

## Infant Protection Societies in the Late Qing

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**Translator's Note:** Fuma Susumu is Professor of History at Kyoto University and the author of many highly regarded works on Ming-Qing history. Several of his publications have focused on the public welfare institutions which cared for orphans and the poor in the cities of Jiangnan. He has written on many other subjects as well. His article, "Minmatsu no toshi kaikaku to Kōshū minpen" 明末の都市改革と杭州民變 [Urban Reforms in the Late Ming and the Hangzhou Uprising], (Tōhō gaku 東方學報, February 1977), is the best detailed study of an urban riot in the late Ming, and he has recently published a pioneering study of lawsuits in the Ming-Qing period: "Min-Shin jidai no shōshi to soshō seido" 明清時代の訟師と訴訟制度 [Lawsuit Specialists and the Litigation System in the Ming-Qing Period], Kyōto daigaku jinbun kagaku kenkyūjo, "Chūgoku kinsei no hōsei to shakai" 京都大學人文 科學研究所中共近世の法制と社會別冊 Kyoto University Institute for Research in the Humanities, Early Modern Chinese Legal Institutions and Society, 1993).

### Introduction

The drowning of infant children, especially girls, used to be widespread in China. Newborn children were drowned for a variety of reasons but especially for the preservation of the family. Yu Zhi (1809-1874) founded the Baoyinghui (Infant Protection Society) in order to save the lives of these children. He describes the following events from the history of his own lineage:

In this family three girl children had already been born. When the fourth birth also turned out to be a girl, the upset mother took

the newborn to the bathhouse and tried to drown it. Knowing her mother's state of mind, the eldest daughter ran to tell her grandfather, who said: "I contribute two coins a day to the Infant Protection Society. How can we help to save other people's children and yet allow this to happen?"

Greatly concerned, he rushed to snatch the child out of the water. But next year another girl baby was born. The wife, even more upset, swore that she would not take care of the baby. Now her husband said, "We contribute to help take care of other people's children; how can we drown our own children?" He persuaded his wife, who had to give in. Two years later, finally the long-awaited male baby was born.<sup>1</sup>

This story vividly describes the typical situation for a family of those times. The greatest thing people feared was the extinction of the family line through failure to have a male heir. Only the male could carry on the family line, and only sons could worship the ancestors. If you did not have a son and could not adopt one, you would have no heirs, and if there were no one to worship the ancestors, after you died no one would worship you; you would become a hungry ghost in the afterworld, and your ancestors would starve eternally. It was the ultimate violation of filiality. Under this concept of filial piety, failure to produce a male heir was the greatest possible crime. That is why the mother in Yu Zhi's lineage, unable to get the male child she hoped for, and facing the expensive prospect of dowries and furnishings for four girls, tried in panic to drown the infants.

Yu Zhi also discusses the mid-nineteenth century peasant family's situation. A poor family with many children would drown babies because of their desperate living standards. In popular parlance this was euphemistically called "marrying off" or "transferring the baby to another person's body" and considered quite natural. They drowned male infants too, even in well-off households. There were families who drowned more than ten girl babies in a row, and there were villages where several tens of girl babies were drowned in one year.<sup>2</sup>

These practices might even make us think that drowning girl infants was considered simply part of the woman's life cycle. At least for poor households, it was a very common phenomenon. In fact, the Jesuit Matteo Ricci gave exactly the same description for late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century China. As he explained it, poor families considered it a good deed to drown infants soon after birth, because they believed that the infant's soul would separate from its body and be reborn in another body, so it would not suffer

the pains of this world but be reborn in a rich family's household.<sup>3</sup> The phrases used by Yu Zhi above ("marrying off," "transferring the baby to another person's body") probably reflect the beliefs described by Ricci.

It is doubtful, however, that drowning girl infants was really considered a good deed as Ricci thought. Even though the deed was done semi-publicly, the use of such euphemisms indicates a certain embarrassment. At least in Ming-Qing China it was considered a great evil to deprive any creature of life, as the popularity of releasing animals demonstrates. The greatest good deeds were to spare lives, even those of fish and animals. It was said: "To save a human life is the highest virtue, greater even than building a seven-story pagoda." Not only Buddhists but Confucianists too proclaimed the doctrine of "the mechanism of the endless production of life" (shengsheng, shengsheng buxi, and shengsheng zhi ji).<sup>4</sup> Even though drowning girl infants was very common, preserving the lives of newborn children aroused great concern. Policies were discussed not only to prevent drowning of babies, but also to rescue children abandoned by the roadside.

In late Ming to early Qing, people who wanted to rescue these abandoned children established foundling societies (yuyingshe, yuyinghui) which contributed money and hired wet nurses for the infants. In addition, they built foundling homes (yuyingtang) based on these societies, which spread all over the country in the early Qing. The Yongzheng emperor (r. 1723-35) ordered foundling homes to be built everywhere. The rich lower Yangzi region built them not only in prefectural cities, but also in county capitals and small towns. Also, towns without yuyingtang built foundling reception halls, or foundling hostels (jieyingtang, liuyingtang) where infants could be held for transfer by boat to yuyingtang.<sup>5</sup>

The protection of foundlings, however, was still inadequate, first because drownings and abandonment were so common, and second because the death rate was very high in the foundling homes. The Infant Protection Societies were founded to overcome the inadequacies of the foundling homes. The creator of these Infant Protection Societies was Yu Zhi whose lineage, including a family with five female children, participated in them.

The activity of the Infant Protection Societies represented one of the final phases of Qing activity in the rescue of children, absorbing a great deal of funds and energy. This activity demonstrates the extent of Qing thought and action about infant care. Baoyinghui were set up all over the country, and the sources on them are quite abundant, but it is not possible to discuss every part of

the country in such great detail as in the most advanced areas. First, we will discuss the origins of the Baoyinghui by indicating the problems generated by the foundling homes. Next, as a concrete example we will introduce the Shanghai Infant Protection Society and discuss to what extent it solved the problems of the foundling homes.

### 1. Problems of Infant Care in the Foundling Homes

The essential care of foundlings involved the arrival of the infant at the home from its natal parents, or from where it was left at the roadside, then handing it over to a stranger for nursing. Although the sources on foundling homes are abundant, none of them discuss the psychological impact of not being brought up by one's own mother. The major concerns of people involved in the foundling enterprise were simply to achieve the greatest possible merit for themselves and to have the largest possible number of infants survive. Let us focus on the survival rates of infants produced by care in the foundling homes. First, what kind of infants were brought into the homes?

The "Report of the Haining Infant Reception Center" offers important clues.<sup>6</sup> Haining zhou capital established a liuyingtang (infant reception center) smaller than the regular yuyingtang in 1891. It took in abandoned children from around Haining, and practiced the same activities as the yuyingtang. It was called a liuyingtang because within twenty-five kilometers was the Xiashi zhen yuyingtang, established earlier with a larger staff. When the number of infants at Haining exceeded a fixed number, they were transferred to Xiashi. The predecessor of this liuyingtang, the Shiyi xiaohui (Small Association for Collecting the Abandoned), collected abandoned children in Haining and transferred them to Xiashi. The Shiyi xiaohui lists 76 children in its records from 1889/4 to 1891/3. For example, here is child number 5:

"A girl baby was born on 6/3/1889 at 4 a.m. at Zhuqiao Fengyan to the Feng family. At noon on the day of her birth she was put on a boat and at 6 p.m. arrived at the Xiashi yuyingtang." Most of the other cases are like this one.

Of the 76 children sent to Xiashi, three were male and 73 or 96% were female. This ratio is common: in the Songjiang yuyingtang, 95% were female in 1869-70, in Nanxun (1890), 92% female, Haining (1891), 89% female. Thus ninety percent or more of the children taken into lower Yangzi yuyingtang from 1860-1890 were female.

The Shiyi xiaohui records also show that nearly all the infants were abandoned within one to three days after they were born. The Feng baby was abandoned eight hours after she was born; the Gu's baby (No. 12) was abandoned two hours after birth. Twenty-two out of seventy-six cases give the time between birth and abandonment, of which seventeen are three days or less. Thus, eighty percent of the children taken in were abandoned within three days of birth. These records show that it is no exaggeration to describe the children as "having just left the womb."<sup>7</sup>

The third point from the Shiyi xiaohui records: many of the children brought up in the home knew when and where they were born and their family names. We must conclude that the parents wrote the surname, date, and time of birth on the child's chest before abandoning it. The eight characters for birth year, month, day, and time were considered an important indication of a person's fate in China. They were an important means of selecting a marriage partner, for example. The surname was also important, because people with the same surname could not marry. What does it mean that the parents abandoned the child so soon after birth but yet left such important indicators of its future with it?

The fourth point from the Shiyi xiaohui records: many of the children suffered a jolting boat ride immediately after birth. For example, it took six hours of traveling for the Feng girl and for others, sometimes during the day, sometimes at night. There are six examples of leaving at six or eight o'clock in the evening. In these cases, they did not arrive until from 6 a.m. to noon the next day.

Many other places in the lower Yangzi took as long as Haining to deliver the children. For example, the Songjiang prefectural yuying-tang received children from about ten places in the seven subordinate counties, the farthest distance being fifty kilometers; sometimes children were sent by relays from one reception center to another. One out of five children had to travel these long distances. Since they were sometimes in the middle of winter lightly wrapped only in rags right after birth, and then had to travel ten or more hours by boat, one can imagine that their chances for survival were precarious.<sup>8</sup>

This was the first major problem of the foundling homes. The homes worried about this. For example, in the Haining home special procedures in severely cold weather were used in which several wet nurses warmed the babies up at their breasts in rotation. The account books show that this rule was actually carried out, as they contain a special entry of 10,300 cash for wages for extra wet nurses in cold weather.<sup>9</sup> In order to cure sick children who arrived at the

home, they categorized the illnesses and gave rewards to the wet nurses who could cure them. The Devilu prescribes giving scallions, dried bean curd, and boiled fresh ginger.<sup>10</sup> The Qingpu hostel in Songjiang prefecture published a simple doctor's manual for infants, entitled "A Simple Manual of Care for Infants."<sup>11</sup> Thus, each yuying-tang had methods to handle the children as soon as they arrived.

Next was the problem of the wet nurses. Once the children had finished the physical examination, they were taken care of by wet nurses hired to provide breast milk for the infants until they were one and one-half to three years old. Some of the wet nurses lived at the yuyingtang to take care of the children; others lived at home and only temporarily took the children for nursing.

Table 1 gives the numbers of children and wet nurses, both resident and home dwelling, at Haining from 1891 to 1893. The resident wet nurses (zhutang rufu) could have up to two infants each; those at home (jiyang rufu), even if they had their own children, had only one infant each. As the number of children grew over time, the number of home dwelling wet nurses grew also. This home presents nearly an ideal picture of a foundling home.

Table One: Numbers of Infants and Wet Nurses  
at the Haining zhou Liuyingtang (1891-1893)

Year	Number of Infants (M,F)	Resident Infants	Home Infants	Number of Wet nurses (resident, home dwelling)
1891	48 (1,47)	3 (1,2)	45 (0,45)	49 (4,45)
1892	65 (3,62)	9 (2,7)	56 (1,55)	61 (5,56)
1893	85 (0,85)	8 (0,8)	77 (0,77)	82 (5,77)

The Haining home assembled the wet nurses on the tenth day of every month to pay their salaries and to check on the condition of the children. After investigation, they received bonuses depending on the children's condition. The accountant's report shows that the bonuses actually were given out with entries such as "Rewarded resident wet nurse 3,240 wen," or "Rewarded out-dwelling wet nurse 28,800 wen." The expenses also included costs of cutting the children's hair, rice powder supplements for the children, inoculations, gifts for doctors, etc. So there was considerable concern for the child-

ren's health. Also according to the regulations, the children, both resident and farmed out, received cloth caps, wadded clothing, swaddling blankets, shirts, and diapers. The accountant recorded 198 items of wadded clothing in 1893. In 1893 192 children entered the home, so quite a lot of clothing was supplied. If the accountant's report is reliable, management of the home accorded with the regulations.

But how many children's lives did this nearly ideal home save? In the beginning of 1893 it held sixty-five children. During the year 192 entered, and 69 died. Thus the death rate for the year was 27 percent. In 1893, however, Haining transferred to Xiashi 34 children, whose death rate is unknown. If we subtract these from the total, the death rate rises to 31 percent. Furthermore, for eight months in 1891, when the large scale transfer of children to Xiashi began, the death rate was as high as 39 percent. In short, roughly one out of three children died in the home.

A death rate of 31 to 39 percent is certainly not high by the standards of the foundling homes of that time. In 1869-70 death rates at the Songjiang home were 48 to 50 percent. From 1888 to 1890 at the northern Shanghai Renji liuyingtang death rates were 41 to 53 percent.

Of course, one of the reasons for the high death rates was that the children were sent to the homes a few days after birth and spent several hours on the road. But an even greater reason was that the babies were taken care of by complete strangers. The new babies could only live if they robbed a wet nurse of a breast she used for nursing her own children.

A report published in Shenbao on 1881/11/8, based on the experience of a member of the Zhenjiang Dongxiang Dagangzhen yuyingtang, provides evidence from personal experience on how a wet nurse could nurse two children at the same time, her own and the yuyingtang's infant.<sup>12</sup> The reporter called it "single-nursing" when a mother nursed one child with her own breasts, and "half-nursing" when she nursed two children at once. He claimed that "infants live under single-nursing, and they die under half-nursing." He also claimed, if you look at the registers of infants who died, very few single nursed infants die, and extremely many half-nursed children die... Heaven provided two breasts for one baby, and you cannot reduce this number. If you give a foundling baby to a woman who already has one child to nurse, each child only gets one breast to nurse from. Even if the wet nurse has a sense of equality, a baby who gets only one breast will only have half the milk he needs. Furthermore, the wet nurse loves only her

own child, so she will give it more milk, and only give a little bit to the foundling.

He writes further, "even if these children seem from the outside to be thriving, internally they are not maturing. Very many of them could die suddenly even from a cold, and even if they survived, they could end up blind from childhood diseases. I write from many years of experience, and I am certainly not exaggerating."

Thus he claims that the death rate is extremely high for wet nurses who nurse both their own children and the foundling home babies. The regulations of the foundling home required that only one infant be given to one wet nurse, and when they hired wet nurses they certainly investigated to be sure that their breasts were engorged. Every foundling home told the wet nurses to treat the foundlings the same as their own children. The Haining home checked the infants' health every month and gave out bonuses based on this. But the conclusion of the Zhenjiang home worker that single-nursed children lived and half-nursed children died is an unmistakable fact.

The greatest problem with the foundling homes was having one wet nurse take care of two infants. As the above report indicates, it was natural for the wet nurse to favor her own child and give it more milk. Certainly the Haining home followed the regulations as far as providing clothing, diapers, and caps for the infants sent out. The wet nurses, however frequently used this clothing not for the foundling, but for their own children. Several yuyingtang tried as much as possible to hire only wet nurses whose own children had just died, but just how easy was it to find enough wet nurses in this situation?

There were many other problems with the foundling homes related to the fixed numbers of children and to expenses as well as after-care, that is, what happened to the infants after they were grown? I, however, will discuss only one question here: the relationship between urban and rural society and the foundling homes.

As indicated above, the yuyingtang were first set up in prefectural capitals, then in county and sub-prefectural capitals, and quite a few in large market towns (zhen). In some places, branch reception centers (liuyingtang, jieyingtang, jieyingju) collected the infants and transferred them to the foundling homes. This network expanded quite greatly in the lower Yangzi region. We should note, however, that the focal point of this operation was only at the level of large market towns and above, like Haining zhou capital or Xiashi zhen. This net could not reach down to the villages. The premodern village society extended its social and market activities only to a radius of five kilometers. The average peasant extremely seldomly

extended his social life to a higher urban center.<sup>13</sup> In short, the foundling homes and reception centers were too far away from the average peasant to be at all useful. Even if they wanted to bring their babies to a home, they had to pay for a boat. Instead, they had to make do with the usual expedients of drowning and abandonment by the roadside. The Infant Protection Society appeared as a response to the above problems of the foundling homes.

## 2. The Origins of the Infant Protection Societies and the Operations of the Shanghai Infant Protection Bureau

As we have seen, parents who abandoned children often wrote on them their birth date and hour, entrusting their future to fate. If they hoped for their own children's survival, it would seem preferable instead to provide funds for the parents who abandoned these children to rear them themselves. Furthermore, even with huge investments of funds the foundling homes had high death rates and the rural areas were completely left out. A new movement began based on this recognition. The man who began it was Yu Zhi, a shengyuan living in Qingcheng district outside the Wuxi county capital. Living in the village of Fuzhou, he knew well the rural practices of infanticide and abandonment. First, he recruited his friends, urging them to contribute 360 cash per person by saving one cash per day for a year. As we saw above, a family with five girl children contributed two cash per day or double the standard contribution. Based on these contributions, Yu Zhi established an office of the Infant Protection Society (baoyinghui) in Fuzhou village. Within a radius of ten li (five kilometers) of the village, he provided mothers with one peck (dou) of rice and 200 cash per month for five months so they could nurse their children themselves. The payments were limited to five months because the society had limited funds, and in the belief that within the five months the mothers would come to cherish their children and not abandon them. Only if after five months they could not support their children could they send them to the foundling homes.

There is another way to look at Yu Zhi's motives in founding the Infant Protection Societies. They were designed to help women who engaged in household spinning and weaving who would lose these occupations when they gave birth. As he wrote,

The very poor households rely on spinning and weaving for an income. They cannot miss even a day's work if they want to survive. When they have children, they cannot work, and they cannot easily cook dinner. They suffer indescribable torment,

holding their weaving work and worrying about what to do. After giving birth their bodies are weak. Knowing they cannot support themselves, they worry constantly. After two or three days, they force themselves to get up and go back to work. Many of them as a result catch colds and find their health dangerously threatened."<sup>14</sup>

Thus, Yu Zhi worried about peasant women who clung to spinning and weaving after giving birth. His relief funds for children also included aid to these mothers. This is why during the month after birth, they received an extra allowance of 200 cash and one peck of white rice.

The Infant Protection Societies, which began in 1843 in the Wuxi countryside, took many forms thereafter but spread widely from their centers in Jiangsu and Zhejiang. In the end they were incorporated into the preexisting foundling homes which were the centers of child welfare activity. By the early Guangxu period they were mentioned alongside the foundling homes, as in the Jiangsu Provincial Regulations of 1876: "The foundling homes have existed for a long time, but their advantages and disadvantages are inextricably mixed together. For a more comprehensive policy, there is nothing better than to establish Infant Protection Societies alongside the foundling homes in every village."<sup>15</sup> "As it is most important to promote infant care in the remote countryside, infant protection and infant care should both be carried out together."<sup>16</sup> Later, the foundling homes began to practice "self-nourishment" (ziyang, ziru): instead of hiring wet nurses, they paid the mothers to nurse their own children. The Zhenjiang Dagangzhen foundling home planned to cease "half-nursing" and practice only full nursing, by making great efforts to find the mothers of foundlings in order to give these women support allowances. The children would be sent to the foundling homes after they had been weaned.

Were the Infant Protection Societies really able to resolve the problems of the foundling homes? There are many sources on the Infant Protection Societies, but we will use the easiest one for obtaining statistics, the report of the central bureau for Infant Protection Affairs in Shanghai of 1874-1875. (Shanghai Baoyinghui Zongju Zhengxinlu).

Infant protection activities had begun in Shanghai several years before the founding of the central bureau in 1874. According to Shenbao of 1872, Shen Songling and others had set up the Tongrenju (Common Humanity Bureau) in the seventh and eighth wards of bao #18 exclusively for the protection of infants.<sup>17</sup> The seventh and eighth wards were close to Ruiqiao zhen, a rural neighborhood. (See Map

One) Also, according to documents presented to local officials in May 1874, infant protection bureaus were set up in three places within Shanghai county, and in each zhen they collected funds and drew up the jurisdictions for their activities.<sup>18</sup> According to these two sources, the infant protection activities begun in Shanghai were of the same form as Yu Zhi's activities in Wuxi: that is, people in a central market town of a rural community each collected local funds.

In fact, Yu Zhi participated actively in the infant welfare activities of Shanghai. His biography records that in 1873 he was asked by the Susong daotai Shen Bingcheng to help promote the saving of lives and the protection of infants by discussing it with people in various areas.<sup>19</sup> Further, in 1874/6 on the orders of Shen Bingcheng he was encouraged to go to different towns and rural areas to carry out infant protection activities. He reported "some success."<sup>20</sup> Of course, "some success" really means that "hardly any success" is closer to the truth. Reports to local officials from 1874/5 describe the establishment of infant protection bureaus in Minhang zhen, Ruiqiao zhen, and Longhua zhen, but soon we find reports from each bureau that "girls are still drowned as before, and even baby boys are being killed." They also say, "local officials and gentry both live in the towns and frequently have very little knowledge of the petty affairs of the countryside." Rural infant protection failed because Minhang and the other two zhen could not rely on the urban officials and gentry of Shanghai to support their operations.

Full-scale infant protection activities in Shanghai county only began when local notables like Jiang Chenggui promoted them. Jiang, a ju ren, held the rank of Wupin Xianji Secretary of the Grand Secretariat. From 1851 to 1875 he was manager of the Tongren puyuantang (Benevolence Hall) and the Qingjietang (Chastity Hall), a veteran of charitable works management. The others who with him urged the opening of the Shanghai Infant Protection Bureau all held such titles as jiansheng, gongsheng, sixth class brevet rank, etc. Qu Shiren, who signed the appeal letter, was a veteran philanthropist who had built and managed such halls as the Guoyutang, Renjintang, Jishantang, and Puyutang.<sup>21</sup>

This was the organizational network of the first infant protection bureau in Shanghai. They put the central bureau in the City God Temple of Shanghai county. The staff included a Director (sidong), General Manager (sizong), Development Officer (siguanjuan), Registrar (siji), Inspector (sichaying), Treasurer (sishoujuan), Secretary (sishuqi), and Rural Inspectors (sixiangju fengqi chaying bianqong). Under the central bureau were the branch bureaus and rural bureaus,

located in Minhang, Maqiao, Gaohang, Luhang, Yangjing, and Yinxiang-gang zhen (see Map One). Various rural bureau managers and staff were designated. The rural bureau managers were to cooperate with the ward directors and dibao, the lowest level of rural administration, in order to reach every pregnant woman in the villages.

Let us look at how the bureaus provided support for women giving birth, whether near Shanghai or in the farthest rural village. The report of the Shanghai bureau lists the women given aid from 1874 to 1875. Looking first at those directly supported by the central bureau, under the entry "households where women come to full term (2000 cash at birth, 400 cash per month)," is listed: "Mrs. Chen née Gu, 26 years old, bore a male child 9/14, husband Afu, local, living at Xinxue." If Ms. Gu intended to rely on relief from the bureau, according to the regulations, she had to report to the central bureau before the birth, or within half a month after birth. After half a month, she was not under the jurisdiction of the infant protection bureau, but was transferred to the Puyutang or Jishantang for relief.

To notify the bureau of a birth, it was necessary to have a guarantor and a dibao or dijia living nearby. When the dibao or dijia notified the central bureau, it sent out an inspector to Chen Afu's house. He checked on the birth of the child. Once this was verified, he gave Chen Afu or his wife a receipt card and the first installment of their relief money. The receipt stated that they had received 2000 cash, cotton wadded clothes, swaddling clothes, shirts, pants, and afterward would receive 400 cash per month for eleven months. The card contained stubs printed for each month's installment up to eleven months. Thus they received a total of 6400 cash over twelve months.

"Full term households" (manqi yinghu) designated those households who had successfully reared a child for a full year and received their 6400 cash. In contrast, other entries designated households whose children died, were adopted out, or for other reasons failed to complete their full term. For example, "Mrs. Chen, née Wang, not waiting to complete her twelve-month term, returned to her husband Chen Yuanlong's home in Suzhou after eleven months." She only received payments for eleven months. "Mrs. Hua, née Qian, bore a baby girl who died after eight days." She only received 2000 cash as the first installment.

At the Shanghai bureau, extra relief funds were given to women whose husbands died after they had conceived a child. In this case, they received 2000 cash on the day of notification as above, but thereafter they received 500 cash instead of 400, and this stipend lasted for four years. This relief was not only for the support of

the child, but also for the maintenance of the widow. In other cases, such as when the mother remarried after her husband's death and wanted to get rid of the child, or when the mother died after the birth of the child, or due to illness the mother did not produce breast milk, so that the child had to be sent away to a wet nurse, who received 800 cash per month for four years. The widow Chen, née Zhang, bore a male child in 1875/1/23, but her husband had died in October the year before, so she received first 2000 cash, and each month thereafter 500 cash for eleven months, for a total of 7500 cash. Mrs. Peng, née Shen, is an example of a woman who died after giving birth. Her daughter was sent to the wet nurse Peng Qian to be reared.

The above are examples of people who lived near the Shanghai central bureau and received support directly from it. Next we look at the branch bureaus, which resembled the center, with slight differences. We will look at several examples from Gaoxing zhen, 15 kilometers northeast of the county capital. Mrs. Xue née Sun lived in the 23rd ward, three to four kilometers northwest of Gaoxing zhen. She gave birth at the end of January. In early February the Xue family received 1000 cash as a first installment, and 200 cash were paid to the dibao who reported the birth. After this, they received 500 cash per month for ten months for a total of 6200 cash. The report stops at the end of 1875 but notes that the Xues would receive 400 cash in the final month. Another example is Mrs. Sun née Yang. She also lived three to four kilometers northeast of Gaoxing zhen in the 29th ward. In 1875/5 she gave birth to a daughter and received 1000 cash. The next month she received 500 cash, but after that she did not wish to receive relief. The Suns received a total of 1500 cash and the dibao received 200 cash.

From these two examples, we can see slight differences from the central bureau. First, the branch bureau, unlike the central bureau, paid the dibao 200 cash. This practice accorded with the regulations on rural branch bureau activities. Secondly, both in the center and in the branches, the families received a total of 6400 cash, but in the center they first received 2000 cash, and 400 cash monthly thereafter, while in the branches they received first 1000 cash, and monthly 500 cash thereafter for ten months, and 400 cash in the eleventh month.

The branch bureaus had difficulties not found in the central bureau. Unlike the urban central bureau, the families in the rural branches were scattered over a wide area, so that it was not so easy to reach the families and investigate them. As the example from Gaoxing zhen demonstrates, this bureau had to cover a radius of

three-four kilometers, and its staff could not go around to all the families. To tie them together they had to rely on the intervention of the local dibao. The proclamation ordering the establishment of branch bureaus stated, "If the families reporting children to the infant protection societies live far away from the branch bureaus, they may report through the ward heads" (tudong). If they cannot rear the children themselves, they may notify the branch bureau only by the agency of the dibao." Thus, the dibao played the role of middleman between the branch bureau in the zhen and the families scattered in the countryside. The dibao seem to have used their middleman role to extort money out of the supplements given to rural families. This is why the dibao received 200 cash from the branch bureau for each infant and was not allowed to take even one coin from the infant's family according to the regulations. Here too the method of payment differed between the center and the branches, because the branches could not supervise the countryside closely.<sup>22</sup>

Above we have described the administrative procedures and financial support offered by the central and branch bureaus, and the difficulties faced by the branches. Next we look at what kind of women and children the infant protection societies supported. The Shanghai baoying zongju zhengxinlu lists the ages of the women getting support at the time they gave birth. The central bureau gave direct support to 263 families within and outside the county capital, of which ages were given for 238 women. These are tabulated in five year intervals in Table Two.

Table Two. Age Structure of Women Receiving Support from the Shanghai Central Bureau (1874-1875)

Age	Number	Percent
15-19	0	0
20-24	24	10
25-29	43	18
30-34	85	36
35-39	60	25
40-44	24	10
45-49	2	1
50-54	0	0

Source: Shanghai baoying zongju zhengxinlu

The youngest age was twenty years, and the oldest was 47. The most common age was from 30 to 34. Women in their early thirties constituted 36 percent of the total number of women receiving support. The average age of all the women was 32.4. What did it mean in the life cycle of these women for them to receive support? We lack sufficient sources to be certain at what age Jiangsu women gave birth to their first child, but according to Eberhard's data from Guangdong, from 1850 to 1899, of women giving birth to their first male child, 43.8%, the largest number, were aged 20 to 24, the average age being 24.1. The average age at the birth of the second male child was 28.2.<sup>23</sup>

These figures do not include girl children or children who died shortly after birth. If the same figures apply to Jiangsu, it means that the average age of women in the Shanghai bureaus of 32.4 is extremely high: eight years after their first birth.

Next, looking at the sex ratio of children, there were 148 girls and 90 boys (twins are counted as single births), or 62% female. This is certainly a high figure, but it is clearly much lower than the Haining zhou Shiyi xiaohui figure of 96%, or Songjiang yuyingtang of 95%. What does this difference mean? First, these women had been pregnant or given birth two or three times before, since it was an average of eight years after their first birth. We do not know if these early children had been reared, or killed, or abandoned. That the percentage of male children was much higher in the Infant Protection Society than in the case of abandoned children brought to the yuyingtang indicates that the parents were much more interested in bringing up male than female children. Putting these two factors together, older women who had been pregnant two or three times before would naturally be extremely interested in rearing a male child.

What were the death rates? Unfortunately we cannot give any exact figures. The Zhengxinlu only covers one year and four months, and there are not enough newly entered children dying within a year to make estimates. If a male child was born on 10/21, we do not know if it was 1874 or 1875, but there is enough data to allow us to derive some results from these inadequate figures. Of the 238 children born, fourteen, or six percent, died before the time for receipt of the second month's stipend. Four more died before the third month, for a total of eighteen, or eight percent. A total of 34, or fourteen percent, died before the full term of one year and two months was up. The true death rate (within the first year) is higher than this, because these figures do not include, for example, children born in 1875/11 who died by 1876/1. Fourteen percent is a lower boundary, but we cannot imagine that the true figure could be as much

as twenty percent. Since the greatest number of deaths occurred within two months of birth, a death rate of 20%, or 48 people, leaves a gap of fourteen. So less than 20% is an approximate standard for the death rates at the Infant Protection Bureau. It was clearly much lower than those of the Songjiang yuyingtang (48-50%), Hubei renjintang (41-53%), or Haining zhou liuyingtang (31-39%).

In the branch bureaus, the woman's age is not recorded, so we can only calculate the sex ratio. In the branches there were 66% female children, almost the same as in the central bureau. The death rates are even less precise than for the central bureau, because each branch was founded at a different time. Calculating the same way as for the center, of the total 102 infants born, eighteen, or eighteen percent, died before receiving any stipend after the first one. This is slightly higher than in the central bureau; the yearly death rate may have exceeded 20%. But compared to the yuyingtang the branch bureaus too were a great improvement.

In sum, judging from the actual operations of the baoyinghui, they successfully overcame the defects of the high death rates characterizing the yuyingtang. How well did they do on the other scale related to the welfare of rural women and children?

The Shanghai central bureau relieved 263 households, or 71%, and the branch bureaus relieved 108, or 29% of the total. That is, the urban households directly relieved by the central bureau were much greater in number than the rural ones. The total expenses of the entire infant protection operation for one year and four months were 4,356,103 wen, of which 494,517, or only 11.4%, was given to the six branch bureaus. According to the expense accounts submitted by the branches, the necessary expenses were not much more than the amount allotted by the center. In other words, the branch bureaus depended entirely on the center for funds and did not actively raise their own money.

The central bureau recognized that the branches could not easily collect their own funds. The first of the regulations for the branches states that the branches should carry out infant protection work, but since they cannot immediately raise their own funds, they should for a while experiment with receiving funds from the center. The six branches, on their part, began their activities in anticipation of receiving funds allotted from the central bureau. The documents of 1875/4 state, "Since collecting funds in rural areas is rather difficult, we rely entirely on the central bureau for support."<sup>24</sup> Likewise, in 1875, the managers of the central bureau went around to inspect and promote the activities of the rural bureaus. According to their reports, when they went to the countryside, ex-

tremely poor children gathered in huge crowds and "cried out in misery from starvation and cold." Moreover, "the merchants gather [only] in Shanghai. Because there are no large shops in the villages, the branch bureaus must depend on the city bureau for supplies."<sup>25</sup> The founding of each branch was a result of direction from the center; the selection of managers of the rural bureaus was by designation by the central managers.

As we noted above, in Shanghai county beginning in 1872 each zhen collected funds to start infant protection societies, but very little was achieved. Real activity only began in 1874 with leadership and funds provided by the city bureau. The changes in the institution in these two years show how difficult it was to protect infants in the countryside. Certainly Yu Zhi's biography states that "he went to each area, conducting exhaustive discussions, fearing only that he would leave something out." So he certainly discussed the project in the rural areas, but it was no use. Although he certainly exerted himself to the utmost, as the biography notes, it used up his energies and hastened his death. In fact, he died the next year. As far as extending infant protection to the countryside is concerned, we must conclude that his efforts ended in failure.

From late Qing Shanghai, we see that the infant protection societies certainly remedied the defects of the yuyingtang as regards the high death rates, and the prevention of abandonment and infanticide. There was, however, too big a gap to allow them to advance their activities from the city to the countryside.

### Conclusion

Above we described the intentions and accomplishments of infant welfare activities in the Qing. Feeling that the yuyingtang format was unsuitable, they created the new form of baoyinghui. Paying the mother to take care of her own child in this way succeeded in greatly lowering the death rate of children. Most of the women it relieved were in their thirties and had already been pregnant several times. Forty percent of the babies saved were male, which is extremely high compared to the five percent male in the yuyingtang. Here we can glimpse the motivations of the women and families who depended on this relief. But we should not forget that female babies were still the majority. Thus, no matter how much female infanticide was publicly known, those who were not ashamed to receive relief from the infant protection bureau frequently did not drown their girl children.

Within these limits the Baoyinghui did reach their goals, even if they only reached some 300 children in a county. We can certainly say that they overcame the defects of the yuyingtang. But as for the other goal, the penetration of infant welfare work into the countryside, its success was very doubtful. In the Shanghai example, the overwhelming majority of the families who received relief were urban dwellers, and even though relief was carried out in the villages, the funds depended on the city. At that time wealth was sucked into the city from the villages, so the operation of relief activities in the countryside was precarious, and had no autonomy. Yu Zhi's format, to have the rural bureaus raise their own funds, not only in Shanghai but elsewhere too, was impossible. For example, in 1870 Tongxiang county of Zhejiang province received an order from the governor to conduct infant protection work in the countryside, but during a year and one-half only thirty infants were saved in the whole county. The reason the results were so poor was that they tried to raise funds from the countryside itself, going around to get contributions from rural households. Since nearly all the rural households were poor, relief for one household required other households to cut into their expenses for its benefit. When compulsory contributions were enacted, this only caused resentment. Poor rural households had no interest in putting out money for the sake of other people's children.<sup>26</sup> Shanghai was able to support six branch rural bureaus and run them because they had the backing of a large city. We can easily see that the support for the Shanghai bureaus, as seen in the reports, came from the silk trade, money changing, boat traffic, and other urban commercial activities.

The Qing efforts to advance infant protection activities were like advancing into a bog. The rural population was huge, but its funds were scanty. No matter how concerned they were about human life or how much they could not bear the abandonment of children, or how much they hoped to gain merit from benevolent activities, they were limited by their low productive capacity and by the lack of contraceptive techniques. Still, their religious beliefs and the belief in filial piety persisted, and in many cases they joined infant welfare activities as an effort to obtain their own male children.

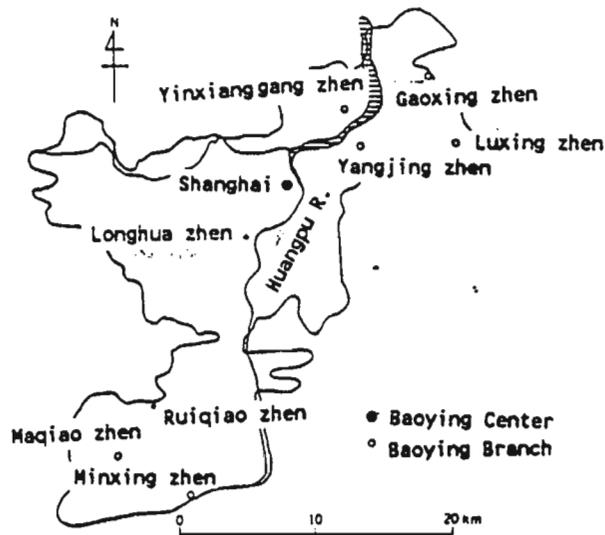
The popularity of practices of sparing life, releasing animals, protecting infants in late Ming and early Qing also spread to Tokugawa Japan, influencing the fifth shogun Tsunayoshi's orders on having pity for living creatures.<sup>27</sup> In Tokugawa Japan, where abortion and infanticide were common, policies were enacted to promote saving and rearing of children, too.<sup>28</sup> But in pre-Meiji Japan, were yuyingtang

or baoyingtang widespread? I am only acquainted with the studies of Takahashi Bonsen and Tsukamoto Manabu, so I have not been able to answer this question. These questions concern not only people's attitudes toward life and human relations, but also significant influences on the formation of modernity, and still await study.

### Glossary

<u>baoyinghui</u>	保嬰會	Infant Protection Society
<u>daotai</u>	道台	circuit intendant
<u>dibao, dijia</u>	地保, 地甲	
Fuma Susumu	夫馬進	
Jiang Chenggui	江承桂	
<u>jieyingtang</u>	接嬰堂	foundling hostels
<u>jiyang rufu</u>	寄養乳婦	home dwelling
<u>liuyingtang</u>	留嬰堂	foundling hostels
<u>manqi yinghu</u>	滿期嬰戶	full term households
Qu Shiren	瞿世仁	
Shen Bingcheng	沈秉成	
<u>shengsheng, shengsheng buxi, shengsheng zhi ji</u>		
	生生, 生生不息, 生生之機	
		the mechanism of the endless production of life
<u>sichaying</u>	司察嬰	Inspector
<u>sidong</u>	司董	Director
<u>siji</u>	司籍	Registrar
<u>siguanjuan</u>	司勸捐	Development Officer

<u>sishoujuan</u>	司收捐	Treasurer
<u>sishuqi</u>	司書啓	Secretary
<u>sixiangju fengqi chaying bianqong</u>	司鄉局份期察嬰弁公	Rural Inspectors
<u>sizong</u>	司總	General Manager
Yu Zhi	余治	
<u>yuyinghui</u>	育嬰會	foundling homes
<u>yuyingshe</u>	育嬰社	foundling societies
<u>yuyingtang</u>	育嬰堂	foundling reception halls
<u>zhen</u>	鎮	market town
<u>zhutang rufu</u>	住堂乳婦	resident wetnurses
<u>ziru, ziyang</u>	自乳，自養	self-nourishment



MAP ONE

## Notes

1. Yu Zhi, Deyilu 得一錄, juan 2, "Baoyinghui jishi" 保嬰會記事 [Account of the Baoyinghui].
2. Deyilu, juan 2, "Baoyinghui yuanqi" 保嬰會緣起 [History of the Baoyinghui].
3. Matteo Ricci, Chūgoku Kirisutokyō fukyōshi 中國キリスト教布教史 [History of the Propagation of the Christian Faith in China], trans. Kawana Kōhei 川名公平, Yazawa Toshihiko 矢澤利彦, and Hirakawa Suehiro 平川裕弘 (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1982), vol. 1, p. 111.
4. Fuma Susumu, "Dōzenkai shōshi" 同善會小史 [A Short History of the Tongshanhui], Shirin 史林 65.4 (1982), pp. 66-69; Fuma Susuma, "Zenkai, zendō no shuppatsu" 善會、善堂の出發 [The Appearance of Benevolent Societies and Benevolence Halls], in Ono Kazuko 小野和子, ed., Min-Shin jidai no seiiji to shakai 明清時代の政治と社會 [Politics and Society in the Ming-Qing Period] (Kyoto: Kyōto daigaku jinbun kagaku kenkyūjo, 1983), p. 218.
5. Fuma Susuma, "Shindai zenki no ikuei jigyo" 清代前期の育嬰事業 [Infant Protection in the Early Qing], Toyama daigaku jinbun gakubu kiyō 富山大學人文學部記要 11 (1986); Fuma Susumu, "Shindai Shōkō Ikueidō no keiei jittai to chihō shakai" 清代松江育嬰堂の經營實態と地方社會 [The Management of the Songjiang Yuyingtang and Local Society], Tōyōshi kenkyū 東洋史研究 45.3 (1986).
6. Hainingzhoucheng chongshe liuyingtang zhengxinlu 海寧州城重設留嬰堂徵信錄 (1891-1893), "Shiyi xiaohui qingce" 拾遺小會清冊 .
7. Ibid., "yuanqi" 緣起 .
8. Fuma Susumu, "Shindai Shōkō Ikueidō," p. 79.
9. Hainingzhoucheng zhengxinlu, "zhengchengbu" 章程補 .
10. Deyilu, "yuying liangfa" 育嬰良法 .
11. Baoying yizhilu 保嬰易知錄, publ. by Qingxi Jieyingtang 青溪接嬰堂 (second edition, 1875).

12. Shenbao 申報 , "Yuying jingyan qiu shifa" 育嬰經驗求是法 , Guangxu 7/9/17 (August 11, 1881).
13. G. William Skinner, "Marketing and Social Structure in Rural China," part 1, Journal of Asian Studies 24.1 (1964), p. 33; Hayashi Kazuo 林和生 , "Min-Shin jidai, Kanton no kyo to shi--dentōteki shijō no keitai to kinō ni kansuru ichi kōsatsu" 明清時代廣東の墟と市—傳統的市場的形態と機能に関する一考察 [Xu and Shi in Guangdong in the Ming-Qing Period: A Study of the Form and Function of Traditional Markets], Shirin 63.1 (1980), p. 99.
14. Devilu, juan 2, "Baoyinghui guitiao" 保嬰會規條 [Regulations of the Baoyinghui].
15. Jiangsu shengli 江蘇省例 (1876), "Shijin ninü bing quan she baoyinghui" 示禁溺女並勸設保嬰會 .
16. Shenbao, Guangxu 7/7/20 (August 14, 1881), "Baoying yide lun" 保嬰一得論 .
17. Shenbao, Tongzhi 11/11/5 (May 12, 1872), "Yizun yanjin ninü gaoshi" 邑尊嚴禁溺女告示 .
18. Shanghai baoying zongju zhengxinlu 上海保嬰總局徵信錄 , p. 1.
19. Yu Xiaohui [Yu Zhi] xiansheng nianpu 余孝惠(余治)先生年譜 .
20. Shanghai baoying zongju zhengxinlu, p. 3.
21. Shanghai Tongren Fuyuantang zhengxinlu 上海同仁輔元堂徵信錄 (1877); Minguo Shanghai xian tongzhi 民國上海縣統志 , juan 18, p. 16.
22. Shanghai baoying zongju zhengxinlu, p. 84.
23. Wolfram Eberhard, Social Mobility in Traditional China (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1962), pp. 143-44.
24. Shanghai baoying zongju zhengxinlu, p. 29.
25. Shengbao, Guangxu 1/8/7 (June 9, 1875).
26. Yan Chen 嚴辰 , Tongxi dasou zibian nianpu 桐溪達叟自編年譜 (1872), "fulu" 附錄 .

27. Fuma Susumu, "Shindai zenki no ikuei jigyo," pp. 33-34.

28. Takahashi Bonsen 高橋梵仙, Datai mabiki no kenkyū 墮胎間引の研究 [Studies on Abortion and Infanticide] (Tokyo: Chūō shakai jigyo kyōkai shakai jigyo kenkyūjo, 1936); and Tsukamoto Manabu 冢本學, Seirui o meguru seiji 生類をめぐる政治 [The Politics of Life] (Tokyo: Heilonsha, 1983).