

# ■ The Cultivation of Citizens: Degeneration, Sexuality, and Nationalist Biopolitics in Zhu Guangqian's *on Cultivation*

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## Abstract

This paper looks at Zhu Guangqian (朱光潛) and the discourse of collective “Life” in the Republican Era (1912-49), focusing specifically on the biopolitical dimensions of the liberal “aesthetic state” (Lee 2006) imagined in Zhu’s *On Cultivation* 《談修養》. In this work Zhu adopts Arthur Schopenhauer’s ideas about the racial “will to life” (“species will”) and degeneration and combines them with an indigenous emphasis on Confucian ideas of self-cultivation (*xiuyang* 修養). Zhu, also a follower of the Italian liberal Benedetto Croce, argues that the success of liberal democracy in China depends largely on self-control and studious attention to individual ethical behavior, particularly as regards sexuality. Zhu thus blends early-20<sup>th</sup> century proto-eugenicist discourse with a liberal emphasis on personal choice and responsibility, softening the Chinese nationalist discourse of the “New Life Movement” (*xinsheng yundong* 新生活運動, 1934) and formulating a theory of responsible popular citizenship which is more in line with Sun Yat-sen’s Three Principles of the People, particularly “Popular Life” (*Minsheng* 民生). This paper tries to situate *On Cultivation* within the larger context of changes taking place both without and within the late Republic—i.e., the rise of Kuomintang biopolitics, by focusing mainly on Zhu’s Schopenhauerian

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understanding of sexuality and “racial life.” From a Foucauldian standpoint we conclude that Zhu’s discourse of “cultivation” is an amalgam of ethical attitudes and mores for citizens that acts partly as a counter-discourse which runs against and parallel to the Kuomintang state’s biopolitical ambition of creating disciplined, “docile bodies.” That is, although it is possible to see governmentality as a macro-management or “government of souls,” it is also possible to understand it as something similar to Zhu’s principles of self-care in *On Cultivation*—that is, as a matter of concerned personal aesthetics. Finally, although I partly draw on Foucault’s late lectures on the hermeneutics of the Western subject and the care of the self (*epimeleia*, or “self-care”), my goal is to understand how Zhu’s emphasis on “species will” (sexual conduct) as a means of race regeneration can be considered in the context of individual, socialized cultivation (*xiuyang* 修養).

**Keywords:** Zhu Guangqian, nationalism, cultivation, Michel Foucault, biopolitics, governmentality

## I. From *Minsheng* 民生 to Biopolitics

Dr. Sun Yat-sen, the “National Father” (*guofu* 國父) of the Republic of China and chief architect of the Chinese constitution, was a physician whose conception of the modern nation state was deeply influenced by his own, first-hand experience dealing with the poor health conditions of the Chinese people. Keenly aware of the humiliations inflicted on China by the Opium Wars and China’s backward medical institutions, Sun, along with other intellectuals and framers of the Chinese constitution, formulated a liberal-socialist model of the nation that sought to directly improve the health of the overall population. Thus Sun’s famed “Three Principles of the People” (*Sanmin zhuyi* 三民主義), which laid the foundation for the values and aims of the Chinese nation state, includes the principle of the “People’s Life” (*Minsheng* 民生).<sup>1</sup> This principle, although Sun never fully articulated its meaning, was described as “the everyday life of the people, the survival of society, the national livelihood, and the fate of the masses.”<sup>2</sup> In theory, *Minsheng* was understood as an alternative form of socialism and was associated with four basic necessities: the right to food, clothing, shelter, and transportation--i.e., the material benefits of citizenship which are provided by the state, including health care, public housing and education. During the Republican Era (1911-1949), however, nationalists, socialists, anarchists, and liberals debated and developed a discourse of *Minsheng* which, precisely due to its ambiguity, could be articulated in many forms as the biopolitics of everyday, “popular life” in China.

Early progressive reformers took the ideology of People’s Life seriously, using it chiefly as a means of explaining how a strong social welfare state was central to the maintenance of the new Kuomintang government. Trained in medicine, Dr. Sun admired the reforms carried out by Western socialist countries (especially the Soviet Union) and stressed the need for adequate healthcare, housing, and

<sup>1</sup> The Three People’s Principles are: ‘Nationalism’ (*Minzu*, 民族), ‘People’s Rights’ (*Minquan*, 民權), and ‘People’s Life’ (*Minsheng*, 民生). The last of these was the least articulated and most ambiguous at the time of Sun Yat-sen’s death in 1925, but it was believed to amount to providing food, clothing, shelter, and transportation (*shi, yi, zhu, xing*, 食衣住行) for the people. I translate *minsheng* literally as “People’s Life” to avoid the more awkward “People’s Livelihood,” though that translation captures the sense of the Principle.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in Jiang Yanshi’s “Livelihoodism’s Establishment of the Socialist Economy,” in *Studies in the Pedagogy of Three Principles Ideology* (Vol. 4, Dec. 1980), p. 42. See also Audrey Wells’ *The Political Thought of Sun Yat-sen* (New York: Palgrave, 2001): 91-101. She agrees with scholars who believe Sun borrowed a great deal from Maurice William’s non-Marxist, British Fabian conception of socialism in composing his lectures on *Minsheng zhuyi*. Sun’s theory of *Sanmin zhuyi* eventually grew into a distinct “discipline” (Three Principles-ism) of its own; one that was taught in most schools and included as a major subject on all official state examinations in the Republic of China up until the late-1990s.

social policies that would strengthen the nation. Sun, however, was partly just following through with late 19<sup>th</sup>-century liberal reforms proposed by intellectuals like Liang Qi-qiao (梁啟超), who “regarded government support for medical sciences and the establishment of public health programs as a basic prerequisite for the strength of Western nations” (Unschuld 246). Liang, as one of the key advocates of Western science and medicine, had described the “New Citizen” (*Xinmin* 新民) as an individual who would exercise self-control and aid the creation of China as a modern nation.<sup>3</sup> In the early days of the Republic one prominent Kuomintang Nationalist statesman, Dai Jitao (戴季陶), would echo this when he proclaimed: “Only after ‘self-control’ can there be freedom within the national law,” so “Our aim is to extend the people’s rights and strengthen the *Kuo-t’i* (國體) (polity) with the fundamental (principle) of individual self-control” (Qtd. in Bernal 142). Here the body politic, or “Kuo-t’i,” is literally the “body of the nation” in Chinese (*guoti* 國體), so Dai naturally wants to describe it as a collection of self-controlled individuals or “bodies.”

The Republican rhetoric of self-control (*zizhi* 自治) has roots in the Confucian discourse of cultivation (*xiushen* 修身/修養) which emphasizes self-mastery and is supposed to produce scholar-official Gentlemen (*junzi* 君子) to rule the realm. In a famous passage from the *Analects* “Zi Lu asked what constituted the superior man. The Master said ‘The cultivation of himself in reverential carefulness.’”<sup>4</sup> Although it focuses on civic engagement as well, the discourse of the Confucian Gentleman continues to exert enormous influence on modern political discourse because cultivation and self-control are still critical markers for nationalist and communist regimes which want their cadres to be perceived as leaders of a healthy, vigorous vanguard. Moreover, self-cultivation is a means of confronting and overcoming what the historian Frank Dikötter, in his seminal research into the modern discourse of race in China, has called the “theme of national humiliation.” According to Dikötter, humiliation “emerged as a consciously constructed emotion during the second half of the nineteenth century [. . .] and implied as sense of collective responsibility. The causes of failure could be attributed to the nation’s lack of effort or ability, not to external factors independent of human will” (Dikötter 602). The antidotes or counter-narratives of national humiliation were national self-discipline and cultivation with the clearly defined aim of strengthening the national will and overcoming the hu-

<sup>3</sup> See esp. Liang’s chapters “On Public Virtue” (*lun gongde* 論公德) and “On Private Virtue” (*lun side* 論私德).

<sup>4</sup> The original dialogue is from the Xian Wen (憲問) section and Confucius’ “the cultivation of himself in reverential carefulness” can also be rendered to “cultivate the self as a peaceful person” (*xiuzi yi anren* 修己以度人). See The Chinese Text Project, *The Analects*. 16 Aug 2015. Web.

miliations of the past.<sup>5</sup> A key difference between the older Confucian self-cultivation and its modern variants was that Republican self-cultivation was organized as a “popular,” conscious effort in the famous “self-reform societies” and civic reformation clubs of the early 20<sup>th</sup>-Century. These groups, which scholars believe were crucial incubators, labor for the birth of modern China as a national polity by promoting charitable activities from volunteer health and sanitation groups to organizations aimed at developing civic discipline. In the proto-anarchist Society for the Advancement of Virtue (進德會), for example, members signed an oath that forbade them from engaging in things like smoking, drinking, visiting prostitutes, and serving in political office.<sup>6</sup> The power and vigor of the nation was thought to reside in the bodies and loins of its youth, and nationalists like Dai, Zhu Guangqian, and others argued that only by harnessing that energy could society advance both in terms of national consciousness and overall physical health.

By the 1930s, during the escalation in fighting with Japan, the biopolitical dimensions of national self-strengthening movements (*zhiqiang yundong* 自強運動) became decidedly more authoritarian. In 1934, after defeating the communists’ Jiangxi Soviet Republic (1931-1934), President Chiang began to call for a new, more resilient citizenry that would put an end to the “bad customs” of the Chinese people. The program of national self-strengthening he envisioned was called the “New Life Movement” (*xinshenghuo yundong* 新生活運動) and would be implemented as a policy aimed at reorganizing public life and putting it on a martial, wartime footing. Citing Sun’s theory of “People’s Life” as inspiration and calling on the nation’s youth for support, the Generalissimo urged a new lifestyle based on “propriety, righteousness, humility, and shame” (*li, yi, lian, chi* 禮義廉恥). The “New Life Movement” (*xinsheng* 新生) would thus use the simplest and most urgent methods to eliminate the habits [習性] of the Chinese people which are inappropriate for the current age and environment, supplanting them with tendencies appropriate to life in this period and under such conditions. “In essence, [New Life] attempts to rationalize [合理化] citizens’ lives but is based on the definite virtues of the Chinese people--propriety, righteousness, modesty, and humility.” (Quoted in Deng 314)

This movement towards greater discipline was long in the making. The inappropriate “habits” (*xixing* 習性) would be eradicated by the “Three Trans-

<sup>5</sup> See also William A. Callahan’s “The Cartography of National Humiliation and the Emergence of China’s Geobody” (*Public Culture*, 21:1, 2009). Callahan argues that the fear of degeneration motivated Chinese thinkers to represent the “Chinese body” as a thing of weakness in order to compel young men to practice better hygiene and fitness.

<sup>6</sup> See Bernal, p. 139.

formations of Daily Life” (*shenghuo sanhua* 生活三化)—the “aestheticization of life,” the “productivization of life,” and the “militarization of life.”<sup>7</sup> These “transformations of life” represent a definite shift toward what Michel Foucault calls a disciplinary society and, moreover, were disciplines which “made possible the meticulous control of the operations of the body, which assured the constant subjection of its forces and imposed upon them a relation of docility-utility” (*Discipline* 137). The Nationalists’ docility-utility calls for a Republic organized around an aestheticized military regime which is very much in keeping with both late-19<sup>th</sup> century Social Darwinist ideas but also imitates the fascist states of Hitler and Mussolini.

The rationalization of the “life” of the multitude becomes the demesne of the state, or more specifically the Generalissimo, Chiang Kai-shek, a strong leader who is needed to rule over a weak national subject.<sup>8</sup> The discourses of *Minsheng* and “New Life” combine to resemble the biopolitical regime described by Foucault in his lectures *Security, Territory, Population*. For Foucault, biopower aims at “the government of (self-)government” and seeks a means of bringing bodies and populations into “the field of practices of power” (*Security* 247).<sup>9</sup> Thus the life of the masses becomes an object of knowledge when it becomes the *raison d’être* of the state, for then “population will appear above all as the final end of government. What can the end of government be? Certainly not just to govern, but to improve the condition of the population, to increase its wealth, its longevity, and its health” (*Security* 105). Biopolitics is thus the art of improving the overall functioning of the “body politic,” knowing its weaknesses and controlling its health, vigor, and fertility. It is thus neither altogether negative nor completely positive, but nevertheless develops as a “truth regime” which valorizes certain bodily behaviors over others. For example, although it encompasses a number of different disciplines (medicine, sanitation, the police and military, etc.) and affects all spheres of life, the government of biopolitical agency is seldom framed as a personal or individual matter. Thus, as many theoreticians of biopolitics have observed (Hardt & Negri 2002, Agamben 2002,

<sup>7</sup> See Deng Yuanzhong’s *Kuomintang: its Real Central Organization* (Taipei: Lianjing, 2000), p. 318. The Chinese terms are clearer: *shenghuo yishuhua* 生活藝術化, *shenghuo chanshenghua* 生活產生化, *shenghuo junshihua* 生活軍事化.

<sup>8</sup> Notions of racial vitality and survival became influential in China after Thomas Huxley and Herbert Spencer’s ideas were introduced in translations by the scholar Yan Fu (嚴復 1853-1921). For Yan and discussion, see William Theodore de Berry’s *Sources of Chinese Tradition* (New York: Columbia UP, 2001): 254-260. For a deeper discussion of Social Darwinism and eugenics theory in China see Frank Dikötter’s *The Discourse of Race in Modern China* (New York: Hurst, 1992).

<sup>9</sup> Further discussion of “governmentality” can be found in Thomas Biebricher & Frieder Vogelman’s “Governmentality and State Theory” in *Theory & Event*, Vol 15, #3, 2012.

Esposito 2009), Western biopower works by exploiting discursive tensions between racial strength and weakness; between fitness for survival and degeneration; between psychological normality and the psychosis; between the immune and the infected, etc. In the Republic of China, in the “Principle of the People’s Life” and the “New Life Movement,” we see a similar set of divisions developing towards widescale corporal reform of the Chinese body politic—that is, a reform which produced a clear biopolitical discourse about the bad habits, traditional weaknesses, and lack of discipline in the Chinese masses.

Young people are exhorted to self-cultivation by refraining from licentiousness, practicing good hygiene, learning to exercise, and even how to love (Bernal 1967; Dikötter 1993; Lee 2005). Republican biopolitical discourse develops as a means of overcoming China’s inherent weaknesses—i.e., of “cultivating” a politically “aestheticized” population concerned with its health, appearance, and good behaviors—but does so by seeking to transform this “negative” energy into fuel for a stronger nation-body. Antidotes to Chinese weakness were written and spoken about in great detail and ways of inculcating “proper” ways of life more compatible with the national agenda mattered the most. This article examines a book that I think can be considered a handbook for personal biopolitical normativity by the liberal educator Zhu Guangqian (朱光潛, 1897-1986) *On Cultivation*, (*Tan Xiuyang* 《談修養》). My main aim is to show how the work tries to re-consider the implementation of *Minsheng* and *Xinsheng* from a “liberal nationalist” point of view that encompasses the patriotic and personal dimensions of Republican biopolitics, especially as regards the sexuality of its citizens. A popular 1920s intellectual, translator, and educational philosopher, Zhu suggests that “self-cultivation” (*xiuyang*) and the “problem of sex” should be looked at from a Schopenhauerian standpoint that always considers individual desire in the context of “racial spirit” (*minzu jingsheng* 民族精神). This plays into the authoritarian-nationalist biopolitical paradigm, however, in an attempt to ameliorate the loss of liberty brought about by Chiang Kai-shek’s “New Life” disciplinary society, Zhu’s book implicitly maintains the view that national and racial problems can be considered as problems of individual *xiuyang*, a matter of ethical “self-care” (*epimeleia*) in the sense described by Foucault in his late (1980s) lectures on the hermeneutics and government of the self (and others).

Zhu’s liberal-nationalist biopolitical thought seeks to fall in line with but, at the same time, subvert the authoritarian-nationalist disciplinary power of the state. It does so by promoting a return to “individual conscience” where matters of national health are concerned, while, at the same time relying on the discourse of the “will to racial life” (*zhongzu shengming yizhi* 種族生命意志) prevalent in Schopenhauer and Social Darwinism. Finally, a note on methodology used in

this article is in order. My approach is based on close readings of the original Chinese-language text where I try to highlight how the discourse of population control and “people’s life” was influential in shaping the thought of intellectuals like Zhu. Though influenced by Michel Foucault’s articulation of biopolitics in *The History of Sexuality* and the work of Roberto Esposito (on “degeneration” and the obsession with cultivating stronger citizens) in *Bios*, I try to tie all this to the late Foucault’s notion of “technologies of the self” in order to suggest that biopolitics is not limited to the idea that disciplinary societies produce discourses aimed at the production of “docile bodies” but, rather, also involves the subjectivation or “cultivation” of citizens by developing new conceptions of moral self-cultivation and uprightness.

## II. Cultivation and Liberal-Nationalism

Zhu Guangqian is remembered by most scholars as the father of modern Chinese aesthetics and an early supporter of liberalism in China. The author of several important New Culture era classics, *On Beauty*, *Twelve Letters for Youth*, *Unspoken Beauty*, and his early magnum opus, *The Psychology of Tragedy*, Zhu was an extremely influential figure in the history of twentieth century Chinese philosophy. Trained in pedagogy and psychology in Europe, Zhu was also an important translator of contemporary Western thought, especially that of the liberal Italian thinker Benedetto Croce, whose idealist aesthetics were an important influence on Zhu.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, as a member of the White Horse Lake literary group with Ye Shengtao (葉聖陶), Zhu Ziqing (朱自清), and Feng Zikai (豐子愷), the young Zhu developed a passionate interest in the study of literary aesthetics, writing essays and books about comparative Chinese/Western aesthetics that are still highly prized exemplars of modernist vernacular literature. Later in life, as China descended into WWII, Zhu joined Chiang Kai-shek’s Kuomintang (Chinese Nationalist Party) and became an instructor at the quasi-military Central Training Bureau.<sup>11</sup> At this time his work takes a sharp, noticeably patriotic turn, and marks an attempt to “aestheticize life” by giving advice on everything from the racial will-to-life to dating, sex, exercise, and personal hygiene.

Zhu’s *On Cultivation* is a collection of informal essays written in colloquial

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<sup>10</sup> For Croce’s influence on Zhu’s thought, see Mario Sabattini’s “Chu Kuang-ch’ien and Croce” (*Tamkang Review* 23, 1-4 (1992/93): 601-26.

<sup>11</sup> See Chen Jifa’s *Zhu Guangqian’s Aesthetics—His Tragic Fate and Spirit* (Taipei: Shaoyuan, 1992), p. 12-13.

(*baihua* 白話) Chinese that form a kind of biopolitical self-help book for the nationalist subject. Published at the height of WWII, in 1942, it is also framed as an attempt to re-think what is meant by self-cultivation, or “good breeding.”<sup>12</sup> Indeed, the work addresses a number of topics that fall within the domain of Chiang’s “Three Transformations of Life” and can be related back to the notion of *Minsheng*. For example, there are chapters that deal with problems like “Ethnic Camaraderie,” “Hero Worship,” “Will Power,” “Temperance,” “Making Friends,” “Relaxation,” “Physical Education,” “The Problem of Sex,” “Love and Marriage,” and related matters.<sup>13</sup> The general point of each chapter revolves around some central weakness or short-coming in the Chinese national character—seemingly individual problems that plague the Chinese people as a whole—and suggests self-cultivation remedies for these weaknesses. To that end *On Cultivation* tries to offer practical suggestions for liberal educators and young students alike, and this is how the book centers on how to become a “cultivated” citizen of the Republic of China—that is, problems of population are invariably solved by an appeal to establish proper cultivation norms which will, evidently, increase the overall biopower of the race-nation. Cultivating new, modern standards of *xiuyang* (修養), individual “life” is enhanced in a way that produces new individuals and strengthens Chinese biopower, that nexus of discourse that “brought life and its mechanisms into the realm of explicit calculations and made knowledge-power an agent of the transformation of human life” (HS1, 143). As knowledge about the “proper” bodily behaviors of the people, Republican biopower is “embodied” in the loins and hormones of China’s youth, and as such must be discussed as a means of gaining power over the realization of embodiment.

In his chapter on “The Problem of Sex” Zhu opposes socio-sexual revolutions of the kind imagined by thinkers like Wilhelm Reich and Soviet authors opposed to the family as a social unit. Zhu makes clear he is against such views, stating that “there are people in the world who dream of a utopia without family,

<sup>12</sup> In this article I translate the Chinese title, *Tan Xiuyang* (談修養), as “On Self-Cultivation” but it could just as well be translated “On Good Breeding” because the term *xiuyang* (修養) indicates both good morals and maturity in thought. The *Far East Chinese Dictionary* gives *xiuyang* as “Man’s moral culture as the result of training; possession of profound knowledge and a sense of morality” (Taipei: Far East Publishing, 1999), p. 90. Moreover, addressed to educators and officials and dealing mainly with inculcating good behavior in students, *xiuyang* also suggests the idea of proper behavior.

<sup>13</sup> Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own. There are several interesting uses of the language of “life” in this passage. The word *shehui shengming* (社會生命), for instance, is literally “social life,” but what Zhu means is the “life” (*shengming* 生命) of the totality as an organic whole. Moreover, Zhu’s claim that sex without the procreative function should, “in according with reason be repressed” (*yuli shi gai shou zhizhi de* 於理是該說自制的), is aimed at showing how “social life” is prior to the “free expression” (*ziyou faxie* 自由發洩) of “individual life.” What Zhu calls “instinct suppression” [*fangxian jiezhhi*] literally means to “defend against laziness and [exercise] self-control.”

a place where relations between men and women are absolutely free,” this state of affairs is “forever only a dream [because] the ultimate goal of relations between the sexes is the birth and rearing of children and not gratification” (136).<sup>14</sup> Thus “free love” (or sex for pleasure) and absolute equality between the sexes is a bad ideal since nature wants population growth, and hence apparently monogamous, reproductive sex.<sup>15</sup> What is interesting about the way Zhu discusses “sex as a problem” is that he insists that sexual behavior is not really a problem of individual desire but a problem where the “existence of an ‘eternal’ [lit. ‘unrotting’] race is of greater importance than individual longevity, how racial life is more important than individual life, and how the will to life of the race [*zhongzu shengming yizhi* 种族，生命意志] is more powerful than the will of individual life” (134). According to this, individuals are compelled to engage in heterosexual sex because this is the will of the race; in this sense, sexual behavior is an abstract expressive content since the biopotential of the “unrotting race” is also a symbol of the national will.<sup>16</sup>

As empowerment over the raw vitality and latent potential of bodies, the “life” of *On Cultivation* is always regarded as a calculable problem of knowledge/power, for in addition to emphasizing the need for good breeding and self-discipline, one of the chief concerns of the book is the idea that China must re-educate and discipline itself as a race-nation. Thus, for example, repression and sexual prohibitions against bigamy or incest have a “natural” role to play in Zhu’s vision of species preservation:

Human [nature] requires a tendency toward free expression, whereas society requires a tendency toward instinct suppression. For the individual, this kind of repression is sometimes unavoidably painful, but considering the overall situation a healthy social organism is a prerequisite of the individual and racial organisms. The need for sexual desire was [thus] originally based on the need to preserve the racial organism, but when it threatens the racial organism’s purpose of guaranteeing a healthy society, it loses its original purpose and should, according to reason, be repressed. (136)<sup>17</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Zhu does not cite Reich specifically, but since he was the best-known advocate of “free love” and the end of the family at the time of writing, it seems likely those “people” he is referring to are the champions of sexual revolution like Reich and Jung.

<sup>15</sup> Here Zhu adds “there are people in the world who dream of a utopia that totally eliminates the family, where relations between men and women are totally free,” apparently indicating Bolshevism, but considers this an impossible dream because “the family is the greenhouse for the perpetuation of the race,” 136.

<sup>16</sup> Zhu uses the term I am translating here as “non-degenerate” (*bu xiu* 不朽) with quotes, evidently to emphasize the original sense of *xiu* (朽) which literally means “to decay, or rot.”

<sup>17</sup> Here, what I translate as “make a living” is (*mousheng* 謀生), as in to “plan one’s life.” The sense of individual life as a “material” to be shaped or formed is implicit; that the overall “life” of the race is material (the life of the old) means it must degenerate, die, and be replaced by succeeding generations.

Repression of sexual desire, Zhu suggests, is rational if a society is “threatened” by its presence—i.e., when that desire does not contribute to the vitality of the race-nation it should be kept in check. This anti-Freudian analysis of sexual desire’s function in society features “repression” as both a natural necessity and even a reasonable duty of patriotic individuals, for becoming a good citizen means knowing how and when to repress one’s desires for the national good.<sup>18</sup>

Zhu examines the biopolitical importance of sex from a number of different angles, treating it as a subject for scientific discourse and debate. Puberty, for instance, is a time when young people experience dramatic hormonal changes and arrive at sexual maturity, and is here identified as a key time for the state (through educators and politicians) to intervene in the bodily life of young people. Writing as an expert on educational psychology, in the chapter “On the Psychological Problems of Young People,” Zhu insists that puberty produces profound psychological affects. As he puts it, “Psychological problems begin with physiological problems, so physical weakness must gradually lead to mental wear and tear. This is a problem related to the issue of racial vigor, so educators and politicians must attend to it” (Zhu 35). If these physiological deficiencies are not “attended to” psychological problems—presumably sexual promiscuity—will ensue and lead to a Chinese population lacking the “vigor” needed for national rejuvenation. Racial virility thus becomes central to the equation of proper sex with race-regeneration, so the author exhorts educators and politicians to administer the health of the pubescent population. For many of the founding generation of liberal Chinese nationalists, the Republic required leaders with better *xinyang*, education, and manners. However, it also required better-trained experts, physicians, Western medical facilities, adequate nutrition, and an efficient public health care system.<sup>19</sup> Without these, degeneration ensued, and all kinds of racial weaknesses and debilitating psychological problems emerged. As in the West, however, identifying and dealing with these “bad” bodies became essential, for “if civilized peoples are exposed to progressive degeneration, the only way to save them is by reversing the direction of the process that is under way, to remove what produces the disease that corrupts it so as to reinstate it in the horizon of goodness, health and perfection” (127).

Arthur Schopenhauer’s influence forms the basis for Zhu’s reading of “sex as

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<sup>18</sup> For a comparable statement of this idea in Freud, see *Civilization and Its Discontents* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1961): “Sublimation of instinct is an especially conspicuous feature of cultural development; it is what makes possible for higher psychical activities, scientific, artistic or ideological, to play such an important part in civilized life,” 44.

<sup>19</sup> See Paul Unschuld’s *Medicine in China: a History of Ideas* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985): 242-243.

a problem,” but his notion of “national will” is couched in Kuomintang and Social Darwinist rhetoric. The “problem” of sex is thus framed in a way that concerns the individual’s relation to society and race, but it deals with that problem as the result of moral choices about the national spirit (*minzu jingsheng* 民族精神). Also contemporary with the time, a science of sex was needed if we were going to understand and influence the individual lifestyles of the people. Thus the “people’s life” as daily existence performs a larger dynamic, “the strongest instinct is what Schopenhauer calls the ‘will to life’ [*shengming yizhi* 生命意志], and at first it is an individual life. We struggle, do business, and exhaust ourselves and this is nothing more than an attempt by the individual to acquire subsistence, develop himself to achieve safety and comfort; in terms of spirituality, it is the attempt to achieve the truth and beauty offered by pleasant feelings. The final purpose of all activity [*huodong* 活動] is in ‘making a living’ [*mousheng* 謀生] (Zhu 134). Zhu suggests that the labor of life is, for the individual, meaningful mainly in the context of racial vitality, for the “work” of life leads to a productive desire for comfort and “pleasant feelings.” This is good and well, but, he continues, “individual life cannot be preserved forever, and at the end of every life is a death. Long life is an ideal that can never be realized, and indeed it is a bad ideal. Try to imagine it yourself: if from day one to the end of time the same generation were still living, wouldn’t the world become a pond of dead water?” (Zhu 134). Although we are identical with this racial will to life, in Taoist-influenced China the ideal of longevity is a broadly accepted social value that he flatly rejects as a “bad ideal.”<sup>20</sup> Zhu’s “pond of dead water” is a striking image of the patriarchal “body politic” as selfish old men trying to live forever. Thus, Zhu understands Schopenhauer’s “will to racial life” differently, as the basis for an unselfish mode of cultivation where the Freudian Death Drive meets the Social Darwinist fear of “race-death.” For in “satisfying themselves” (i.e., desiring life) privately and in “making a living,” the individual participates in a transcendent species will he can appreciate and participate in in some conscious way.<sup>21</sup> Here, however, Zhu recognizes that the struggle to “make a living” and “developing oneself” are natural ends in themselves, but for one generation to persist is corrupting influence on the “pond.”<sup>22</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Traditional Chinese medicine and religious Taoism both emphasize the importance of longevity, and to some extent one of the chief ideals of traditional Chinese philosophy itself is to learn to live long, peaceful lives.

<sup>21</sup> Schopenhauer writes that “[b]efore us there is certainly only nothingness. But that which resists this passing into nothing, our nature, is indeed just the will to live, which we ourselves are as it is our world. That we abhor annihilation so greatly, is simply another expression of the fact that we so strenuously will life, and are nothing but this will, and know nothing besides it” (Schopenhauer 531).

<sup>22</sup> This “pond of dead water” is probably a reference to Wen Yi-duo’s famous poem “Dead Water” 《死水》

### III. Biopolitics and the “Aesthetic State”

The modern Chinese term for liberalism, *ziyou zhuyi* (自由主義), implies a free self (*zi* 自) that is regulated (*you* 由) from within, so it is not surprising that the discourse of self-cultivation and good breeding would become central to the idea of civic goodness or racial strength. In the nineteenth century, China had looked out at a world of barbarians and seen that “the threat from the white, hairy and curly but clever European races—in which European ash-white was the obverse of the coal-black, and both were sexually unbridled—meant the former had to be beaten, the latter left to die out” (Feuchtwang 14). For many, eugenics and “liberal” biopolitics turned out to be the master-weapon for overtaking and surpassing the European races, for the “yellow peril” myth of Western countries had made it all too clear that Asia’s enormous, fertile population was the natural key to its future success as a nation. Indeed, according to Feuchtwang, “Preserving and strengthening the race (*baozhong* 保種) would turn the [yellow] peril into a yellow glory. Here the word for type or seed (*zhong* 種), from a long-established Chinese botanical science of selection, was used, not the *zu* (族) of lineage-nation” (Feuchtwang 14). Thus, in addition to the problem of individual freedom, the problem of eugenics of race regeneration was manifest not only in skin color but also in sexual health and the “breeding” of individual citizens capable of a productive co-existence.

In the West, one of the leading liberal supporters of eugenics was the early sexologist Havelock Ellis who believed that only through “the developed individual conscience, guided by a new sense of responsibility, and informed by a new knowledge, that any regeneration of the race must be rooted” (Ellis 61). A pioneer in the study of sexual psychology and an authority that Zhu cites regularly in *On Cultivation*, Ellis also advocated a liberal education of “individual conscience” in matters of sex as the key to racial self-strengthening. According to Arnold I. Davidson this was a key step in the West’s understanding of sex, for henceforth the problem of sexuality will be “naturalized” and knowledge of sex will become a key issue for popular sociology and psychology. As Davidson writes, “for sexuality to become an object of clinical knowledge, a new style of psychiatric reasoning was necessary . . . [Ellis] treats sexuality and its attendant disorders [. . .] as if they were naturally given” (36). Sexology thus emerges as a science when it regards aberration and deviance as normative categories, and when clinical subjects are “found” to have serious psychological and social disorders stemming from sexuality. For Zhu, sex is naturalized in precisely this manner and the nationalist subject is characterized by individual psycho-sexual delusions and issues, for as he observes, “it [the sex drive] is at times encountered in passing,

at times in returning; at times it can be normal, at times abnormal. In this flowing and criss-crossing it is, like other things experiencing complex relations, subtle to the point of being unimaginable. Indeed, the shocking blows of psychological change also follow the sex drive in aimless illusion” (Zhu 137). Here, as elsewhere, the traditional language of flows and patterns of energy, Qi (氣), enters the description of a sexuality that has a regular, fathomable capacity for regulation and control.

Zhu champions Schopenhauer’s idea of “sexual delusion,” put forth in the philosopher’s famous essay “The Metaphysics of Love,” evidently because he thinks sexual desire is instinctual and driven by latent forces in the collective unconscious. Thus, although we apply all manner of customary beliefs and superstitions to the act of sex, we often forget that it is nature’s tool for racial survival. Indeed, according to Christopher Janaway, Schopenhauer “talks of ‘the will of the species’ as directing the behavior of individuals while deluding them that they pursue by choice their own individual preferences and purposes, such as seeking their own pleasure” (Janaway 153).<sup>23</sup> In Zhu’s explication of Schopenhauer, then, sexual desire is a psychological phantom-“representation” that conceals the truth of individual sex as a means of breeding populations. This is essentially the same position we see outlined in Zhu’s work on the “problem” of sex; however, instead of representing a similarly anti-individualist position with regard to sexual pleasure, Zhu also views sex as integral to social progress and the reform of the “body politic” (*guoti* 國體)—it is a tool for national salvation that begins in the “individual conscience” of liberal self-cultivation.

To reiterate, in *On Cultivation*, Zhu, an educator and former author of popular treatises about aesthetics and psychology, promotes an “aestheticization of life” (*shenghuo yishu hua* 生活藝術化) that is aimed at both the individual and the race-nation. Lee Haiyan, in her seminal work on the early Republican development of sexology, claims that what liberal thinkers like Zhu and the sexologist Zhang Jingsheng (張竟生) had in mind was an idea of the “aesthetic state” that would bring about change via a cultural revolution or radical transformation of the collective consciousness. Borrowed from German political theory, this

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<sup>23</sup> Janaway is even more explicit about the anti-individualism inherent in Schopenhauer’s idea of sexual behavior:

[Schopenhauer’s] account of sexual love operates on two levels: at the level of individual consciousness, the other is singled out as the object of desire and idealized. He or she is apparently beloved for qualities of value he or she uniquely possesses; and satisfaction of the desire by another interchangeable object is ruled out. Thus it seems to the individual lover. But all this is an illusion, according to Schopenhauer. The individual is merely being used. For at the deeper explanatory level, all (heterosexual) sexual desire can be explained functionally as enabling reproduction, p 152.

is a utopian ideology “which seeks to reconcile the sensible and the intelligible and redefine the twin goal[s] of happiness and sovereign strength in terms of aesthetic fulfillment rather than wealth and might” (Lee 2006). While such an idealization of the nation state is clearly apparent in Zhu’s work, it is important to keep in mind that by the 1930s the “aesthetic state” had already begun to morph into Chiang’s “militarization of life” which was the key to the New Life Movement’s “Three Modernizations” of public life. In biopolitical terms, radical programs for the “aestheticization of life” (in both Asia and Europe) usually meant “national regeneration” projects of the Great Depression era exploited (as Japanese miltiartists and Nazi propagandists did) traditional culture as a means of promoting national pride and popular customs. Zhu’s liberal-nationalist style of reasoning, however, attempts to use the traditional discourse of “cultivation” (*xiuyang*) to elevate the Chinese sense of personal aesthetic standards, particularly with regard to things like personal hygiene, nutrition, athletics, and, racially responsible sex. In short, a “civilized” citizenry with a high level of self-regard and ethnic pride must know how to *reflect* the vitality of the “body politic” through their own person and individual fitness.

The longest chapter of the book, for instance, deals with the problem of “ethnic camaraderie” (*zuqun* 族群), which Zhu thinks the Chinese are very bad at. “Our race,” he writes, “has many virtues; however it is not very good at *zuqun*: ‘One monk gets a drink of water. Two monks together get a drink of water. Three monks together have no water to drink.’ This popular anecdote profoundly illustrates the chief weakness of our race [. . .] This is our fatal flaw, and if we want a national renaissance politicians and educators should first forge their reforms at this point” (Zhu 44). Mutual assistance and social cooperation, features of Chinese society that Western observers incorrectly believe them to be very good at, is a critical weakness of the Chinese *volk* in Zhu’s view. Interestingly enough, Zhu ties the cultivation of ethnic cooperation to the rhetoric of the “Chinese renaissance” made popular by his contemporary and fellow liberal philosopher Hu Shih (胡適).<sup>24</sup> Following his teacher, John Dewey, Hu also sought to moderate the creeping fascism of Chiang Kai-shek’s Kuomintang by emphasizing the correspondence between civic ideas of national identity and Chinese educational reform. Zhu follows a similar tack, I believe, but does not entirely distance himself from the authoritarian positions of the “New Life

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<sup>24</sup> Hu Shih was a former student of John Dewey and one of the most important intellectuals of the twentieth century. In 1926 he published an influential essay in English titled “The Chinese Renaissance.” Later, in 1933, Hu gave a series of English lectures at the University of Chicago which were also titled “the Chinese renaissance” and dealt with the need for humanist educational reform in China. For a detailed account of Hu Shih’s influence as a liberal scholar, see Greider (1970).

Movement.”

For Zhu, good “ethnic camaraderie” (*zuqun*), like “good sex,” relies on the understanding that personal desire should be channeled into a collective effort to improve the *volk* (*zu*) in question. Indeed, in “On the Problem of Sex” Zhu suggests that the traditional Chinese understanding of sexuality (which includes polyamory) is flawed, and proposes a model that will help alter and improve the race. Indeed, the very “problem” of sexual desire, is that it has not been adequately defined as a manifestation of the racial will-to-life. Good breeding (*xiuyang*) thus begins with the individual’s understanding that sexual behavior has a public, procreative function that is both physiological and psycho-social. Hence, Zhu alludes to the teachings of Havelock Ellis, Sigmund Freud, and Edvard Westermarck approvingly, but clearly leans toward “sex as social problem” from Schopenhauer’s perspective—i.e., a thinker not often associated with the rise of sexology (or Foucault’s *scientia sexualis*) but whom Zhu cites as an authority on ideas of sexual conduct. However, what is most important about this sexual conduct is that it is viewed through the lens of *xiuyang*, or in other words as a departure from the social per se to the individual creation of an ethical essence. This is important for our understanding of Republican biopolitics for a number of reasons.

First, by way of contrast, Friedrich Nietzsche also reacted strongly to Schopenhauer’s ideas about eugenics and reproductive behavior, famously claiming that Nature has as its “preparatory task that one first *makes* men to a certain degree necessary, uniform, like among like, regular, and consequently calculable” (58-59, emphasis orig.). Nietzsche’s suggestion that Nature does “breed” (*zuchtung*) men as regular, uniform organisms capable of collective behavior given a positive twist in Zhu’s work, which emphasizes that young Chinese men should practice things like *zuqun* and a socially responsible sex that will bring about a new racial vitality. Nietzsche’s thinking is diametrically opposed to this: making the race “uniform and calculable” is what natural selection and Nature does most efficiently, but this means that it also produces a population that is herdlike, obedient, and docile. Susceptible to the disciplinary controls Foucault talks about in his work, this sort of racial “regularity” is repugnant to Nietzsche. A second, related point is that according to the Italian philosopher of biopolitics, Roberto Esposito, there is an inherent contradiction in Nietzsche’s understanding of “life” (*bios*): “the survival of a force opposes the project of strengthening it. Limiting itself to survival, it weakens itself, flows back, and, to use the key word in Nietzschean semantics, *degenerates*, which is to say moves in the direction opposite its own generation” (Esposito 94, emph. original). Nietzsche speaks of a future generation of “ripe fruits” or willfully well-bred men who are

exceptional in that they are capable of transcending their regular/calculable “breeding.” The majority cannot do this, however, having been pruned by a mentality that leads to degeneration and a dying out of the species-will. For Esposito this means Nietzsche does more than merely flirt with eugenics philosophy, he weds himself to it, for “only when man undergoes the same selective treatment applied to animals or greenhouse plants will he be able to cultivate the self-generating capacity that degeneration has progressively consumed” (Esposito 100). Second, it seems to me that Esposito downplays the degree to which Nietzsche’s work can also be read as a personal philosophy of the individual Will, for not only does “cultivation” and “breeding” imply a mode of eugenics thinking, it also implies that these conditions of “degeneration” can be met with Nietzsche’s famous “transvaluation of all values,” his understanding of radical self-fashioning and individual cultivation as an escape route from the bondage of biopower and social oppression.<sup>25</sup> In sum, as with Nietzsche, I think we can see in Zhu Guangqian’s *xiuyang* a struggle to imaginative domain for the individual to create his own ethical relationship to disciplinary society.

#### IV. Liberal Self-Cultivation versus Authoritarian-Nationalist Biopower

To develop the connection between the official biopolitical discourse of the Kuomintang state and Zhu’s discourse of national “cultivation” we must again return to disciplined, reproductive-oriented sexuality (i.e., breeding). That is, for Zhu, while the discourse of “cultivation” is aimed at the “developed individual conscience”—i.e., the place where desire must be controlled and productively channeled—it is also aimed at the administrators of the aesthetic state. Thus the cultivation or “selective treatment” of the race which will curtail its own degeneration is, for Nietzsche and for Zhu, a central concern. Zhu’s understanding of Schopenhauerian biopower sees it as both an individual disciplinary problem and a task for the educational establishment, for the task of *xiuyang* implies “good breeding” of the self and, in the broader context of society, a reform of “popular life” (*minsheng* 民生). What matters in the end is that both levels act on “life”

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<sup>25</sup> For this reason Esposito believes the Nazi appropriation of Nietzsche’s ideas about racial self-transcendence were not without warrant, for they were ideas lent themselves very well to the “Aryan understanding of life.” As Timothy Campbell has explained, for “Esposito the specificity of the Nazi experience for modernity resides in the actualization of biology, when ‘the transcendental of Nazism’ becomes life, its subject, race, and its lexicon, biological” (Campbell 15). In my view, Zhu’s appropriation of Schopenhauer achieves the same re-ordering of “racial life” and is thus not specific to the “transcendental of Nazism.”

(*bios/sheng* 生) and are tied to the understanding of the self's relationship to authority. Thus Zhu's book of informal essays, written during wartime, display a sincere attempt to show how Schopenhauer's understanding of the "species will" could be helpful in cultivating China's youth.

From a biopolitical standpoint, however, we can read the essay "The Problem of Sex," and *On Cultivation* generally, as an Eastern intervention into nationalist discourse of population-management. Sex is central to this discourse because, as Foucault famously puts it in his essay on the intellectual history of modern sexuality, it became "a means of access both to the life of the body and the life of the species" and, moreover, by the late 19<sup>th</sup>-century we see "it becoming the theme of political operations, economic interventions [. . .] and ideological campaigns for raising standards of morality and responsibility: it was put forth as the index of a society's strength, revealing both its political energy and its biological vigor" (Foucault 267-68). Problems of "biological vigor," seen through the lens of individual sexual behavior, are what leads Foucault's genealogy of modern sex back to Malthus and the urgent question of feeding populations and maintaining national health. Early liberal biopolitics is thus always concerned with sexuality for the reason that racial vitality and growth depends on the production, or breeding, of individuals capable of becoming "good citizens" who contribute to the "body politic" (*guoti* 國體).<sup>26</sup> However, the program of supporting Chinese "biological vigor" implemented by Chiang Kai-shek and later outlined more liberally by Zhu is also a byproduct of that new style of reasoning which worked by diagnosing abnormal "symptoms"—i.e., by identifying deficiencies or bad customs (*xixing* 習性)—and then prescribing discursive solutions or cures in educational policy.

Foucault actually describes this model of liberal governmentality in his lectures published as *Security, Territory, Population*, where he says it will frame "Natural phenomena . . . in such a way that they do not veer off course, or in such a way that clumsy, arbitrary, and blind intervention does not make them veer off course. That is to say, it will be necessary to set up mechanisms of security" (*Security* 353). This program for establishing a quiet "security" over natural relations is, in Zhu's *On Cultivation*, centered on maintaining sexuality as a healthy "economy" of desires. Although this sounds extreme, if we consider it carefully Zhu's approach moderates the Generalissimo's fascist-leaning attempt

<sup>26</sup> For Giorgio Agamben, however, there arises a "state of exception" throws the "body politic" into a state of annulment where force-of-the-law negates the citizens' "life" (*bios*) and replaces it with his "bare life" (*zoe*). This, in turn, leads to the eras of the Arbeitslager, the Gulag, the Laogai, and finally Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay.

to “militarize” and “aestheticize” the “New Life,” instead emphasizing the individual’s responsibility with regard to things like sexuality and the education of adolescents. That is, his book can be seen as an attempt to turn the “New Life” inward, toward cultivation and what Ellis described as “individual conscience.”

Although I have been discussing how Foucault’s biopolitical formulation of “population” is important to our understanding of Zhu’s work, it must now be remembered that over the last five or six years of his life Foucault changed his views on power’s relation to the “government of self and others.” In his late lectures on self-fashioning in ancient philosophy, he suggests an alternative to modernity’s obsession with the biopolitics of racial/national “biological vigor.” Now he claims that concepts such as “virtue,” “strength,” and “cultivation” were often descriptions of personal behaviors thought to be suitable for fashioning “good lives”—i.e., what he describes at length as the *epimeleia heatou*, or the “care of the self.” In early Greek philosophy, Foucault argues, *epimeleia* was central to the “arts of living” (*techné tou bios*) which developed “without any relation with the juridical perse, with an authoritarian system, [or] with a disciplinary structure” (*Hermeneutics*, 348). Remarkably, what Foucault claims is that philosophy began as an attempt at self-government and not as a matter of what the individual should or could not do, believe or disbelieve in the process of caring for his own person. Instead, he thinks this evolved out of a personal aesthetics of living and was part of the problem of “taking care of oneself” independently of dogmatic morality or the need to conform to societal norms. This took considerable “work,” however, and as Foucault notes ancient Graeco-Roman thinkers practiced austerities and stoic behaviors like temperance, abstinence, and self-imposed poverty were not aimed at taming “life” (*bios*) or making it conform to external authority, but rather directed inward—toward making a stronger and more resilient individual. In considering his desires or sexuality, then, the philosopher will consider how to regulate his passions in caring for his own spiritual and physical health.

In addition, according to Foucault, *epimeleia* is “not just a preoccupation” or selfish hobby for improving the quality of one’s own life.<sup>27</sup> Rather, he writes, it is “a whole set of occupations; it is *epimeleia* that is employed in speaking of the activities of the master of a household, the tasks of the ruler who looks after his subjects, the care that must be given to the sick or wounded patient . . . *epimeleia* implies a labor” (*Hermeneutics* 51). This term is helpful to our un-

<sup>27</sup> The term *epimeleia* designates not just a preoccupation but a whole set of occupations; it is *epimeleia* that is employed in speaking of the activities of the master of a household, the tasks of the ruler who looks after his subjects, the care that must be given to a sick or wounded patient, or the honors that must be paid to the gods or to the dead. With regard to oneself as well, *epimeleia* implies a labor,” *Hermeneutics* 51.

derstanding of Zhu's *xiuyang* for a number of reasons. First, it implies that our liberal gentleman (*junzi* 紳士) is someone who has is atuned to both his own needs and those of his immediate community. Second, like *epimeleia* it is individual *xiuyang* that allows the subject to withstand those “blows of psychological change [that] also follow the sex drive in aimless delusion” (*On Cultivation* 137). Moreover, as discussed above, the “labor of life” (*mousheng* 謀生) that Zhu writes about also indicates the significance placed on self-care as a daily occupation and practice of *xiuyang*. Thus, while national “self-strengthening” (*zhiqiang* 自強) goes on above, down below at the level of the cultivated individual, the Gentleman (*junzi* 紳士), the struggle against the juridical apparatus and authoritarian state can continue as before.

This brings us back to Lee Haiyan's contention that early 20<sup>th</sup>-Century thinkers were attempting to imagine “aesthetic states” analogous to the ones imagined by thinkers like Friedrich Schiller where government actively promotes an overall aestheticization of social and political life. In her study of the Chinese sexologist Zhang Jingsheng, for example, Lee observes that he “conceives of the erotic-aesthetic practice of the individual as a correlative to the governing practice of the state,” so he cannot but help imagine a utopian-Republican “structure of judgment and universal principles” (123). Moreover, she notes that despite “all the attention Zhang lavishes on sex, it is a form of askesis that is not essentially different from the art of diet, raiment, dwelling, and exercise” (104). Lee's analysis could easily be extended to Zhu's ideas about “the problem of sex” and *xiuyang*, for like Zhang's *Sexual History*, Zhu's work also seeks to imagine a sexual behavior that is practical and based on an aestheticization of the “will to life of the race” (*zhongzu shengming yizhi* 種族意志). Liberal-nationalist governmentality is thus an effort to promote responsible ideas of sexuality which will become part of a modern *xiuyang* that is profitable to the body politic (*guoti*) and the Chinese Republic. Thus, although in some ways similar to *epimeleia*, there is a fundamental difference between Zhu's modern *xiuyang* and the ancient practices of “care of the self” that Foucault talks about in his lectures. The construction of a liberal “economy of desire” imbued with civic responsibility is what Zhang and Zhu share in common, but it is also what the complex utopian will to racial life dictates. The individual becomes important to History precisely insofar as he is able to fulfill the Utopian destiny of the aesthetic state and, paradoxically, thereby produce individuals of a higher moral caliber than has been possible hitherto. This cycle of tension between the state biopower and intellectuals' attempts to remain independent is, of course, also highly reminiscent of the constant struggle of the Confucian literati (*rujia* 儒家) to influence and even guide the actions of the emperor.

## V. Conclusion: Liberalism, Biopower, and the Cultivation of Citizens

Liang Qichao's (梁啟超) "New Citizen" (*xinmin* 新民), Sun Yat-sen's "People's Life" (*minsheng* 民生), Dai Jitao (戴季陶) and others' exhortations to national "self-discipline" (*zizhi* 自制), Chiang Kai-shek's "aestheticization of life" (*shenghuo yishu hua* 生活藝術化), Hu Shih's (胡適) call for a "Chinese cultural renaissance" (*zhongguo wenyi fuxing* 中國文藝復興) and Zhu's own "cultivation" (*xiuyang*) are all important elements in the construction of Republican biopolitical discourse. For Hu Shih what is remarkable about the new era is that it begins with "a completely new attitude" which wishes to "get rid of all the weaknesses of the East and frankly adopt, thoroughly adopt, modern civilization" (Hu 274). Citing the custom of foot-binding and the terrible conditions of rickshaw drivers in China, Hu states that this "new attitude, an attitude on the one hand of frank admission of our own weaknesses, all the weak points in Oriental civilisation; and on the other hand the attitude of a frank, a genuine understanding of the spirit, not only of the material prosperity, but also the spiritual possibilities of the Western civilisation" (Hu 274). Zhu's book, though tendentious and addressed to nationalist educators and intellectuals, follows Hu Shih's attempt to adopt the "spiritual possibilities" of Western thinking by applying them to Chinese ethical self-fashioning.

In this article I have attempted to give a brief genealogy of how this new attitude toward "oriental weakness" helped form the basis for Republican biopolitics by looking at how one theorist, Zhu Guangqian articulated those weaknesses. The key point Zhu makes is that almost all "personal" problems related to cultivation (and especially the cultivation of the body) are actually rooted in social and racial problems that the masses are not aware of. Zhu was by no means the first or only liberal to frame arguments about rebuilding the population through better learning. Material prosperity is the condition for spiritual awakening, and for Zhu Guangqian this meant cultivation would take on a disciplinarian ethos of racial exceptionalism. One could argue that this led to participation in and support for the Kuomintang's proto-fascist "New Life Movement," for within this Schopenhauerian sexology there is a vision of the Chinese body-politic that is quite anti-individualistic, non-liberal, and even authoritarian. This may be proof that, as one contemporary philosopher, Li Zehou (李澤原), has claimed, "the democratic wing of liberals were not left-leaning, but right-leaning. On the stage of Chinese politics (and even, to a certain degree, on the stage of scholarship), they were unable to play an independent role or act out their independence. This is both a significant feature of modern China, and also its great tragedy" (Li 102). While Zhu and other liberals do appear to be

“right-leaning” in the reading I have given here, the idea of national degeneration as poison and moral self-cultivation as antidote never simply followed the distinctions of left or rightwing politics. As we have seen, there were even anarchist precedents for Zhu’s insistence that individual cultivation and askesis were the answer to China’s political problems. What is significant is that while liberals like Hu and Zhu were willing to align themselves with the Kuomintang, they nevertheless sought to temper the party’s fascist and populist tendencies with a certain degree of pragmatic individualism. This effort likely failed because “when power becomes entirely biopolitical” and based on the formation and regulation of bodies, it is inevitable that “the whole social body is comprised by power’s machine and [. . .] reacts like a single body. Power is thus expressed as a control that extends throughout the depths of the consciousnesses and bodies of the population—and at the same time across the entirety of social relations” (Hardt & Negri 24). While Zhu attempts to stake out an individualist plane of resistance to Nationalist “biopower” with an ethos of self-care, the potency of “popular life” (*minsheng* 民生) and the “New Life Movement” rode roughshod over the individual in imagining a nationalist collective consciousness and inventing a “discourse of degeneration.” Perhaps unwittingly, Zhu contributed to that discourse and its rightwing “truth regime,” but his *On Cultivation* paradoxically remains an interesting intervention into the Chinese biopolitical paradigm.

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## 公民的培養：朱光潛《談修養》中的退化、性欲和國家主義生命政治

### 摘要

本論文研究朱光潛與共和時期（1912-49）的集體「生活」論述，特別著重朱氏的《談修養》中自由主義「美學狀態」的生命政治面向。在此作品中，朱氏採用叔本華的觀點，講述種族的「生命意志」（「物種意志」）和退化的概念，並結合孔夫子的修養概念，強調土生土長的重要性。同為義大利自由主義者克羅齊的追隨者，朱氏認為中國自由民主的成功，高度仰賴自律與殷切地關注個人的道德行為，特別是性方面的事情。因此，朱氏將20世紀早期之優生學為先的論述，結合自由主義所強調的個人選擇和責任，以此和緩中國民族主義論述中的「新生活運動」，形構出一種有責任且受歡迎的公民權理論，以期更符合孫中山先生的三民主義，特別是民生的部分。本文主要著重於朱氏對叔本華所作的闡述，試圖將《談修養》置放在更廣大的歷史變動的脈絡中討論——國民後期之內和之外，例如國民黨生命政治的崛起。從傅科的觀點，朱氏的修養理論與國民黨培養受規訓「服從的身體」形成對抗論述。

**關鍵字：**朱光潛、國家主義、培養、生命政治、傅柯、管理

