

186 (46 percent) were working either as rickshaw pullers, pedicab drivers, or street peddlers; only 76 (19 percent) were factory workers.⁴⁵ Another survey conducted in the early 1950s in Yaoshuilong, the largest slum of Shanghai, indicated that factory workers comprised 39.2 percent of the adult population (above fifteen years of age).⁴⁶ A third survey sample of 547 households in Yaoshuilong, including 1,223 adults, revealed that 53.7 percent of the adults were employed. Among those who were employed, factory workers comprised 37.1 percent; rickshaw pullers and pedicab drivers, 24.4 percent; peddlers, 20.3 percent; and others, 18.2 percent.⁴⁷ Given the fact that this slum was located right in the Huxi industrial district where cotton mills and many other factories were concentrated, the percentage of factory workers among the employed adults was fairly small; if we add in the unemployed, the percentage of factory workers among all adults was even smaller.

Since slum residents desperately sought a means of livelihood, any possibility that could give a minimum means for survival would draw them together. Thus a slum's location often gives a clue to the occupations of its residents. For example, many porters lived in the slums that were close to the Shanghai Railway Station in Zhabei, where daily thousands of passengers came and went. Also, most dock workers lived in the slums that were located along the Huangpu River, while few lived in the western part of the city where almost no dock jobs were available. Factory workers were most likely to be found in the slums of the Huxi and Hudong industrial districts. In the slums south of the old county town, one could find another occupational group: small handicraftsmen.⁴⁸ Their concentration there might have been a heritage of the traditional handicrafts which had been practiced in the nearby county seat.

There was only one occupational group that could be found in every slum of Shanghai: rickshaw pullers and pedicab drivers.⁴⁹ The nature of their work—they operated all around the whole city area every day seeking passengers—made the location of their residence relatively immaterial. More meaningfully, the ubiquitousness of rickshaw pullers and pedicab drivers suggests that this was the poorest group of people who formed the basic population of the straw shack slums of Shanghai.

CONCLUSION

The urban outcasts of Shanghai were those people who were forced by desperate circumstances in their rural homes to flee to the city in search of sheer survival.⁵⁰ Being mostly uneducated and unskilled laborers, they often could not compete with other, earlier urban-based migrants in the city. Failing to find stable employment, they squatted on whatever vacant area they could find in the city, where they erected "temporary" hovels as their homes. The straw huts, therefore, were the symbol of the marginal status of their inhabitants in this city. These people had, in a way, not been "accepted" by the metropolis. To use a term recently created by Shanghai scholars, these former peasants had not yet developed "Shanghai identities."⁵¹ As Lamson observed, "These immigrants are looked upon by the Shanghai natives as 'foreigners' and are forced to get along as best they can in a none too friendly environment." Indeed, the peripheral location of Shanghai's shantytowns symbolized the marginality of these immigrants. They were physically in Shanghai, but to some degree they had not yet entered the city. They did not enjoy any of the facilities that a modern city can provide to its residents. Also, they were, psychologically, still outside of the city, and they hardly regarded themselves as "urbanites." As late as in the 1970s, when straw huts had largely become history, inhabitants in some districts of Yangshupu still referred to themselves as *ala xiangxia ren* (we are country folks), with the connotation that they were inferior to other city people of Shanghai who were usually called *Shanghai ren* (Shanghai people). Indeed, even in the 1970s, these people still talked of going to Nanking Road (something they seldom did) as "going to Shanghai," although Nanking Road, the "Times Square" of Shanghai, was barely five miles from Yangshupu, and Yangshupu was itself surely part of Shanghai.⁵²

It seems that at any corner of the city when once a "temporary" straw hut slum appeared, it would last forever, regardless of the efforts of local authorities to remove it.⁵³ at the same time, new straw hut slums continued to appear.⁵⁴ Toward the end of the Nationalist period, eyewitnesses reported that "in this 'golden land' (*cunjindi*) homeless people cannot even find a place to build their straw shacks."⁵⁵ Given the fact that most of the slum population was from the countryside,