

# **Zhang Jian and the World Exposition in the Early Years of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century**

## **—— An Inter-Cultural Historical Observation**

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The modern world exposition is the product of modern civilization development and modernization which includes various kinds of expositions such as products exposition, industrial exposition, handicrafts exposition, fishery products exposition, and ect. In modern China, it was generally called “fair”, but it differs with the ancient god-welcoming fair and the temple fair. Usually, it is connected with modern commercial economy which lays more emphasis on products display than sales promotion and market expansion. Meanwhile, it performs the function of connecting the ties of different countries and promoting the communication of technology and culture among nations. It serves as an essential means and medium in facilitating the development of the world and the overall civilization communication of human beings.

Modern exposition, which originated in the western world, has played an important role in helping China and Japan absorb the advanced western technology and cultural trend of thoughts and forcefully promotes their modernization process. Zhang Jian and Shibusawa Eiichi, two famous entrepreneurs and pioneers of the modernization in East Asia, were deeply influenced by the fashionable world exposition cause and trend of thoughts then and contributed enormously to the exposition causes in China and Japan respectively. They became the most important pioneers of the modern exposition cause in their countries , as well as the active advocates for conducting civil diplomacy through exposition.

This paper attempts to dissertates Zhang Jian’s role in the expositions of the early years of 20<sup>th</sup> century so as to discuss the economical, cultural and civil diplomatic interaction among China, Japan and the United States from a certain perspective.

## I Introduction: Exposition and Modern China and Japan

The history of International Exposition can be traced back to the Victorian Britain. In 1851, Britain, which was at its peak of industrial revolution, held the unprecedented Great Exposition of the Works of Industry of All Nations in order to demonstrate its great power to the world. The exposition was directed by Queen Victoria's husband---duke Albert. It lasted five months, attracting over 6 million visitors. The great exposition left behind it not only a magnificent "Crystal Palace" which embodies the highest technological achievement of that time, but also signifies a new mode for large-scale international civilization communication.

After the rising of exposition in Europe, with the western thought being introduced to the eastern countries, its influence was gradually felt in East Asian countries. Among East Asian countries, Japan, which was at its eve of Meiji Restoration, made the quickest response to it. Although Japan did not have a clear idea about the exposition, its Shogunate sent two or three dukes and earls carrying products to take part in Paris International Exposition in 1867. In 1871, Tokyo government also sent a few officials leading some merchants carrying products to attend San Francisco International Exposition. It was in 1873 that Japan, for the first time, officially sent its delegation to the world fair--- Vienna International Exposition in Austria. The newly-established Meiji government attached great importance to it. Lord commissioner Shigenobu Okuma, foreign affairs lord Munenori Terashima and Large warehouse lord Kaoru Inoue were in charge of the affair, and an Exposition Affairs Bureau was set up to organize merchants to carry products to attend the exposition. As a result, Japan achieved success in its first official appearance in the exposition and earned 92 medals.<sup>1</sup>

After the Vienna International Exposition in 1873, Japan attended 44 various international expositions altogether during its Meiji and Dazheng periods, among which there were sixteen big-scale world expositions.<sup>2</sup> Japan began to hold its own expositions while attending international expositions. In 1877, Japan organized its first exposition in Tokyo's Ueno park and it lasted over 3 months, drawing 450,000 visitors. Japan held five expositions during Meiji period, each was bigger than its previous one both in its scale and the number of participants.<sup>3</sup> Japan also held many expositions during Dazheng period, among which Tokyo Dazheng Exposition in 1914 and Pinghe

Exposition in 1922 were two bigger ones. Originally Japan intended to hold an international exposition in 1912 \_\_\_\_ Tokyo International Exposition, and invite many countries to it, but because of shortage of fund and other causes, its attempt failed.<sup>4</sup>

China's participation in World's Exposition started in the late Qing Dynasty, almost the same time with that of Japan. Yet, it did not learn to do it as well as Japan and did not organize it as efficiently as Japan. In 1866, Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs received an invitation to attend the Paris Exposition in France, but just brushed it aside. It was in 1873 that the government the Qing Dynasty officially began to send people to attend the Vienna International Exposition in Austria. Later, Chinese authority and non-governmental businessmen attended over 20 international expositions held in Philadelphia, America(1876); Paris, France(1878, 1900); Neworland, America(1885) and Osaka, Japan(1903). At the beginning, the Qing Dynasty government was still proud for being a "Celestial Empire" and paid little attention to going abroad for the exposition, considering it as showing off treasures and unhelpful thing. This can be seen from its early translation of world exposition. Generally its Chinese equivalent means "competition of the rare" and "occasion for treasure gathering", which carried derogatory implication. In 1873, the Austrian Vienna International Exposition invited China to "present interesting products" and attend the exposition. At first, the Qing Dynasty government was reluctant to go, taking "China did not ever attach great weight to odd things and cannot contribute things to the occasion" as an excuse. Later, requested by the Austrian ambassador again and again, it agreed to let civil merchants feel free to attend it if they were willing to carry excellent and odd products with them for comparison.<sup>5</sup> It was not until around 1905 that the Qing Dynasty government was awakened to the importance of international exposition. In the same year the Qing Dynasty government issued "General Regulations for Going Abroad for Exposition" which included 20 clauses. It set uniform regulations for Chinese businessmen to go abroad for international expositions and stimulated the businessmen in all provinces to "carefully select products" and actively take part in the competition. Supported by the government, businessmen began to select products themselves for the exposition, changing the previous embarrassing situation that "Tax Department was appointed to collect and prepare products for the exposition, which only added

to the laughing stock”. The products on display won awards many times.

After the Qing Dynasty government was overthrown by China’s 1911 Revolution, the call for thriving China’s industry became increasingly high. During the period when the United States was holding its Panama Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco in 1915, Chinese newspaper made a lot of report about world exposition and launched an unprecedented “exposition heat”. The government of the Republican State, which was established for a short time, hoped to rebuild China’s image at international stage through participating in that exposition. The government attached great importance to it, sending a delegation of 40 members led by Chen Qi to attend it. The exhibits were shipped by two batches with its weight amounting to more than 2000 tons. The Chinese exhibits pavilion funded by the government cost over 90,000RMB, imitating the Tai He Palace in Beijing and carrying a strong flavor of nationality which was appreciated by visitors from different countries . China achieved great success in that “world exposition” and was awarded 56 grand medals, 67 honorary medals, 196 gold medals , 239 silver medals and 147 bronze medals. <sup>6</sup>In addition to this exposition, China also participated Philadelphia International Exposition in the United States in 1926.

Since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, China held various kinds of domestic expositions besides going abroad for international expositions. The well-known ones are as follows: “Tianjing Industrial Exposition” directed by Tianjing General Commercial Affairs Association in 1907, “Wuhan Industrial Exposition” held in Wuchang in 1909, “Nanyang Industrial Exposition” held in Nanjing in 1910, “Chinese National Goods Exposition” held in Shanghai in 1928, and “West Lake Exposition” held in Hangzhou in 1930. These are all local expositions, except the Nanyang Industrial Exposition in 1910. In fact, it has become the first national exposition judged by its big scale, and to a certain extent, it came near to an international one so that it was listed in the “Dictionary of the History of International Exposition” compiled by J. Finding.

Besides China and Japan, other East Asian countries also actively participated in international expositions. Some countries sent representatives to it, some hired exposition area to display their products. For example, in Paris International Exposition in 1900, in addition to the exposition buildings set by China and Japan, other East Asian countries such as Korea and Thailand also had their

buildings there. The layout of Thai exposition building was “neither Chinese style nor Indian style. It imitated the design of the house of a tycoon in Pangu<sup>盘谷</sup>. There were two exhibition buildings, one was for displaying products and one served as wine shop , with bridge on the top to connect them.” Wood and cereal were their main products. What the Korean exposition building had for displaying were also mainly agricultural products and handicrafts.<sup>7</sup> Between 1902 and 1903, France held an international exposition in Hanoi, Vietnam, which was still the colony of France then, both China and Japan sent their exposition delegation there. In 1907, America held a sport welcoming game in its colony Manila, Philippine, “there were parades and various products display”, China was invited to attend it.<sup>8</sup>

International expositions and expositions held by different countries on their own have directly pushed various countries to expand their trade and strengthen international cooperation, thus promoting the development of global technology and economy . “Crystal Palace” built in the first international exposition in London in 1851 indicated the coming of the “glass age” in human’s construction history; the 300-meter high Eiffel Tower left behind Paris International Exposition in 1889 represented the coming of “iron and steel age”. Many important technological inventions such as steam engine, train, telegraph, telephone, typewriter and TV have been spread around the world and become family word through the introduction and demonstration at the international exposition. At Paris International Exposition in 1889, when the great American inventor Adison demonstrated before millions of audience his invention --- telegraph and phonograph, it aroused widespread excitement and curiosity. In the sense of economical communication, exposition site has become a big advertising market and location for the sale of products and display. The leading status of those famous-brand products which contains high technology element is consolidated through awards, while those little-known quality products become well-known through comparison and evaluation. It was believed that “the purpose of holding expositions in various countries is to promote friendship, and emphasis is particularly laid on trade expansion”<sup>9</sup> Obviously, in the process of participating in and holding expositions, driven by the trend of modern civilization and new technology, East Asian countries, which comparatively lagged behind the advanced ones, correspondingly began their own

industrialization and was incorporated into the trend of world integration.

Basically, the function of exposition is not limited to mere technological and economical communications, it fosters the overall human civilization communication. People once sighed with emotion when the Nanyang Industrial Exposition was held that “one learns more from one-year visit of the exposition than 10-year study” .It clearly shows that the social function of exposition lies first of all in the communication and dialogue between different civilizations and cultures. The scale and the immediacy of this kind of communication and dialogue is hard to be replaced by whatever other mode of civilization communication, especially in the early time of industrial revolution. In the first British international exposition in 1851, participants of the exposition from the world amounts to over 17,000, and visitors 6,000,000. When France held its Paris International Exposition in 1867, participants went up to more than 50,000, and visitors 10,020,000! Many people felt it “amazing and shocking” to visit the exposition and consciously and unconsciously accepted the ablution of modern civilization.

The essence and soul of a civilization lies in its social values. The shock in thoughts and reflection triggered by civilization comparison will eventually be reflected from the shift in ideas. The participation in the international exposition became a catalyst to cause change in the ideas of considerable officials, intellectuals and businessmen in East Asian countries, or to strengthen their earlier variations in ideas. The first change appeared in their basic outlook of the world. Participation in the international exposition and the subsequent media advertisement publicize the idea of a competitive international society of different cultures in East Asian countries for the first time. The unique way of international exposition to have different areas for displaying the products of different countries is helpful for people to recognize the place and role of their local cultures in the world civilization system.

Being present at the grand occasion of international exposition, people cannot help feeling that “today’s world is the unity of all nations on the globe”. Chinese people came to realize that China was only a common member of the international family, and the warmed-over ideas of “Chinese supremacy” fell off of itself. In addition to this, people’s consciousness of economical competition and

technological creation, their ideas of market and energizing industry and commerce developed accordingly in the process of their participation in international expositions. All in all, the exposition rush coming from the west to the east is playing a positive role in driving East Asian countries to catch up with the western civilization and modernize themselves, so as to reshape themselves and develop further in the intense international competition.

Zhang Jian's participation in and understanding of international exposition happened exactly in the above historical context.

## **II. Zhang Jian's Participation in and Understanding of International Exposition in the Early Years of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century**

### **2.1 Zhang Jian and Japan's Osaka Exposition**

Zhang Jian's understanding about modern exposition began in May, 1903, when he came to Japan for his visit of the 5<sup>th</sup> Japanese exposition, that is Osaka Exposition.

Japan did far better than the Qing Dynasty in learning from the west and holding modern expositions. In 1877, Japan held its first domestic exposition in Ueno park of Tokyo. It lasted over 3 months, and over 450,000 people came to visit it. Later, three more expositions were held respectively in Ueno of Tokyo and Okazaki of Kyoto in 1881, 1890 and 1895.<sup>10</sup> From March 1 to July 1 in 1903, Japan held its fifth domestic exposition in the Temple of Heaven King in Osaka. It covered an area of 600,000 square feet, and more than 5,300,000 people came to visit it. Various exposition buildings housing over 220,000 pieces of products were set, such as Industrial Building, Farming Building, Forestry Building, Aquaculture Building, Transportation Building, Machinery Building, Educational Building, Arts Building, Sports Building and Taiwan Building. Japanese emperor and other such VIP as the former Prime Minister Hirofumiita, Taro Katsura, and former Foreign Minister Jutaro Komura came to visit it.<sup>11</sup>

As the most important gentry-merchant in the late Qing Dynasty, Zhang Jian received great attention and was invited by Japan to visit the exposition. It was his first trip to Japan and it lasted

over 2 months. He arrived in Japan in May 28 and returned to China in July 26. During his stay in Japan, in addition to visiting the exposition, he traveled south to Nagasaki of Kyushu and north to Hokkaido, visiting and examining dozens of factories, farms, schools and other organizations, and for the first time he had a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of Japan. Zhan Jian also acquired practical knowledge about modern exposition through his trip to Japan. We may say Zhang Jian's trip to Japan has in fact become the starting point of his thoughts about modern exposition and that of his exposition career, which had a far-reaching influence on his activities concerning industry and local autonomy cause. As to the motivation of his visit to Japan, Zhang Jian said clearly "After the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895, I had the idea of developing industry together with education. The planning and managing of textile factory takes 5 years to show its effect, so I intend to go to Japan for an exploration during this period. .... In January this year, Xu Jiyu sent me Japanese ambassador Amano's invitation in Jiangning, and I made my mind to go."<sup>12</sup>

According to Zhang Jian's private diary, the following day of Zhang Jian and his party's arrival in Osaka, they went to the temple of the Heaven King visiting the exposition. They visited Arts and Crafts , Machinery , Education and Health Buildings in order, commenting that " the products in the Machinery Building and Education Building made by students was the most admirable ones. The embroidery in the Arts Building is excellent, but its paintings were common." From Zhan Jian's diary in the first day we can see he paid special attention to China's participation in the exposition, noticing that there was special Reference Building for displaying products of all participant countries. In terms of China, only six provinces --- Jiangsu, Hubei, Hunan, Shandong, Sichuan and Fujian prepared goods for the exposition, and most of the exhibits were antiques. Zhang Jian was rather dissatisfied with this condition, thinking the suitable place for these antiques to go was museum, not an exposition. He also made a comparison of the situation of China and Japan at the exposition, believing that China lagged far behind Japan in this respect. He pointed out: "Japan began to manage non-governmental agricultural and industrial exhibitions by official money in the tenth year of Meiji period, later in the fourteenth, twenty-third and twenty-eighth year of Meiji period , three more exhibitions were held successively with increasing scale. Since the twenty-eighth year of Meiji period , Japan began to hold



expositions in various prefectures, prefectures and counties to gain more practical experience, only the selective goods can be put on display. The above six provinces did not compete with each other and presented lots of exhibits without selection, only to congest the exposition space .”<sup>13</sup>

The fourth day after Zhang Jian’s arrival in Japan, he went to visit the exposition again, paying special attention to Agricultural and Forestry Building. He noticed that Japan had made rapid progress in agriculture, its yield of adzuki bean, soybean, barley and wheat was “far more than that of China”. While he was examining Hokkaido’s map of soil cultivation, Zhang Jian particularly made a comparison of what he did in Tongzhou and Haimen (Jiangsu province) in terms of reclamation and culture with that of Kuninaridate and Kiyotaka Kuroda in Hokkaido. Following that he sighed with emotion: “Kuninaridate and Kiyotaka Kuroda are famous for their accomplishment in Hokkaido. Yet, what they have achieved is only to bring their potential to full play and realize their ideal. With the full support of their government, what cannot be done?..... This is their luck which I can not have.” <sup>14</sup> Similar sigh appeared frequently during his stay in Japan . He felt it was far more difficult in China than in Japan to develop industry and commerce with little practical support from the government and little attention of the scholar-bureaucrats<sup>15</sup> In Japan, there was not only a clear line between the function of businessmen and government officials, but also full support for the development of industry and commerce from the government. He wrote in his diary “In Japan, the government officials advocates the development of industry and commerce for the benefits of its people, profits goes to businessmen and the government neither deprives the businessmen of their right to make profits nor stop their business, from this we can see how intelligent they are!”<sup>16</sup> Although Japan had its own problem in the matter of political policy and commerce, since Meiji Restoration, Japan achieved great success in developing industry and reclamation and successfully held one after another quite a few expositions, it could not be denied it had a lot to do with the open industry policy of the Meiji government.

Zhang Jian was most deeply impressed by the progress that Japan made in technology, industry and the overall civilization degree since Meiji Restoration through his visit to the exposition. Electricity and electric bulb which signified the level of technological progress then was still rare in

the Qing Dynasty, but it was already a common thing in Japan. The Osaka Exposition noticeably demonstrated what Japan had achieved in industrial dynamic revolution. Zhang Jian made vivid description about this in his diary. It read: “The 10<sup>th</sup> day stay in Japan ..... I went to visit Machinery Building with **Bofu** after meal. It was Friday in Japan, all the lights in and outside the exposition were on ..... 7-color mirror was spinning in the water curtain pavilion , flashing the beautiful light of neon light. It seemed they achieved quite a lot in optical invention.”<sup>17</sup> Concerning the progress Japan made in its industry, Zhang Jian noted in his diary: “I went to visit the Machinery Pavilion at the exposition again and found that the textile products were the best, coronene-making excellent. There were also other products such as mat weaving machine, paddy pestling machine, oil pressing machine, sugar refining machine, cigarette making machine, water uptake machine and noodle-making machines.”<sup>18</sup>

It is not difficult to see from Zhang Jian’s diary that while Zhang Jian was visiting the exposition, in addition to learning about Japan’s development in politics, economy, industry , commerce and education, he had been paying attention to a central question, that is, how to learn from Japan’s experience to effectively foster what he was doing in his hometown (Nantong)----- village autonomy and construction work. He made very careful observation of the work in this aspect . For example, the first day when he visited the exposition, he felt very regretful that such quality goods as the cotton of Haimen and the salt of Lvsi and Zhenliang were not put on display on the exposition.<sup>19</sup> In May 15,when he revisited the Aquaculture Pavilion, he thought of Nantong. <sup>20</sup>In order to develop Nantong’s salt industry and agriculture, Zhang Jian went to visit the Aquaculture Pavilion , Farming and Fishery Pavilion consecutively in May 28 and May 29. In the Farming and Fishery Pavilion, he wanted to buy some agricultural and industrial machinery for Nantong’s agricultural cultivation.<sup>21</sup>

1903 was the most important year for Zhang Jian’s industry career. Since he went into business in 1894 as Number One Scholar, after 10 years painstaking management, the businesses he had been running began to show signs of effect. The trip to Japan for visiting the exposition provided him not only a chance to have a personal understanding of exposition, the product of modern civilization, but also a catalyst to really learn about Japanese society and became informed of the practical development of modern economy and education. A brief estimate showed that only in two months

time, he endured the hardships of a long journey and traveled widely in Japan, seeing many new things he was anxious to know and obtaining much new knowledge he longed for. Besides the information he acquired at the exposition, he had been to Tokyo and Osaka, carefully examining their primary schools , middle schools, normal schools, agricultural and commercial schools; he had also explored the factories, mint, port, iron smith institute, and bank in Osaka; the paper-making factory and shaft-sinking in Shizuoka; letter-press making field in Tokyo; bast fabric making field, seeds-breeding field ,and cattle-tending field in Hokkaido; and the salt field in Kurasiki.

The establishment of Nantong Museum was the landmark in Zhang Jian's modern agricultural career development in Nantong, it also became the first modern museum in China. It was his visits to the various museums during his visit to Japan in 1903 that inspired him to establish a museum. In 1905, based on the findings from his examination on Japan, he petitioned the Educational Department and Zhang Zhidong for imitating Japan and setting up an Imperial Museum in the capital, and museums in all provinces gradually. He pointed out that the building of museums and libraries across the country is a common practice of modern civilized countries. It was a matter of great significance for it aimed at exposing the public to the native country's culture, absorbing the cultural essence of various countries and making the country more civilized. He said Japan's Tokyo Imperial Museum was very unique and was a good example for China to follow .“Japan's Imperial Museum is slightly different from that of other countries, and is unmatched by others. Japanese government contributes all their collections of various dynasties to the museum and makes it open to the public; besides, its citizens are allowed to put their private collections on display there too. What a grand occasion! It is advisable that we learn from Japan and establish our imperial museum in the capital.”<sup>22</sup> Based on his experience of running school in Nantong, Zhang Jian particularly pointed out that the establishment of museums and libraries could make up for the shortage of school education and made more people enjoy mass education and enhance the general civilization degree of the country.

It is not difficult to see what Zhang Jian concerned most when he was in Japan was what he was going ahead with and what he was going to do in China, especially in his hometown, Nantong. Between 1903 and 1911, he managed to run quite a few enterprises and schools one after another. For

example, he established the Salt Industry Company, Fishery Company, Cultivation and Herding Company Branch in 1903; In 1904, he set up Pencil Company, Japanese style Experiment Salt Field, Shipping Company, Inland River Shipping Company and Printing Bureau. In 1905, he ran schools like Worker's Technical School, Commercial Ship School, Preliminary School. Following that in 1906, he established Iron Smelting Company, Distillery, Agricultural Affairs Experimental Institute, Railway School, Law Institute, Civil Engineering Institute. In 1907 and 1908, he set up Dasheng Branch and Glass Company respectively. Besides, he also ran various preliminary schools during these years. What Zhang Jian saw and thought over in Japan bore a lot to do with his blueprint for Nantong, local autonomy and construction in Nantong.

Zhang Jian's trip to Japan and his visit of the exposition became a new starting point for his enterprise career. It enabled him to have a personal experience of the emergence of the capitalist industrial society and the various new things coming from the west. In particular, it enabled him to have a deep understanding about the rapid growth in Japan's national power since Meiji Restoration, which became an continuous source of power for his modernization construction work in China, especially in Nantong.

By coincidence, Shibusawa Eiichi, father of Japan's modern enterprise, obtained his comprehensive knowledge and deep understanding about modern western civilization also by visiting International Exposition, although it was many years earlier than Zhang Jian. In 1867, the fifteenth General of Shogunate Yoshinobu Hitotsubashi sent his brother Akitake as representative of Shogunate to attend the Paris International Exposition held in France. Shibusawa Eiichi was chosen to go with Akitake as an attendant. This two-year visit formed an important turning point for him. On their arrival in France, Shibusawa Eiichi went to visit the exposition with Akitake and his party. The most advanced industrial products were put on display at the exposition, such as the British gas engine, German electric machinery, French steel smelting stove, marine cable and water power elevator, and etc. All these novel products enabled Shibusawa Eiichi to broaden his sight and added to his experience. He became very interested in western civilization and determined to introduce them to Japan.<sup>23</sup>

## **2.2 Zhang Jian and Milan Fishery Exposition in Italy in 1906**

Fishery Exposition is a kind of professional international exposition which differs with International Exposition. It mainly aims at exchanging and spreading the technology and knowledge that different countries accumulated in aquatic breeding, fishing and fish product manufacturing. The late Qing Dynasty took part in four international fishery expositions: Milan International Fishery Exposition in 1906; Boston Fishery Exposition in America in 1906; 安凡士 Fishery Exposition in Belgium in 1907 and Washington International Fishery Exposition in America in 1908. Zhang Jian participated in plotting and directing China's first participation in Milan Fishery Exposition in Italy.

Italian Embassy in China presented a note to the Foreign Affairs Department of the Qing Dynasty, inviting China to the fishery exposition held in Milan. The note read: "Our country will hold an exposition in Milan, it includes a fishery exposition. We are informed by our government to request you to send the note to the Commerce Department and the General Tax Department. Please inform all provinces and the local authority along waterway to plaster the notice. Fishermen of the fishery company are also invited to attend it."<sup>24</sup> After the Commerce Department received the note sent by the Foreign Affairs Department, it sent letter to the Nanyang Minister and Beiyang Minister (ministers in charge of the affairs in the South and North China respectively), consulting what to do. Later, Zhang Jian, who was then the first -class counselor of the Commerce Department was recommended by the Nanyang Minister Zhou Fu to plot the fishery exposition activities.<sup>25</sup>

Based on his experience of visiting the Osaka Exposition in Japan in 1903 and his study of all the past fishery expositions, Zhang Jian put forth two essential suggestions, which to a certain extent influenced the policy of the Qing Dynasty government towards expositions.

Firstly, he suggested that "the Fishery Company of Seven Provinces "be established, and the authority cooperated with businessmen to prepare products for the exposition themselves. Zhang Jian believed that Chinese businessmen benefited little from the previous expositions mainly because the foreigners were trusted to be in charge of it, and it is difficult to motivate the initiatives of non-governmental merchants. He pointed out: "China's participation in international expositions

started from Austrian Vienna International Exposition in 1876, followed by 费尔特 International Exposition, Paris International Exposition and London International Exposition, yet, no attention was paid to it at all. It was not until 1900 that we set up our own exposition building in Paris International Exposition, it cost 150,000 yen, but it was still the foreigners who were in charge of the affairs.” Later the scholar-bureaucrats and the government paid some attention to the work and noticeable effect was achieved. “The scholar-bureaucrats paid some attention to the work at the exposition in Osaka , Annam and Tokyo, and our capital’s cloisonné was awarded the super-class diploma. In 1904, exposition was held in St. Louis in America, the government attached importance to it , and infant Fulun was sent to attend it. It was estimated the Osaka exposition cost over ten thousands raised from different provinces, and the St. Louis exposition cost the Finance Department 750,000 yen.”<sup>26</sup> So Zhang Jian maintained that the efforts of the government be combined with the civilians’ to prepare for the fishery exposition, “Corporation of Seven Provinces should be established with two fishing vessels in each province, regardless of regions, they should communicate with one another”, He referred to the practice of other countries and ordered “ the Corporation of Seven Provinces be responsible for making rules which includes different categories such as fishing ground, fishing tackle, fishing boat, fish species, aquatic products, and aquatic products manufacturing. The list is to be sent to the following provinces like Shangdong, Zhejiang, Fujian, Guangdong, Anhui, Hubei, Jiangxi, and Hunan, and the customs offices and commercial offices of these provinces are responsible for appointing people to prepare products required by the list and send them to Wusong Fishery Exposition to be put on display.”<sup>27</sup>

Secondly, Zhang Jian reminded the Qing Dynasty government of paying attention to the sovereignty over territorial waters implied in this fishery exposition. He insisted that China should take advantage of this fishery exposition to declare Chinese sea power, which was a very valuable insight then. Early in 1904, Zhang Jian made proposals to the Commercial Department that sea power should be integrated with fishery, and China came to realize that “ sea power lies in fish ery”.<sup>28</sup> After a careful examination of the history of various countries in holding fishery exposition, Zhang Jian believed that since Britain held its fishery exposition in 1862, many countries kept expanding their

fishing ground, and “only after several decades, the fishing ground was expanded from 3 sea miles to 2,500 sea miles . Germany, France, America, Russia, Italy and Austria followed Britain’s example. Fishery is connected with sovereignty over territorial waters very closely. “<sup>29</sup> China had ignored its fishery for a long time, and had no knowledge of the so-called sea power. Consequently, the Qing Dynasty government should took the chance of participating in the fishery exposition to make the sea map and show its fishing ground and declare its sovereignty over territorial waters.

The Commercial Department adopted Zhang Jian’s proposals, and made Zheng Xiaoxu premier to establish “ Fishery Corporation of Seven Provinces”. Meanwhile, Zhou Fu, the Minister of Commercial Department and South Sea, ordered county magistrate Chen Shoupeng and vice-General of Navy Qiu Baoren to set up a bureau and have the “map of the Fishing Ground in Sea and River.” made. In February 1906, based on the sea map made by the British Navy, two general Chinese sea maps and seven sea maps of seven coastal provinces were completed. Not only longitude and latitude were drawn on it, but also Chinese and English notes were attached. In July the same year, another three sea maps were completed, and one of them was printed for sale by Nanyang Official Press.<sup>30</sup>

Plotted and directed by Zhang Jian and other people, the preparations for the fishery exposition and the holding of it were quite successful. The Fishery Corporations of Jiangsu and Zhejiang provinces set their exposition halls in early April and displayed their exhibits for three days. Several thousands of people went to visit it each day. “The consuls of other countries in Shanghai and foreign businessmen all went to visit it continuously.” After that, the exhibits were shipped to Italy to take part in the exposition. It was estimated that China won over a hundred of medals and certificates at the exposition, and “most participants reaped slight gains from the exposition”<sup>31</sup> Though it was much better than before, Zhang Jian still felt unsatisfied with the government’s support for taking part in international exposition, thinking that the government’s support was too insufficient. He made such comment:” On the surface, our participation in the Milan International Exposition aimed at developing our fishery, what lied beyond that was to demonstrate our sea power. Yet, the government provided no money for it at all, only demanding the Fishery Corporation which was to be established to deal with it. As a result, only 25,000 yen was collected from seven coastal provinces. How inappropriate the

imbalance in the work was!”<sup>32</sup>

Another achievement of the exposition was that for the first time, the 21 clauses of the *General Regulations for Going Abroad for Exposition* issued in 1905 was followed and it was up to the authority combining the efforts of the civilians to handle the international exposition work.<sup>33</sup> Eventually, China began to get rid of the old situation in which the foreign customs officials were in charge of the exhibition affair and made the preparation work move towards a systematic pattern. It was a great change in the history of Chinese exposition, and Zhang Jian played an essential role in it.

### **2.3 Zhang Jian and Nanyang Industrial Exposition in 1910**

At the end of the Qing Dynasty, in addition to taking part in international expositions, China started to hold its own expositions. In October 1906, the Department of Agriculture, Industry and Commerce established Capital Industrial Display Institute in Beijing “especially for displaying China-made products for people to have a visit and serves as the basis for comparison and improvement.”<sup>34</sup> In the same year, Industrial Exposition was held in Chengdu for the sake of “imitating foreign international expositions and making some adaptations.” In 1907, Tianjing General Chamber of Commerce directed “Tianjing Industrial Exposition,” and within one month, clients far and near delivered up to nearly 300,000 products for exposition.<sup>35</sup> In 1909, the Governor of Hubei and Hunan provinces Chen Bianlong launched “Wuhan Industrial Exposition” in Wuchang and set five display halls for exhibiting the products selling well in Hubei province; in addition, four exposition halls were set for Zhili, Hunan, Shanghai and Ningbo together with seven other special display rooms for Hanyang Iron and Steel Factory, Industrial Institute and etc. The exposition lasted 45 days and served the purpose of “awarding the industrial and commercial lines of Hubei province and being helpful to their progress.”<sup>36</sup> Even such remote province as Sichuan held six industrial expositions in Chengdu between 1906 and 1911 by “imitating foreign international expositions and making some adaptations”, “when the exposition was held, products of different places were brought there for competition, which formed an unseen spectacle of Sichuan.”<sup>37</sup>

Nanyang Industrial Exposition held in Nanjing in 1910 was the first national exposition and the



biggest one in scale at the end of the Qing Dynasty which lasted nearly five months. Except frontier provinces, all other provinces had their exposition halls and Britain, America, Germany and Japan had their exhibits on display too. The exhibits were estimated to reach over 100,000 pieces with 5,000 pieces being awarded prizes. Over 200,000 people from various places came to visit it.

At this most important exposition of the late Qing Dynasty, a number of south east gentry-merchants led by Zhang Jian played a key role in it. They were the practical organizers of this national exposition. The Exposition Affairs Office was the central organization of the exposition which had one director acted by Duan Fang first and taken over later by Zhang Renjun. Zheng Xiaoxu acted as the chief vice-director, the other vice-directors were acted by the then Jiangning Fansi (江宁藩司, director in charge of Jiangning civil affairs and finance), Jiangning Xuesi (江宁学司, director in charge of Jiangning education ), Jiangnan Liangdao (江宁粮道, director in charge of Jiangning cereal shipment), Jinlin Guandao (金陵关道, director in charge of Jinlin customs affairs) and director of the Board of Shanghai General Chamber of Commerce Yu Qiaqing. The Exposition Affairs Office was set up in Nanjing with Chen Qi acting as its Managing Director. Under the administration of the office was its board which was set in Shanghai and responsible for collecting money and requisitioning exhibits from different provinces and etc. Most of the directors of the board were Shanghai-based gentry-merchants. To ensure the smooth collection and delivery of the exhibits, Organizations such as Sponsoring Associations , Products Associations and Exhibits Associations were established in all provinces. Zhang Jian was appointed inspector of the exposition in August 1909, responsible for inspecting the exhibits.

At the opening ceremony of the Nanyang Industrial Exposition, on behalf of the Provincial Assembly of Kiangsu province, Zhang Jian delivered a speech to congratulate the holding of Nanyang Industrial Exposition. It was said that his speech was “emotionally touching”, and well commented. Following the beginning of the exposition, Zhangjian led the work of setting up the Research Association of Industrial Exposition, with Li Ruiqing acting as director and Zhang Jian as general secretary. It intended to “combine the wisdom of comrades to study and find out the advantages and disadvantages of the techniques and quality of the products on display so as to guide their progress in

accordance with the purpose of holding expositions.” The association studied the exhibits in agriculture, health, education, handicrafts, marshal equipment, arts, and machinery halls in June and July. The study usually focused on a certain subject, such as Mo Zhujun’s “A Comparison of Chinese Agricultural Products with That of Foreign Countries”, Jiang Shousheng’s “A Comparison of Jiangning satin and Hangzhou satin” and Tao Xianjin’s “Comments on Jiangxi china and Hunan china”. The members of the association did their study independently at first, made a report based on their findings, and then gathered together to “prove the truth of the findings and challenge whatever is doubtful”; later, they invited experts to provide methods for improvement work. Finally, all the research findings were edited for publishing.<sup>38</sup> The establishment of the Association of Industrial Exposition and its effective work contributed to the improvement of Chinese products.

As mentioned earlier in the paper, Zhang Jian was deeply impressed by international exposition, a new form of thing which performed the function of fostering economic development and civilization advance when he visited Osaka International Exposition in 1903. The holding of the Nanyang Industrial Exposition provided him a chance to examine how to transplant this new means for developing economy to China successfully. He visited all the exposition halls very carefully. In May 27<sup>th</sup>, he visited Zhili exposition hall and noted in his diary:” I found Yuan Shikai very capable for his job as Zhili governor, he did a far better job in developing the industrial techniques than Jiangsu did.”<sup>39</sup> Zhang Jian believed that Zhili gained advantage over Jiangsu in machinery and new style textile products.

During the exposition period, the gentry-merchants from the whole country gathered in one place, which help strengthen their unity and the degree of socialization and organization increased. At the exposition, urged by Zhang Jian and other people, the General Chamber of Commerce of Shanghai, Jiangning and Suzhou united to launch a commercial conference of Jiangsu province to discuss how to implement the tax reform in Jiangsu province. In October 1910, encouraged by the representatives of the Chamber of Commerce and industry in Shanghai and Tianjing, the gentry-merchants of different places brewed to organize a national Chinese industry association “with the aim of connecting the industry to investigate the industries in the country so as to enhance Chinese citizen’s ability to

develop industry. At the establishment meeting, Li Pingshu, Xiang Ruikun were elected consuls, and Chen Qi, Yu Qiaqing members of the board. Zhang Jian and chairmen of the Chamber of Commerce of various ports and major industries were invited to join the board of directors. The office of the association was located in Shanghai.<sup>40</sup> Zhang Jian also urged to organize National Agricultural Affairs Federation, Industrial Speech Assembly, Press Association and other national associations. The National Agricultural Affairs Federation was launched by the Research Association of Industrial Exposition in which Zhang Jian acted as general secretary, with the aim of “connecting the agricultural organizations in the whole country to investigate the national agricultural condition so as to plan, advise and guide agricultural improvement. “ In fact, it was the unity of the Agricultural Associations in all provinces.<sup>41</sup> The National Agricultural Affairs Federation had its journal and Zhang Jian wrote preface for it.<sup>42</sup>

It indicated that gentry-merchants like Zhang Jian showed very wide concern for the society. Though they belonged to the business circle, their concern went beyond the business line to agriculture, even to the overall development of national economy, which made them surpass the limitation of common short-sighted Babbitt businessmen. Such grand occasion as the exposition provided Zhang Jian and the like a hard-to-find opportunity to uplift their spiritual world and realize their ambition.

### **III. Exposition and the Non-Governmental Communications of Merchants in China, Japan and US**

International exposition greatly fostered the economic communications between China and other countries, it also provided an opportunity for people in the industry circle and merchants to communicate and contact with each other closely. Early in the first London International Exposition in 1851 in Britain, Shanghai businessman Xu Rongcun showed high commercial wisdom and sensitivity to it and mailed twelve parcels of “Rongji Silk” to take part in the exposition. It turned out that the silk he sent was awarded gold and silver medals by British Victorian Queen. Following this, “Rongji Silk” sold very well at home and abroad, and Xu Rongcun achieved great success in business. At the St.

Louis International Exposition in America in 1904, the situation in which foreign customs officials represented China to take part in the exposition was changed, and China, for the first time, sent government officials leading businessmen to participate in the exposition. At the Liege International Exposition in Liege town in Belgium the next year, representatives of seventeen Chinese business units went to attend the exposition. Since then, Chinese merchants began to step up the stage of international trade communication, International Exposition.

In 1910 when China held its Nanyang Industrial Exposition, the communications between Chinese merchants and foreign ones had gradually developed into a popular “state diplomacy”, that is the non-governmental diplomatic activities conducted by businessmen and other kinds of people. Between 1895 and 1897, French Lyons delegation of the Chamber of Commerce came to China for a 2-year business affairs investigation, and had preliminary contact with Chinese businessmen. Almost meanwhile between 1896 and 1897, British Blackben delegation of the Chamber of Commerce came to examine business affairs in East China, Central China and South China.<sup>43</sup>

The Nanyang Industrial Exposition further promoted the communications between the entrepreneurs and businessmen in and outside China. Japan and America once sent their industry delegations to China for an investigation. They mainly held talks and communicated with the Chamber of Commerce of China. Japanese industry delegation was composed of 12 members and 2 attendants, with the president of Japanese Mail Liner Company Renpe Kondo as its leader. Most of the delegation members are chairman or vice-chairman of the Chamber of Commerce, such as Michio Doi, chairman of Osaka Chamber of Commerce, Kahee Otani, chairman of Yokohama Chamber of Commerce, Ohashi Shintaro, vice-chairman of Tokyo Chamber of Commerce, Souhee Suzuki, vice-chairman of Nagoya Chamber of Commerce and Shigetaroutarou Shiraishi, General Manager of Tokyo Chamber of Commerce.<sup>44</sup> Japanese delegation claimed that the purpose for their trip was to visit Nanyang Industrial Exposition and examine Chinese industry and commerce. “To establish a bridge between Chinese trade and Japanese trade and promote the business in the two countries.” It included the approaching of the entrepreneurs in the two countries; inviting Chinese entrepreneurs with strength to visit Japan; paving the way for the rise of the common cause of the two countries.<sup>45</sup> At the same

time it “ carried the order of the government to contact Chinese government”, attempting to build up their trade relationship with China through the contact with Chinese government officials and the Chamber of Commerce.

Before Japanese industry delegation arrived in China, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Qing Dynasty government had informed the Chambers of Commerce in different places to make reception preparations and emphasized that “delegations should be taken good care and well treated”<sup>46</sup> Though some Chambers of Commerce thought that “the purpose of Japanese delegation was nominally to investigate our industry, but to expand their power and benefits in fact”,<sup>47</sup> out of politeness, they made enthusiastic preparations for entertaining the delegation. The Japanese delegation arrived at Andong county of China through Korea on May 12, 1910, then traveled all the way through Fengtian, Dalian, Yingkou, Tianjing, Beijing, and Hankou to Nanjing to visit the Nanyang Industrial Exposition. After that, they paid visits to Zhenjiang, Suzhou, Hangzhou and Shanghai cities, and returned to Japan via Shanghai.

Although there still existed some tense atmosphere in Sino-Japanese relationship, the shadow left by Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895 and Japan-Russia War(1904) did not disappear completely, the Japanese industry delegation was very satisfied with the reception work in China. In his report back to Japan, Renpe Kondo, leader of the delegation said: “Chinese authority and its people welcome us and treat us heartily, as representatives of Japanese citizens and the ambassador of peace, we received the kindness of Chinese officials and citizens for us in such a big empire with a population of over 400,000,000, we have the responsibility to report to our country fellows about this.” He particularly talked about his impression of the Nanyang Industrial Exposition, he said : “concerning the good performance of China at the exposition, I can only chose to talk about some outstanding ones. Above all, the exhibits in the Education Hall deserves mentioning. Only four or five years passed since China started to run new style preliminary schools, yet, some exhibits made by the pupils are admirable enough. What comes next is the products produced by Hanyang Iron and Steel Works and Pingxiang’s model, they are the important achievements at the exposition and are well enough to show off to the world. The products of the South Sea Islands put on display in the Jinan Exposition Hall are made by

the Chinese living on the South Sea Islands, they are quite good. It is a definite fact that China's power covers the South Seas. In short, China's Nanyang Industrial Exposition can be said successful." He also particularly talked about Japanese influence on China's exposition cause, pointing out "most of the people working for the exposition are students studying abroad in Japan ." <sup>48</sup>

Comparatively, American enterprise delegation is more of a nongovernmental one and their visit to China was longer and more productive. The delegation consisted of 23 members, seven wives of the members and two attendants. The delegation leader was the former chairman of Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce William H. Booth, but its key figure was the chairman of the board of Dollar Steamer Company Robert Dollar. <sup>49</sup> Members of the delegation are mainly made up of representatives of the associations of merchants in cities along the West Pacific, such as San Francisco, Seattle, Tacoma, Spokane, Portland, Auckland, Los Angeles and San Diego. Many of the delegation members were the famous entrepreneurs of US West, of whom ten people dealt in finance, eight people dealt in foreign trade, some of them were running more than one industry. Three members of the delegation were also members of the delegation of the Associated Chambers of Commerce of the Pacific Coast to Japan in 1908. It can be seen that America attached great importance to the visit to China and endowed the delegation with important mission.

The American delegation claimed they had two objects for their visit, one was to promote the friendly feelings between the two nations, the other to increase the trade between the two countries. For these objects, they prepared in advance 23 subjects directly relating to increasing trade and investment in China. The subjects included:

1. Chinese immigration.
2. Bank and loan associations.
3. Monetary exchange.
4. Revenue and taxation.
5. Opening of Panama Canal; its effects on commerce.
6. Establishment of permanent exhibits.
7. Merchant marine, United States and China.

8. Coke, coal and lumber.
9. Fruits.
10. American and Chinese raw cotton and silk.
11. Railroads.
12. Canal, rivers and harbors.
13. Electricity.
14. Foreign loan.
15. Opium.
16. Constitutional government.
17. Extra territoriality.
18. Education.
19. Social position of women.
20. The evolution of China.
21. Sages of China.
22. Consular service.
23. Possibilities of the United States of America increasing commerce and the causes of the decline of our trade and the remedy.<sup>50</sup>

Most of the projects directly served the purpose of increasing American trade to China, some indirectly served to promote American trade to China and American capital export. The reason of investigating “Chinese immigration” lied in trying to eliminate Chinese anti-foreign feelings left by the campaign of resisting against American goods in 1905 launched by Chinese merchants.

The American delegation arrived in Shanghai on August 12, 1910, they left for Nanjing to visit the Nanyang Industrial Exposition in August 20. Led by Zhang Jian, the South East gentry-merchants took the chance of American delegation’s visit in China to actively conduct the so-called “Sino-American state diplomacy.” In August 22, Zhang Jian held a honorable feast to entertain Mr. Dollar and his party. Representatives of the Provincial Assembly in 16 provinces were present at the feast. Zhang Jian delivered a long speech at the feast, saying: “China is still on the early stage of

transformation, you must have seen the situation in your daily contact. Though China is carrying out reform in its industry, it involves many other aspects such as finance, law, bureaucracy system. Obvious effects can not be achieved unless reform is carried out meanwhile in these areas. I can show one example of the little achievement we have made to you, that is the Provincial Assembly which provides us a chance to have a happy gathering.” Judged by Zhang Jian’s speech, the significance of the contact between the industry circles of the US and China was not limited to economic cooperation and communication, it aimed more at driving comprehensive reform in China through their role in participating in and discussing government and political affairs. Zhang Jian emphasized in his speech that Chinese reform would take American industry and politics as a guide, and hoped the American delegation would provide guidance and help to their on-going constituent activities through “helpful means so as to produce mutual help for each other.”<sup>51</sup> The reply address of American delegation made by their representative George Burnham also carried strong political color to the effect :”The daily progress made in Chinese politics must be represented by its Civil Provincial Assembly, in this connection the Provincial Assembly of Kiangsu province has done the best job. We sincerely hope that some day the Provincial Assembly would match the Freedom Hall in Philadelphia.”<sup>52</sup> Dollar was also aware of the political significance of Zhang Jian’s speech, believing “as they(the Chinese) are only getting started in this new departure of constitutional government this meeting of all the Assemblymen was most important.” At the banquet held by the Provincial Senate, members of the Chamber or Senate were “ all anxious to know as much as possible of American form of government.”<sup>53</sup>

In addition to Shanghai and Nanjing, the American delegation also toured and investigated the more economically developed upper and middle branch of Yantze River and such south-east coastal cities as Hangzhou, Suzhou, Nanjing, Zhenjiang, Jiujiang, Wuhang, Tianjing, Yantai, Fuzhou, Guangzhou, Xiamen and capital city Beijing. Along their journey, they passed through Jiaxing, Wuxi, Changzhou, Wuhu, Hong Kong. The delegation had widespread contact with Chinese businessmen and officials and carefully examined many important industrial, commercial enterprises and cultural, educational organizations.

The American delegation obviously focused their interest in learning about Chinese industries



and commerce and communicating with relevant personnel. “Visiting various industries” was the most frequent activities they had, amounting to over 50 times, including visiting industry and mining, business, trade, finance, railroad, agriculture, public utility and foreign-owned enterprises. The delegation “spared no effort in studying our industries, and placed special emphasis on promoting Sino-American business, going out of their way to discuss details with courtesy.”<sup>54</sup> Wherever they went, they held business and trade negotiations with the businessmen of local Chamber of Commerce. For example, in Nanjing, “both parties jointly organized a committee to discuss trade issues.” In Zhenjiang, they met a batch of businessmen and members of the Chamber of Commerce. At the welcoming banquet given by the governmental merchants, the American delegation demanded that the Chamber of Commerce send representatives to talk with the Commercial Affairs Committee of the delegation. In Hankou, they “talked with twenty leaders of merchants about trade affairs”. In Tianjing, they had pleasant talk with Tianjing General Chamber of Commerce about “import and export situation and how to increase the business of the two countries.”<sup>55</sup> In Yantai, they “discussed all matters of commercial interest to both of them” with the local businessmen. In Fuzhou, they “invited the members of the Chamber of Commerce to investigate the recent situation of American goods in Fujian province.” In Guangzhou, they held talks with the General Chamber of Commerce to “study business together.”<sup>56</sup>

Through on-the-spot investigation and their contact with Chinese merchants, the American delegation members had a preliminary knowledge about the development of Chinese economy and made some judgments as to the prospect of Sino-American economic communications. For example, Mr. Dollar expressed his opinion after he visited the Nanyang Industrial Exposition. He said: “You have a very rich agricultural country, perfectly level land and as productive as the best of any country, but you lack manufactures. No nation has ever become truly great measured by our modern standards, that has not engaged extensively in manufacturing. Ships and a merchant marine is also a necessary part in the commercial development of any great country, all of which you are lacking in.”<sup>57</sup> This is the general impression of the delegation members about Chinese economic development. The American entrepreneurs paid special attention to looking for new market for exporting products and capitals and

thought about how to compete with other foreign capitals in China. After paying a visit to Hankou and Tianjing where coal and iron resources had been exploited, American businessmen believed that Hankou and Tianjing would without doubt become two industrial centers of China in the future, so the chance to invest and develop business in the two places can not be missed. While they are visiting the large paper mill of Lung Chang in Shanghai, they noticed the mill was using the paper pulp imported from Norway and Australia, they thought of competing with them at once :” If our pulp manufacturers, and especially those from British Columbia, were to try, they could furnish all the pulp required in China, as the rate of freight from Norway must be double that from America, and that from Australia would be fifty per cent more.” On their visit to the coal mine in Luangzhou, when they found that “in all the shops and mines there is not a piece of American machinery”, they felt depressing. When they got to know the mine will possibly purchase American power generation equipment, they immediately thought that “a good, practical man is needed to get all this business.”<sup>58</sup>

During the period of American delegation’s visit in China, the merchants of the two countries discussed issues of Sino-American economic cooperation and communication through many rounds of talks. The subjects put forth by American delegation for discussion included: (1) Bank, one-half Chinese capital, one-half American. (2) Exhibits in China and America. (3) Exposition at San Francisco in 1915.(4) Reciprocity. (5) Merchants of both countries to visit each other. (6) Building of a steamer, one-half capital from each country, to fly Chinese flag. (7) Uniting the Chambers of Commerce in China with its headquarter in Shanghai.<sup>59</sup>

On November 11, 1910, acting on the agreement, the Chambers of Commerce in both China and America sent representatives to Shanghai to hold the “Sino-American Business Conference”, particularly studying the above-mentioned subjects. It was decided that four subjects can be put into operation: (1) Joint banks of US and China will be established with 10,000,000 yen; (2) The Chambers of Commerce in both countries set exposition institutes for each other; (3)The Chambers of Commerce in both countries send business investigators to each other; (4)Sino-American Steamer Corporation will be established. Eventually it was decided at the conference that “Chinese merchants are responsible for drafting bank regulation first, then it will be sent to American for checking and

confirming. Then, the bank can be set up. All the members of the conference agreed that the second and the third subjects were important measures for developing business and the Chambers of Commerce in both counties should be responsible for implementing them. As to the establishment of Sino-American Steamer Corporation listed in the fourth subject, the conference considered it as the forerunner of business, since Mr. Dollar personally was willing to do it with Chinese merchants, Chinese merchants should try doing it by becoming shareholder, so as to popularize it later.”

However, for various reasons, most of the subjects were not carried out except one. The Chinese American Bank of Commerce was finally established, but the way of its operation and management is far different from what was originally agreed upon. The most hopeful subject, the establishment of the Chinese American Steamer Corporation did not become a reality too. The fund raised by Chinese merchants was diverted to be only the share of foreign-owned Dollar Steamer Corporation. As for the other two subjects, even the basic preparations were not made.

The real significance and fruit of the visits of American Delegation and Japanese Delegation to China lay in opening up channels for further communication and cooperation of the merchants in the three countries, in addition to deepening the mutual understanding between the merchants in and outside China. The most direct fruit was both the American and Japanese Delegations invited Chinese Chambers of Commerce to return their visits, and took the chance to further conduct “merchants diplomacy” or “state diplomacy”, which played a role in promoting official diplomacy amongst the three countries, and launched far-reaching civil diplomatic activities.

During their visit in China, both the American and Japanese delegations officially invited the Chambers of Commerce in Shanghai and other places to return their visits, and Chinese Chambers of Commerce also agreed to. About over half a year after Japanese delegation returned to Japan, in February 1911, the Minister of Japanese Commercial Affairs Department officially sent China an invitation :” The Japanese Chamber of Commerce now would like to invite the entrepreneurs in Beijing, Tianjing, Hankou, Nanjing, Suzhou, Shanghai, Hangzhou and Guangzhou to visit Japan.” The Chinese Department of Agriculture, Industry and Commerce immediately informed the associations of merchants in these places, saying:” Japan sincerely invited our business circle to pay them a visit. It is

hard to decline such a hospitable invitation, only time is urgent, prompt preparations for it must be made.”<sup>60</sup> In April, the Chambers of Commerce in Shanghai, Beijing, Hankou, Hunan, Hangzhou and Suzhou held a meeting in Shanghai to elect publicly representatives for the delegation to Japan and discuss what should be covered by the visit. It was determined at the meeting that Chinese delegation would return Japanese visit in October.<sup>61</sup> On Oct. 18, 1911, a delegation made up of over 60 members was organized in Shanghai, Shen Zhongli, director of the board of Shanghai General Chamber of Commerce served as its chairman, and Zhao Yannong, premier of Beijing General Chamber of Commerce, vice-chairman. Members of the delegation included representatives from the Chambers of Commerce and other organizations of agriculture, industry and commerce in Shanghai, Tianjing, Hankou, Suzhou, Hunan, Zhenjiang, Yantai, Shashi, Lushan, Guangzhou, Yingkou, Baoding, Fengtian and Guilin.<sup>62</sup> However, while the delegation was ready and waiting to go, the flame of Wuchang Uprising in 1911 spread rapidly to many places, so that the delegation had to decide to postpone its schedule. After China’s Wuchang Uprising, though invited again by Japan and China reorganized its delegation and intended to leave in 1913, it did not come true for various reasons.<sup>63</sup>

Having gone through many setbacks, Chinese industry delegation was finally able to return American visit after Wuchang Uprising. Before Wuchang Uprising in 1911, Chinese Chambers of Commerce discussed to organize a delegation to visit America. The Chambers of Commerce in Shanghai, Hankou and Tianjing publicly elected Zhang Jian their representative to go up to Beijing and negotiate with the government of the Qing Dynasty about the visit to America, the establishment of the Chinese American Bank of Commerce and Chinese American Steamer Corporation and gained the approval the government. “200,000 yen was allowed to be allocated ” as “government allowance”<sup>64</sup> yet, because of turbulent current political situation, the plan collapsed. After Wuchang Uprising , American party sent frequent letters to urge the visit. In 1912 and 1913, Robert Dollar, the key figure of the American industry delegation, came to China for the sake of his own business and making preparations for holding Panama-Pacific International Exposition. He took the chance to persuade Chinese Chambers of Commerce to organize a delegation for a visit to America as agreed upon.<sup>65</sup> The American Chamber of Commerce even trusted its advisor of Panama-Pacific International Exposition.

Ai Beimu(爱贝穆)and other people to come to Tianjing, Hankou and Shanghai to persuade the Chambers of Commerce to organize the delegation. With the frequent urging and inviting of the American party, in April 1914, the Chambers of Commerce in different places held their first conference of National Federation of Chambers of Commerce in Shanghai. Representatives of the conference fully discussed the matter and determined in principle that a delegation will be organized for visiting America when the US was holding Panama-Pacific International Exposition in 1915.

Early in 1915, Mr. Dollar came to China again. After careful planning, he finally precipitated the Chinese enterprise delegation's trip to America. The delegation consisted of 12 members, the overseas Chinese tycoon of Guangzhou General Chamber of Commerce Zhang Zhenxing served as the chairman of the delegation, the great entrepreneur of Shanghai General Chamber of Commerce Nue Yuntai acted as vice-chairman, and the backbone of Chinese Youth League of Christianity Yu Rizhang was its honorary interpreter. Accompanied by Mr. Dollar, the delegation arrived in San Francisco in May 3, and after a 4-month visit in America, they returned to China in September. Chinese delegation's visit achieved great success, its chairman Zhang Zhenxing described in his report to the President Yuan Shikai after returning to China how the delegation was warmly welcomed by American society in their various visiting activities and ceremonial activities. He believed that:" If the two countries want to show goodwill to and help each other in the future, it must start from uniting the business of the two countries. I firmly hold this opinion in our communications with them only to show that China earnestly attaches importance to industry so as to execute my duty for the union later."<sup>66</sup> General secretary of the Department of Agriculture and Commerce Wu Zaizhang also considered the delegation's visit to America very successful in his report to the Department of Agriculture and Commerce, saying:" The delegation managed to travel across the US in such a short time visit, the social activities they had wherever they arrived not only promoted business friendship, but also contributed to the diplomacy of the two countries."<sup>67</sup> The major American entertainer Mr. Dollar commented on the Chinese Enterprise Delegation's visit to America as follows:" It is a great success", both parties had "established unforgettable friendship, and it would become the forerunner of trade between the countries"<sup>68</sup>

Through participating in and paying business visits to one another, the merchants in China, Japan and America directly led to the thought of “state diplomacy” or “merchant diplomacy”. It was exactly in the process of people’s intercultural communication, a new type of diplomacy, non-governmental diplomacy which differs with official diplomacy emerged as the times required. Though it was closely related to economy and trade, its real purpose lay in promoting the friendship between the two countries and developing pure non-governmental friendship, which was beyond the reach of official diplomacy of the government. This kind of diplomatic mode is essential when there are disagreements and troubles between the governments of the two countries, sometimes it can play the role of promoting the establishment of official diplomatic ties between the two countries.

Standing on the position of “state diplomacy”, some upper-class Chinese merchants then were able to abandon the diplomatic disagreements between countries during the process of communicating with Japanese and American merchants and promote international communications of non-governmental economic organizations. For example, quite a few merchants and other people publicly expressed their views before the Japanese delegation: “If Japanese can treat Chinese people with the most civilized right, I firmly believe there won’t be any Chinese citizen who is unwilling to have friendship with Japanese people”. They hoped that Japan would abstain from vice and learn virtue and foster the friendly communications of the people in the two countries.<sup>69</sup> While organizing the enterprise delegation to visit Japan, Shanghai General Association of Merchants clearly pointed out that “this visit to Japan is a pure state diplomacy, but in fact, it serves as an aid to official diplomacy”. At the first conference of Chinese Federation of Associations of Merchants to discuss how to organize the delegation to visit America, the inspection audit report also pointed out clearly: “This kind of activity is necessary for commercial diplomacy, so it needs organizing at once..... the organization of the enterprise delegation to visit America turn out a kind of diplomacy between the merchants of China and other countries, which will certainly produce an effect in the future.”<sup>70</sup>

As the most important leaders in Chinese and Japanese enterprise circle respectively, both Zhang Jian and Shibusawa Eiichi were firm advocates of “merchants diplomacy” and “state diplomacy”. Chairman of Japanese enterprise delegation Renpe Kondo mentioned in his summarization report back

to Japan that their visit to China was driven by Shibusawa Eiichi's thought of "state diplomacy", and "now baron Shibusawa Eiichi endowed us with the responsibility to act as the tie to connect China and Japan, we must carry out the mission even at the cost of our lives. If the state diplomacy between the two countries obtained through great pains this time was considered as fleeting clouds and abandoned without thinking, it will turn out the great misfortune of the two countries."<sup>71</sup> Zhang Jian played a key role in the merchants diplomatic activities between the merchants of Japan, China and America. He not only took part in the receptions of the two delegations and the talks with them many times, but also actively promoted the returning visit of Chinese enterprise delegation and once even made preparations to lead the delegation to visit America .

"Merchants diplomacy" initiated by such entrepreneurs as Zhang Jian, Shibusawa Eiichi and Dollar in China, Japan and America and the entrepreneurs' economic and cultural communications across the Pacific Ocean was like mere trickle that ran continuously even accompanied by an international political situation with quirky twist, thus it became a good story in the state diplomacy of the three countries. Following the communications of the entrepreneurs started from the Nanyang Commodity Exposition between the end of the Qing Dynasty and early Republican State, merchants of China, Japan and America continued their communication, and various sorts of communications became increasingly closer. For example, in 1917, a delegation of ten members led by Rose, General Advisor of Chinese American Trade Corporation came to visit China again, and was warmly welcomed by Shanghai Association of Merchants, Beijing Association of Merchants and National Federation of Associations of Merchants.<sup>72</sup> In 1920, American Workers' Union of Silk Industry organized a delegation to visit China, the next year, invited by American Workers' Union of Silk Industry, Chinese silk merchants attended New York International Exposition of Silk. In 1923, American silk merchants again organized a delegation to visit China, in the same year, Chinese silk merchants organized a delegation to take part in the second New York International Exposition of Silk. In 1922, both Chinese and Japanese merchants sent their representatives to attend the Pacific Commercial Affairs Conference held in Honolulu Hawaii) in the US. This is the first time that Chinese merchants participated in international merchants activities (not the usual enterprise visiting activities).

Chairman of the delegation of Chinese merchants representatives, the well-known Chinese entrepreneur Mu Ouchu was elected vice-chairman of the conference and member of the Order Committee. So far, Chinese merchants have formally stepped up the international stage and become an official member of international organizations of merchants.

Looking back on this historical process of merchants diplomacy, it can be seen clearly, the intercultural exchange and communications led by international exposition had such important significance and far-reaching influence that it went far beyond the imagination of Zhang Jian and Shibusawa Eiichi, two precursors who promoted the process of Chinese and Japanese exposition causes.

Notes:

- 1 Japan's First Participation in International Exposition, *Journal of China's Industry*, No.1, 5<sup>th</sup> year (1914) .
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