its Twilight Years* [清季外交史料] (Beijing: Shumu wenxian chubanshe, 1987), 2177.

Yaowan and westward to Zhengyangguan along Huai River. In a word, Zhaoshangju created a giant network of inland navigation.²⁸⁾

In Jiangnan, the interregional communication was significantly increased in the wake of the repeal of prohibition of inland navigation. In particular, the transport of passengers and cargo witnessed a considerable growth. For example, in 1896 (the twenty-second year of the Guangxu reign), when the steamers were widely used, the Suzhou Customs statistically indicated that the number of Suzhou-bound small steamers and tugboats from Shanghai were 353 and 1,004 respectively and those of Shanghai-bound small steamers and tugboats from Suzhou were 355 and 902 respectively. When it comes to the passenger transport, there were 12,142 Shanghai-bound passengers from Suzhou and 16,008 Suzhou-bound passengers from Shanghai. One year later, the number of passengers commuting between Shanghai and Suzhou by steamer exceeded 200,000. One piece of report of *Shenbao* published on August 4, 1899 (the twenty-fifth year of the Guangxu reign) depicted the steamers busing on the water west of Suzhou River, which read:

Inasmuch as the small steamers sailing on the inland waterways are inexpensive and very efficient and convenient, gentries and commoners are all fond of taking them. Shanghai is a traffic hub interconnecting the north and the south. For this reason, the city is incomparably attractive to merchants of all shades. Every day the small steamers commute between Shanghai and other cities such as Suzhou, Jiaxing, and Huzhou. Whenever we gaze away out to Suzhou River, there is brimming with steamers blowing the whistle and vomiting forth dense clouds of black smoke. Passengers have filled every ship and every boat.

Zhuang Baoshu's story proved this. In 1897 (the twenty-third year of the Guangxu reign), Zhuang planned a trip from Hankou to Shanghai. He gave up taking steamer, contending that it carried too many goods and might be delayed or stopped due to bad weather. Zhuang, overriding all objections, hired instead a conventional boat. His friends and relatives all laughed at him, ridiculing that he was far behind the times. Later, in his diary Zhuang admitted that he himself was stubborn and opinionated.²⁹⁾ Zhuang's story demonstrated that, by then when people were going to take a long journey, they would choose, above all, steamer.

In 1902 (the twenty-eighth year of the Guangxu reign), Jiang Weiqiao, for the first time, went to

28) Fan Baichuan, *The Rise of Shipping Business in China*, 242, 318.

29) "Items penned from the 8th to the 9th days of the 5th month of the 23rd year of the Guangxu reign (1897)," Zhuang Baoshu, *Diary of Zhuang Baoshu*, in *Four Diaries of Renowned People of Changzhou in Late Qing*, 515-516.

Shanghai. On the fourth day of the seventh month, Jiang departed from Changzhou by ship and at 4 pm he arrived in Wuxi, where the traveler met with his friends such as Gu Zhuo and Cai Wensen, all of whom would join him on the trip to Shanghai. On the sixth day, Jiang and his friends boarded steamer and reached Suzhou, where they took a Shanghai-bound ship. Passing by the Golden Rooster Lake of Suzhou, these young men set their feet on the land of Shanghai in the next morning. Originally, Jiang would travel to Japan with Zhong Guanguang, who taught at Nanjing (Southern-Elite) Academy, on the twentieth day. Jiang's father falsely told him that his wife and children were all seriously ill. Hearing this, Jiang immediately returned to home. Exactly on that day, he boarded a steamer and arrived in Jiangsu in the next day, when he was informed that the China Association for Education was founded. At 11 pm, Jiang had already been at home. In comparison with the aforementioned Jin Wuxiang's trip, the time of Jiang's return was considerably shortened.³⁰⁾ In the next winter, when Jiang had permanently lived in Shanghai, he went back home for the Chinese New Year. On the twenty-second day of the twelfth month, Jiang bought a steamer ticket at *Zhaoshangju* and boarded the Suzhou-bound ship in the afternoon. At 7 am next morning, Jiang reached Suzhou, where he purchased the ticket sold by DKK, a Japanese steamship company, at Changmen and then took a small steamer heading for Changzhou. The ship left Suzhou at 1 pm and five hours later it arrived in Wuxi. Traveling another six hours, Jiang presented himself at home.³¹⁾

The advancement of transportation accelerated the dissemination of new ideas and new knowledge. In 1893, when Daishengchang run the business of inland navigation in the southern Jiangsu merely for one year, there had already a sales office of *Shenbao* in the downtown of Wuxi County. Three years later, the dissemination of new knowledge and new ideas was accelerated remarkably, inasmuch as a large number of steamers went back and forth on the inland waterways of Jiangnan. At this point, the present author, differing himself from many scholars who say it was the War of Jiawu, which brought the humiliating failure and a huge loss of land and money to China, that seriously impacted the Chinese and excruciatingly awakened the Chinese intellectuals, who then, driven by the sense of crisis, formulated many new thoughts and gave impetus to the changes involving entire China, argues instead that it was in the wake of the signing of *Maguan Treaty*, which demanded China to allow the foreign ships to sail freely on the inland waterways, that the

30) "Items penned from the 4th to the 20th days of the 7th month of the 28th year of the Guangxu reign (1902)," Jiang Weiqiao 蒋维乔, *Diary of Rule-Following Master (i.e. Jiang Weiqiao)* [因是子日记] (The edition collected by Shanghai Library).

31) "Items penned from the 22nd to 23rd days of the 12th month of the 29th year of the Guangxu reign (1903)," *Diary of Rule-Following Master* (i.e. Jiang Weiqiao).

dissemination of new ideas was greatly accelerated in China and Jiangnan in particular, to which present-day academia pays little attention. An example was Jiang Weiqiao. Since 1897 (the twenty-third year of the Guangxu reign), Jiang started to read lots of modern books. He said he bought and read almost all newly-published magazines and papers of records such as *Current Affairs* (时务报), *World Affairs* (万国公报), and *Journal of Agronomy* (农学报), as well as purchasing the books translated by Jiangnan Arsenal and keeping these volumes close at hand.³²⁾ By 1902, in his diary, Jiang penned: “My idea of reform has greatly developed. Whenever there is a reform, there must be the powerful driving force. Therefore, what I have done this year is unprecedented in my life. This year, I have visited Wuxi, Yi(xing), and (Shang)yu once, where I came into contact with all comrades aspiring for a fundamental social reform.”³³⁾ In 1903, Jiang, for the first time, lived in Shanghai for a long time. When the year was ending, in his diary he penned that what I learnt and what I taught this year in Shanghai were ten times and even one hundred times greater than what I had done previously.³⁴⁾

The constantly reduced spatiotemporal distance between Shanghai and the southern Jiangsu greatly facilitated the diversification of the channel of information dissemination, as well as making the dissemination much rapider. As a consequence, the new ideas, new knowledge, and new things were gradually popularized in different parts of Jiangnan. People, living in these changes, were continuously edified by everything unconventional to such an extent that they not only acquired a broader vision but also changed completely their perception of the society and way of act and most importantly shifted from being passively against new things to being positively tolerant of them. The physically narrow and intellectually closed space of small cities and towns of the southern Jiangsu was being replaced with an open, broad spiritual space. The prevalence of steam ship made Shanghai much more accessible to the ordinary people. It was not the new knowledge and new ideas but the hearsay from their fellow villagers that interested many ordinary people. People would naturally accept a great diversity of information, thoughts, and knowledge, all of which were sometimes faintly discernable, partly true and partly false, and confusingly organized, and, passively or positively, brought them home. Gradually, the prosperous streets, plentiful products, and fashionable terminologies of Shanghai were appreciated even by the lowest echelons of the Jiang society. It was

32) “Items penned in the 23th year of the Guangxu reign (1897),” *Diary of Rule-Following Master* (i.e. Jiang Weiqiao).

33) “Items penned at the end of 28th year of the Guangxu reign (1902),” *Diary of Rule-Following Master* (i.e. Jiang Weiqiao).

34) “Items penned at the end of 29th year of the Guangxu reign (1903),” *Diary of Rule-Following Master* (i.e. Jiang Weiqiao).

precisely the information dissemination, which, subtly and unconsciously, influenced the ordinary people, that brought about the most fundamental socio-economic-social changes in Jiangnan.

Then, the railway made trip between Jiangnan and Shanghai easier and more convenient. In 1907 (the thirty-third year of the Guangxu reign), the Shanghai-Nanjing Railway was inaugurated on the fourth day of the fourth month. Eight days later, Jin Wuxiang, who then lived in Changzhou, got aboard the train bound for Shanghai, where he would visit the international exhibition held at Zhangyuan, a well-known park. One of the purposes of Jin's trip was to try the new thing—train. Just as Jin had done to his boat trip, Jin recorded in detail his trip to Shanghai by train. According to Jin's diary, he left home at 2 pm; then went through Xiaobei Gate, crossed over the suspension bridge, and headed for Xiaoqiao, from which he went further two *li* and finally reached the station, where Jin took the Shanghai-bound train. The train passed by Qishuyan and Henglin and arrived in Wuxi at 3:30 pm. Then it successively galloped across Zhoujinggang, Wangting, and Hushuguan, where it was greeted by a Nanjing-bound train. The train arrived in Suzhou at 4:45 pm. Going through Kuantang and Weiting, it stopped in Kunshan County. At dusk the train reached the end of the journey—Shanghai—by way of Luojiabang, Anting, Huangdu, Nanxiang, Zhenru, and Daijiao and Jin alighted from this Iron Horse. The trip took him five hours in total. Jin revealed the price by penning that the cost of taking the second-class seat was 3.1 silver dollars and the third-class seat 1.4 silver dollars. Then, Jin, roaming around in Shanghai for several days, returned to Changzhou by train again. The meticulous Jin found that the price of Nanjing-bound train was cheaper than that of the Shanghai-bound one, on the grounds that the second-class seat sold at 2.4 silver dollars and the third-class seat at 1.05 silver dollars.³⁵⁾ Later, there was the express train running on the Shanghai-Nanjing Railway. Jiang Weiqiao had hastened home for the funeral of his beloved mother. In order to save time, Jiang specially took the express train, by which he returned to home in three hours.³⁶⁾ Compared with the train before the dawning of CRH at the beginning of the twenty-first century, this express train merely took one more hour.

The much more efficient, convenient transportation considerably increased the range of human activity. Train, for instance, further reduced the spatiotemporal distance. As a consequence, many started to travel along the railroad line. The conventional Chinese literati, either positively making a sightseeing tour or passively being sent out for missions or even into exile, were all fond of

35) "Items penned on the 12th and the 17th days of the 4th month of the 33rd year of the Guangxu reign (1907)," Jin Wuxiang, *Diary of Jin Yanshen*.

36) "Item penned on the 8th day of the 10th month of the 2nd year of the Xuantonng reign (1910)," *Diary of Rule-Following Master (i.e. Jiang Weiqiao)*.

travelling. In this regard, Chen Jilu, a Qing scholar, had penned: “Every year I travel around the country with rice. I will not return to home until the end of the year. Immediately after the beginning of spring, I am on the journey again.”³⁷⁾ It was true that poets could improve their writing by virtue of the inspiration drawn from beautiful mountains and rivers; but it was also true that such journeys were astonishingly time-consuming, let alone the actually small range of travel. An example was Wu Zihui. In one piece of diary penned in 1893 (the nineteenth year of the Guangxu reign), Wu said: “I am inherently fond of travelling. Now I am almost thirty. Nevertheless, I still cannot fully enjoy a sightseeing tour. Aside from taking the civil service examination, I have never been any places lying over 500 *li* away from my homeplace.” To be honest, “500 *li*” was an overexaggeration. Wu, a native of small town known as Xueyanqiao at the junction of Changzhou and Wuxi, lived in the downtown of Wuxi. From the age of 6 to 15, that is, in one decade, Wu had never left the alley wherein he lived. Before the age of 25, he had only taken a five-day trip in Suzhou, apart from visiting the downtowns of Changzhou and Wuxi for study and Jiangyin, the seat of Jiangsu Provincial Directorate of Education, for the civil service examination. In 1889 (the fifteenth year of the Guangxu reign), the twenty-five-year old Wu, for the first time, boarded a steamer sailing from Wuxi to Nanjing for the civil service examination at the provincial level. One year later, he visited Shanghai. In 1892 (the eighteenth year of the Guangxu reign), when Wu had been twenty-eight-year old, he was on his virgin trip to Tianjin by a seagoing vessel, from which he went further to Beijing for the examination at the national level.³⁸⁾ As time went by, the quality of Wu’s trip was diversified so brilliantly that he took steamers, trains, and even planes and visited not only the Chinese cities such as Wuxi, Shanghai, Beijing, Guangzhou but also foreign lands such as Japan and Europe. By then, Wu’s dream to “fully enjoy a sightseeing tour” came true.

37) “Chapter Fourteen: Preface to *Poetry of Wuzhen Pavilion*” (五真阁吟稿序), Chen Jilu 陆继格, *Collected Writings in Study of All-Medicine-Adoration* (崇百药斋文集).

38) “Item penned on the 14th day of the 4th month,” Wu Zihui 吴稚晖, *Diary: 1893* (癸巳日记), in *Complete Works of Wu Zihui* (吴稚晖先生全集), vol. 11: *Mountains, Rivers, and People* [山川人物] (Taipei (Taipei): The Editorial Board of *History of Party* of the Central Committee of the Nationalist Party of China (Guomindang), 1969), 164-165.

V. Concluding Remarks

In Jin Wuxiang's diary, a legend read:

(Among the people living in the place other than their own hometowns, who are having the New Year's Eve party in a guild hall, one suddenly sighed:) "This year is ending. There is quite a long way from home. For all of us, enjoying the happiness of family reunion is a mission impossible. At this very moment, looking out the terrible scene here, how can I endure this!" (Hearing these words, everyone present is deeply moved. A Daoist priest sitting there responds:) "In truth, going back home and enjoying family reunion are not difficult at all!" (Nevertheless, home is thousands of miles away from here. For this reason, everybody think the Daoist priest is talking nonsense.) The Daoist priest goes on, saying: "I can play something magic. Let me try it, please." (He thus folds one piece of paper into a ship and goes outside. Then the Daoist priest blows on the paper ship. Immediately the paper ship grows bigger and turns into a genuine boat. All are invited to board the ship and told not to open their eyes in any case. After all take their seats, the Daoist priest says: "Go!" The ship, riding on the wind, sets sail. Four hours later, still at dawn of the New Years' Eve, all have arrived at their cottage doors.)³⁹⁾

Undoubtedly, it is a beautiful story consoling people who suffer greatly the difficult journeys. The ancient China was known for its vast territory and inconvenient transportation. Precisely for this reason, the ancients were not willing to move from their native land. Such reluctance was, to a certain extent, an embodiment of the embarrassing situation of transportation. In modern times, due to the improved transportation, more and more people went outside and became ever-increasingly tolerant of new ideas and new things. The changes respecting travel in Jiangnan epitomized the times. In present-day China, the distance between different regions has been reduced to the utmost by highway, flight, and most praiseworthy, CRH. As a consequence, the way of life and mode of thinking of the Chinese change significantly. Herein lies a major driving force through which the social changes in China can be implemented.

39) "Item penned on the 20th day of the 10th month of the 1st year of the Guangxu reign (1875)," Jin Wuxiang, *Diary of Jin Yanshen*.

Ethical considerations

Ethical issues (including plagiarism, informed consent, misconduct, data fabrication and/or falsification, double publication and/or submission, and redundancy) have been completely observed by authors.

Conflict of Interests

The author has no conflict of interests to declare.

[原始中文]

江南客旅与近代社会变迁

思想的传播并非空穴来风，必须依靠人的活动进行，因此人们的活动范围就相应成为信息接受和传递的空间。但人们发生空间位移要有交通条件来保证，因此，交通状况的优劣便成为信息传播的决定性因素之一。一般来说，交通越发达，为本区域成员接受外界思想和外来思想进入本地提供了基本条件，反之，如果一个区域处于相对封闭的状态，那么本区域了解和接受外来思想的机会便会减少，固守原有生活方式的可能性便会增强。从信息传播的过程来看，交通的空间距离与信息传播的范围是成正比。近代江南新思想传播速度的快慢与交通的发展便有着明显的相关性，在早期，交通条件的落后限制了新知识新思想的传播，而到后期，随着交通工具的进步如轮船、火车的出现则拉近了江南各地之间的空间距离，也加快了思想的传播，而这些新思想的传播又对江南社会产生了重要的影响。本文便对此论题作一初步讨论，尚望各位方家指正。

一、往还壶榭夜航船

江南属于著名的水乡，根据范毅军的描述，江南地区“平均每一平方公里土地上，就有超过两公里的河流通过，此外更有面积大小不等的湖泊广布其间”。¹⁾ 因此正如王家范所言，在江南“船是基本的运输工具，河流是交通大动脉”。²⁾ 这两大因素成了构筑江南交通格局的决定性要素，船成为沟通城市和市镇，市镇与乡村来往的重要交通工具。江南很早就已经出现了来往于各地的班船，这就是著名的夜航船。夜航船的历史非常悠久，宋代笔记《能改斋漫

1) 范毅军：《市镇分布与地域的开发：明中叶以来苏南地区的一个鸟瞰》，《大陆杂志》第102卷第4期，2001年。

2) 王家范：《百年颠沛与千年往复》，上海远东出版社2001年版，第214页。

录》和《中吴纪闻》中都提到，古乐府中还有夜航船之曲。³⁾元末明初人陶宗仪在《南村辍耕录》中也说：“凡篙师于城埠市镇，人烟凑集去处招聚客旅，装载夜行者，谓之夜航船。”⁴⁾清江阴人金武祥曾有这样一首诗：“凌杂米盐星货铺，往还壶榼夜航船。村童鲁钝时逃塾，野老辛勤自力田。”其下有注：“吾乡城镇均有班船，或日班，或夜班，或谓之信船，粤人谓之渡船，皆往来有定期，以寄书信及货物，并以载客商……即古所谓夜航船也。”⁵⁾这段话可以说是对江南一带城乡之间交通情况的生动描述。当时江南各地都有属于本地特色的船只，日本学者松浦章曾根据《北新关志》列出了清代运行在运河沿线的70余种船只，便大多以镇江、松江、杭州、湖州、平湖、宁波、无锡、吴江、常州、嘉兴、丹阳、南浔等江南各地地名命名。⁶⁾

夜航船虽然方便，但是运行缓慢，本地往来尚算便捷，可若要跨府越州，便要耗去大量时间。《宋会要辑稿》中保留了一份珍贵的资料，绍兴十二年（1142），户部曾规定江南各州府官船抵达临安的地理和日限，其中秀州为一百九十八里，计四日二时，平江府为三百六十里，为八日，湖州为三百七十八里，计八日二时，常州为五百二十八里，计十一日四时，江阴军为七百三十八里，计十六日。⁷⁾这也使得后人得以了解到当时来往于江南的船只途中所需花费的时间。松浦章曾用乾隆三十年的旅程书《天下路程示我周行》作过计算，在清代，从苏州到上海100多公里的距离，正常情况下，民船需要航行四至五日。可见，由于船只动力技术进展不大，其实和六七百年前没有什么明显的变化。而由于潮水、气候、突发事件等种种不可知的因素，还会延缓出行的时间。

同治十年（1884），金武祥第一次乘船到上海，向来观察非常仔细的他记录了沿途的旅程：八月初八日“未刻开行，二十里戚墅堰，十里横林，泊”。初九日“五鼓开行，二十里洛社，二十里皋桥通白塔湖，并至江阴等处，十里无锡县，培成堡上岸进城，遂绕城行。十里老窑头，三十里社安，十里南望亭先过北望亭，有厘卡，二十里浒墅关，泊”。初十日“五鼓开行，二十里枫桥有厘卡，十里阊门，进水关，泊”。十一日“十一日，五鼓开行，五里斋门，五里娄门，十里槐谷帮，二十里惟亭，十五里真义桥桥内即进贤镇，十五里昆山县，泊南门”。十二日“五鼓开行，走内河，约二十里出口。内河路较近，而桥甚低，水长恐难难过。又行二十里菴葭帮，二十里黄渡，水路迂回，风顺逆不定，牵挽而行，颇行濡滞。中经厘卡二处，未暇询其地名。黄渡市肆近百家，为青浦县辖，离县约十里，小泊，候潮退。又

3) 吴曾：《能改斋漫录》卷七《事实》，中华书局1960年版，第192页；龚明之：《中吴纪闻》卷四，上海古籍出版社1986年版，第89页。

4) 陶宗仪：《南村辍耕录》卷一一，中华书局1959年版，第137页。

5) 金武祥：《陶庐五忆》，光绪粟香室丛书刻本，第8-9页。

6) 参见（日）松浦章《清代内河水运史研究》，江苏人民出版社2010年版。

7) 《宋会要辑稿》食货四八之一，中华书局1957年版，第5623页。

行二十里张家泾，泊”。十三日“十三日，五鼓开行，十里野鸡墩，十四里周泰伯庙，二十六里上海县”。⁸⁾

从上述的记载可推断，从常州到无锡要一天时间，苏州要两天，昆山则是三天，青浦四天，到上海已经是第五天了。由于船只动力技术进展不大，其实和700多年前没有什么明显的变化。直到光绪十一年（1885），庄宝澍参加顺天乡试后，从上海乘船回常州，一路上或是潮水盛涨，舟高于桥，或是西风大作，舟行蹇缓万分，或是城河水浅，不得进步，十二月初五日从上海出发，当天只到周太仆庙，次日方到黄渡，到常州也是十一日。⁹⁾可见缓慢的船速加上部分航道“纡回曲滞”，江南客旅并不像今天我们以为的那么方便。

那么陆路的情况又如何呢？江南陆路的主要有塘路构成。塘路本是修浚河道时挖河积土筑成的纤道，供船夫背纤迂走，此后加宽渐成塘路。塘路和驿路、官路基本一致，故有官塘之称，主要用于政府公文的传递和官员公务旅行，大多与主要干河平行。除了塘路之外，其它地方基本无路可走，即使有路，也是那种直穿田野的小路。塘路路况其实也不尽理想，不仅颠簸，遇上雨雪尤为艰难。同治十一年（1872）十二月，金武祥从南京回江阴，便走塘路。当时正逢大雨雪，阴雨泥泞，他“乘马而行，据鞍扶伞，倾险时虞”，行走两天，方从南京到句容，感叹是“客中苦况之尤甚者”，¹⁰⁾江南其它地方的情况当与此类似。

二、甍轮刻日知千里

机械动力的轮船来到中国是在鸦片战争之后。1842年签订的《南京条约》规定开放广州、福州、厦门、宁波、上海五处通商口岸，实际承认了外国享有在中国沿海通商口岸自由航行的权利。1844年，“魔女”号、“海盗”号、“财神”号三艘英美轮船在广州与香港之间的航线上航行，这是外国轮船在中国水域最早开设的定期航线。1858年签订的《天津条约》开放了长江水道，沿江港口正式对外开放。次年，一些在上海的外国洋行如怡和、宝顺便已经开始在长江一线从事轮运活动。1862年3月，旗昌洋行集资100万两，在上海设立了第一家外资专业轮船公司，即上海轮船公司（Shanghai Steam Navigation Co.），这便是著名的旗昌轮船公

8) 金武祥：《金滢生日记》同治十年八月初八日至十三日条，上海图书馆藏稿本。

9) 庄宝澍：《庄宝澍日记》光绪十一年十二月初五日至十一日条，《晚清常州名贤日记四种》，凤凰出版社2013年版，第342-343页。

10) 金武祥：《金滢生日记》同治十一年十二月初十、十一日条。

司。¹¹⁾

同治三年（1864）三月，也就是旗昌洋行开办两年半之后，金武祥第一次乘旗昌洋行湖广号从九江返回故乡，当天便经过了湖口、彭泽、东流，次日一早便到达安庆，经淞阳、芜湖、南京，到晚上已抵达镇江，船价是每人银二两八钱。他在镇江找到一艘小船回家，却因水浅候潮等了一天，途中又经历了两天，方才抵达常州府城，回到江阴老家还要一个晚上的时间。船价则是每人四百五十文，与江轮相比无论从时间还是金钱来看，其实并不怎么合算。海轮费用要更贵，但用时也更短。金武祥在同治十年（1871）从上海乘船到英国公司轮船蒙古号到香港，只花了两天时间，船费是每人英洋八元，当时从天津到上海的轮船用时和费用也基本一致。¹²⁾

轮船与帆船，孰优孰劣，乘过的人自然很清楚，所以同治十一年（1872）四月在《申报》上便刊登了一篇《轮船论》，呼吁在内河使用轮船运输。文中比较轮船和帆船在苏沪两地的航行速度，称从上海到苏州，水路大约三百里，轮船最慢时速可达每小时五十里，三百里的路程一天即可到达。而内地民船最快也要两天，慢则要三天，若遇到阻滞，更不知道要多少天了。文章还比较了上海至汉口的行程：上海搭轮船到汉口，价格每人不过七两银子，计铜钱十二千余，为期不过三日，如果改搭民船，虽然船价火食可减省一半，而最快也要二旬，而这个时间轮船已可往返三次。

由于江南地区大部分人都无法享受轮船所带来的通行便利，所以来自上海的新知识与新思想的传播也自然受到了各种局限。前引《轮船论》便以为如果使用轮船进行信息传递，“虽不能如电报之速，然较之急足快船已十倍矣”。¹³⁾据姚公鹤回忆，1890-1891年间，族伯姚岳望自英国出使回常州，赴家塾见其父，力劝其子弟“于诵读之暇，不可不购阅新闻纸以通知时事”，并和他们谈及《申报》上所登载的郭嵩焘画像之事。¹⁴⁾这说明，姚公鹤兄弟此时仍很少能够读到《申报》。蒋维乔和同人们第一次看到江南制造局翻译的西学书籍已经是光绪十九年（1893），而本地旧儒听说他们在研究西学，目为怪物，痛诋不已。蒋维乔在日记中便认为常州与上海交通需用帆船，极其不便，是导致当地风气十分闭塞，接收新知识新思想困难的重要原因。¹⁵⁾

这一点，也可以从《申报》、《格致汇编》等当时的一些传播新思想的媒体的销售渠道情况得到证明。1877年第11期的《格致汇编》上刊载了其销售点，分别是北京、烟台、武穴、

11) 樊百川：《中国轮船航运业的兴起》，中国社会科学出版社2007年版，第88页，第91-92页。

12) 金武祥：《金滢生日记》，同治三年九月十七日至二十二日条；同治十年闰五月十七日条。

13) 《轮船论》，《申报》同治十一年四月二十四日。

14) 姚公鹤：《上海闲话》，上海古籍出版社1989年版，第29页。

15) 蒋维乔：《竹翁自订年谱》本年条，上海图书馆藏稿本。

上海、汕头、温州、天津、登州、九江、苏州、福州、香港、宜昌、牛庄、汉口、南京、厦门、广州、日本神户、横滨、新加坡、淡水、宁波、镇江、武昌、济南，基本上都是开放的通商口岸和省会城市，江南各府县，特别是次级中心城市如常州、嘉兴、湖州等均不在列。¹⁶⁾ 1880年的《申报》第一次出现了外埠售报处的记录，包括北京、天津、南京、武昌、汉口、扬州、安庆、九江、苏州、杭州、福州、宁波、香港、广州、南宁、重庆、长沙，也基本上是通商口岸和省会城市。¹⁷⁾ 上述城市能够成为这些媒体的销售点，不管原因如何，至少可以说明了两个问题：一是《申报》、《格致汇编》这样的刊物在这些城市有着足够的销售量，二是这些城市有着相对畅通的信息传递渠道，从上海运送报纸刊物到这些城市相对较为方便。这两个方面其实是相辅相成的。一旦有足够畅通的传播渠道，自然能获得一定的销售量，而一旦销售达到一定规模，自然会推动更加畅通的传播网络的建立。因此，我们可以作出下列判断，至少在1880年代左右，通商口岸和省会城市是信息传播最为畅通的地区，也是接受新思想最快的地区，而江浙腹地各城市在信息传播和新思想接受方面要明显落后于上述地区。

江南河道中其实很早便出现了轮船的身影。比如1877年翁同龢自上海赴常熟，已经由小轮带船航行。¹⁸⁾ 只不过这些多经政府特许，其用途受到严格限制，“准行内河并带官物，不准带货搭客作贸易之事，以示与商船有别”。¹⁹⁾ 而轮船在江南内河的正式航运则一直未能获得官方的正式批准。在光绪八年（1882）的《申报》中便称：“苏、杭内地河道，若以小轮船行驶，极为便捷。历年中外商人皆以厚利所在，多思禀准试办。只恐碍民船生路及税卡抽厘等情，辄格于时议，未蒙准行。”²⁰⁾ 当然，改变总在慢慢的进行中，就在同一年，招商局“翔晃”号轮船开通了从上海经嘉兴至硖石的航线，这是上海至江南腹地最早的客轮。²¹⁾ 光绪十五年（1889），康有为便由上海乘翔晃轮至嘉兴，仅需半天时间。²²⁾ 不过这都只是个案，于是聪明的中国人便想到了一种折衷的办法，于是江南的河道上经常会出现轮船拖着帆船前行的奇观，这与铁路运行初期，马拉火车在铁道上行走的景象恰成一奇妙对比。就在翔晃轮开通两年后的光绪十年（1884），《申报》便在嘉兴开设了申昌号书画室，专门出售《申报》及相关出版品。次年4月，《申报》在常熟开设了申昌号，11月，《申报》在常州、湖州等江南其它府城也开设了申昌书画室。但是由于官方对内河轮船运输的限制，这些新知识的传播仍然

16) 《各口寄售〈格致汇编〉》，《格致汇编》第2年第11卷，1877年12月。

17) 《申报》1880年1月1日。

18) 陈文杰整理：《翁同龢日记》第三册，中华书局2006年版，第1304页。

19) 《交通史航政编》第1册，交通史编纂委员会1935年版，第482页。

20) 《轮船试行》，《申报》1882年5月23日。

21) 《嘉兴市志》编纂委员会：《嘉兴市志》，中国书籍出版社1997年版，第1093页。

22) 张荣华整理：《康有为日记》，《近代史资料》第119号，中国社会科学出版社2009年版，第49页。

局限在府城一级，乡镇甚至县城受到的影响仍然有限，当时居住在常州乡间的姚祖晋兄弟仍然没有看到申报，即便是府城中的看到《申报》的那些人也因为运输的原因，并不能及时阅读最新的报纸和书籍，而只能通过“打包”的方式集中阅读过时的新闻和知识。可见，由于江南地区大部分人尚无法享受通行便利，新思想的传播仍然局限在少数精英文人圈子之中。

三、火轮船又火轮车

但是历史前进的车轮总是无法阻挡。1890年，清政府终于承认“上海一口，时有华洋官商雇（轮船）往内地”的事实，“另定专章，奏准暂时雇用”，但仍“声明不准搭客各带私货”，“亦不准拖带货船”。于是在这年下半年，有一些小轮船公司相继开行。1891年，戴嗣源、戴玉书父子创办的戴生昌开通了苏、杭、嘉、湖各路航线。²³⁾ 这些小轮船公司的出现，成为日后江南内河轮船航运业的起点。光绪二十年（1894），徐兆玮到北京参加乡试，便先在常熟乘小舟，第二天夜间抵达苏州，次日戌刻附小轮赴上海，第三天午刻抵达上海。

而官方政策的全面松动是在中日甲午战争之后，光绪二十一年（1895）签订的《马关条约》明文准许外国船只“从上海驶进吴淞口及运河以至苏州府、杭州府”。光绪二十四年（1898）颁布的《内港行船章程》又将范围扩大到各通商省份的内河水道。²⁴⁾ 此后，以上海为中心，专营内河航线的外国轮船公司相继设立。1896年5月，在苏州、杭州被辟为通商口岸之前四个月，日本商人白龙岩平便创办了大东新利洋行，9月份，苏杭开埠，大东公司便以两只小轮船开设了上海、苏州航线，次年一月，再以一只小轮开设了上海、杭州航线。此后大东公司得到了日本政府的支持，1898年10月，改组为大东汽船合资会社。1902年大东开设了苏州至常州、无锡、镇江的航线，逐渐成为江南航线上的霸主。²⁵⁾

也就在颁布《内港行船章程》的同一年，官方规定：“通商省份所有内河，无论华、洋商均可行驶小轮船，藉以扩充商务，增加税厘。”²⁶⁾ 1896年，由杭州往来上海、苏州的轮船局已经有4家，小轮三十八只。苏州也有4家轮船公司往来沪、杭两地，此外还有往来无锡、常州、湖州的小轮三只。戴生昌轮船局在1899年添设了镇江、清江浦航线，1900年再添苏州、无锡、常州线，并于1901年延长至镇江。此后，招商局成立了内河轮船公司，最初航线仅在上海，随后大事扩充，通过兼并戴生昌等手段，在江南伸展至青浦、南浔、湖州、宜兴、溧阳、江阴，从苏州西经无锡、常州至镇江，再北折而至扬州、清江，又从清江北越宿迁至窑湾，西溯淮河至正阳关，形成一个庞大的内港航运网。²⁷⁾

23) 樊百川：《中国轮船航运业的兴起》，第159-160页。

24) 王铁崖：《中外旧约章汇编》第1册，三联书店1957年版，第616、786页。

25) 樊百川：《中国轮船航运业的兴起》，第278-279页。

26) 《总署奏请准内河各埠行驶小轮片》《清季外交史料》卷130，书目文献出版社1987年版，第2177页。

27) 樊百川：《中国轮船航运业的兴起》，第242、第318页。

轮船开禁后，江南各地之间的联系更趋密切，客货来往益加频繁。光绪二十二年（1896）年轮船刚刚开始江南大量航行时，据苏州海关的统计，有“由申进口小轮353只，拖船1004只；出口往申小轮355只，拖船902只”，“计往沪者12142人，由沪来者16008人”，到了次年，沪苏杭之间乘坐轮船往来者已超过20万人次。光绪二十五年（1899）8月4日的《申报》记述了苏州河口以西轮船运输繁忙的景象：“内地通行小轮船，取费既廉，行驶亦捷，绅商士庶皆乐于出途。沪上为南北要冲，商贾骈阗，尤为他处之冠。每日小轮船之来往苏、嘉、湖等处者，遥望苏州河一带，气管鸣雷，煤烟聚墨，盖无一不在谷满谷，在坑满坑焉”。光绪二十三年（1897），江南人庄宝澍想从汉口赴上海，不乘轮船，认为轮船有“箱笼货物之多，阴雨朝晚之不时，停轮久暂之难料”等诸多不足，“力排众议，竟雇华舟”，被亲朋好友嘲笑为“背时”，他在日记中也承认自己“愚而好自用”。²⁸⁾可见当时人们已觉得出门远行，乘轮船为当然之事。

光绪二十八年（1902）蒋维乔准备第一次前往上海，七月初四日，他在常州乘船，下午四下钟即到无锡，与他在无锡的朋友顾倬、蔡文森等会合，一同前往上海。七月初六日，他们上午乘轮船到苏州，然后再从苏州展轮过金鸡湖，第二天早上到达上海。二十日，蒋维乔本拟与南菁书院的老师钟观光一同赴日本游学，但他父亲谎称其妻、子重病，他只得连忙回乡探望，当时便趁轮归家，次日到苏，得知中国教育会成立，是晚十一下点已经抵家。这一路程相比当年的金武祥便要明显缩短了许多。²⁹⁾而到了第二年，已经常驻上海的蒋维乔回家过年。十二月二十二日，他到招商局买票，午后登舟赴苏。二十三日早晨的“七下钟”他到了苏州，随后至阊门到日商经营的大东局买票乘大东公司的小轮船回家，“午后一点钟开轮，六下钟到无锡”，“十二下钟”他就到家了。³⁰⁾

交通的发展也加速了新知识新思想的传递速度，仅仅在戴生昌开通苏南内河航线一年多之后的1893年，无锡县城便开设了申报销售点，到了1896年大量轮船进入江南内河之后，新知识新思想的传播速度更是日益加快。学界在讨论近代思想传播进程时，大多以为甲午战争，中国战败，割地赔款，对国人造成了极大冲击，使得一些知识分子沉痛觉醒，危亡意识之下，创生各种思想潮流，推动了整个中国的变化。而事实上，《马关条约》之后的内河轮船开禁其实对新思想在内地尤其是江南的传播起了极大的推动作用，而这一点恰恰是很多人容易忽视的。正是在光绪二十三年（1897）年后，蒋维乔开始大量阅读新式书籍，“时务报、万国公报、农学报，凡新出之报章杂志，无不购阅，制造局所译之书随手翻阅”。³¹⁾到了

28) 庄宝澍：《庄宝澍日记》光绪二十三年五月初八日、初九日条，《晚清常州名贤日记四种》，凤凰出版社2013年版，第515-516页。

29) 蒋维乔：《因是子日记》光绪二十八年七月初四日至二十日，上海图书馆藏稿本。

30) 蒋维乔：《因是子日记》光绪二十九年十二月二十二日至二十三日条。

31) 蒋维乔：《竹翁自订年谱》光绪二十三年条。

1902年，他在日记中称：“余之改革新思想大为发展，凡遇改革，必有动力，故余今岁之运动，亦为生平所未有，凡赴沪三次，赴锡、赴宜、赴虞各一次，联络各地同志，籍谋改革”。³²⁾ 1903年是蒋维乔第一次长时间居住在上海的年份，在这一年岁尾的日记中，他便写道：“今岁处沪上，所得阅历上之知识及教育学生心得，什佰于他岁。”³³⁾

正是上海与苏南之间时空距离的不断缩短，推动了信息传播渠道多元化和传播速度的加快，新事物、新知识、新思想开始在各地次第迅速普及，身处其中，耳濡目染，人们的眼界日益开阔，社会观念和行为方式也发生了前所未有的变化，对新事物逐渐由消极被动接受转化为积极主动认识、接受和推崇。过去苏南小城那种目障身塞、孤陋寡闻的狭小空间被一种开放的广阔的精神空间所代替轮船的发展更使得大量普通民众得以进入上海。普通民众关心的并不是新知识新思想，他们被上海吸引是因为那些赴沪同乡们道听途说的信息，到了上海之后，被大都市的各种景观所耳濡目染，自然也会接受那些若似若无，半真半假，纷繁杂乱的各种信息、思想和知识，或主动或被动地将这些信息、思想和知识带回家乡。上海市面的繁华，物品的丰富，名词的新鲜便由此普及到了江南最底层的民众，恰恰是这种潜移默化式的信息传递才从根本上改变了江南社会经济文化各个层面。

此后，随着火车通行，江南赴上海的旅程更加方便。光绪三十三年（1907）的四月初四，沪宁火车正式通车。十二日，金武祥便在常州登上火车到上海参加张园举行的赈灾赛珍会，顺便尝试一下这个新鲜事物。他仍然在日记中仔细的记录了沿途的行程：“午后两点钟时出小北门，过吊桥，下小桥，约二里至车栈，乘宁沪铁路火车赴沪。”“开行经戚墅堰、横林，三点二刻至无锡，又经周泾巷、望亭、浒墅关”，此时“遇沪上来车”，之后“四点三刻抵苏州，过外跨塘、唯亭，抵昆山县，又过罗家浜、安亭、黄渡、南翔、真如，袋角，傍晚抵上海，遂下车”。其间只花了五个小时。他还记录了车价，“二等车房每客洋三元一角，三等车房每客一元四角”。等几天后回常州，细心的他还发现“车价二等二元四角，三等一元五分，较自常至沪为减也”。³⁴⁾ 此后，沪宁线上还开通了特别快车，蒋维乔回常奔母丧，乘特别快车只花了三个小时的时间，这已经和本世纪初高铁开通前沪宁线火车运行时间只有一个小时的差距了。³⁵⁾

交通的方便使得江南人的活动半径大大增加，而火车的开通进一步缩短了空间的距离，很多人开始沿着铁路线出游。中国传统社会的文人或是主动游览山川，或是被动饥驱奔驰，均

32) 蒋维乔：《因是子日记》光绪二十八年岁末条。

33) 蒋维乔：《因是子日记》光绪二十九年岁末条。

34) 金武祥：《金淮生日记》光绪三十三年四月十二日条，十七日条。

35) 蒋维乔：《因是子日记》宣统二年十月初八条。

好出行，清人陆继辂曾称“余以负米出游，每岁暮一归省，发春数日即又治装行”。³⁶⁾但是羁人逆旅中能得山川之助，增进诗艺，但是也耗费了大量的生命在旅程中，更不用说绝大多数文人的活动范围其实仍然有限。光绪十九年（1893），吴稚晖在日记中曾说：“予性好游，年将三十矣，犹不得畅游，除考试外，所到之处，不出五百里。”其实，这“五百里”都是夸张。吴稚晖是位于常州、无锡交界的阳湖县雪堰桥人，他的外家住在无锡城中，除了常州府城、无锡县城和参加院式必须去的江苏学政所在地江阴县城之外，他在二十五岁之前，只去过苏州游玩过五天，而六岁至十五岁这十年间更是终年不出里门。光绪十五年（1889），二十五岁的他第一次乘轮船从无锡到南京参加省试；次年，他第一次来到上海。光绪十八年（1892），他第一次乘海轮赴天津，然后到北京去参加乡试，这一年他已经二十八岁了。³⁷⁾随着时间的推移，他此后的出游生活更是日新月异，从轮船到火车，从火车到飞机，从无锡到上海，从上海到北京，从北京到广州，从广州到日本，从日本到欧洲，终于可以如愿得以畅游了。

余语

金武祥在日记中曾经讲述了这样一个传奇故事，有一群旅居异乡的人客人在岁末夜集会馆，有人突然叹道：“已经岁暮，吾辈远客他乡，不获聚家室团圆之乐，残年旅况，情何以堪？”大家听了之后都歔歔感叹。旁边有个道士回道：“欲归度岁，亦何难哉？”此处离家乡尚有千里之遥，所以众人皆以为妄言。道士便道：“贫道有小术，请尝试之。”遂叠纸作一船，到门外一吹，顷刻长大，与真船无异。道士让客人们登船，告戒他们闭目勿视。随着他一声“起”，船已御风而行，两个时辰之后已经到家门口，尚是除夕的黎明。³⁸⁾传统社会客途艰难，这个故事只是旅人的美好愿望。古代中国幅员辽阔，交通不便，中国人所谓安土重迁，其实在某种程度上也因为环境所迫而已。到了近代，随着交通状况的改善，更多的人开始走出家门，接收新事物和新思想。江南客旅的历史变迁，其实只是一个时代的缩影。今天我们坐高铁，乘飞机，经高速，各地之间的距离已经缩短到无以复加之地步，也由此改变了

36) 陆继辂，《崇百药斋文集》卷一四《五真阁吟馆序》。

37) 吴稚晖：《癸巳日记》四月十四日，《吴稚晖先生全集》卷十一《山川人物》，中国国民党中央委员会党史编纂委员会1969年版，第164-165页。

38) 金武祥：《金武祥日记》光绪元年十月二十日条。

中国人的生活方式、思维方式，这种过程的不断变化也成为推动中国社会变迁的重要动力。

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