

## 6. Conclusion

After the Shimonoseki Treaty, the Japanese took over the basic administration of the Qing Dynasty and administrated Taiwan as an agricultural supplier of Japan. Japanese business and culture were brought in while Taiwanese culture was also exported to Japan. Dadaocheng, because it was the business center in the late Qing Dynasty, became the social district where many business associations and cultural organizations were based and where business and culture mingled between Taiwan and Japan. Most people associated with these organizations were the gentry. They followed the Japanese model of doing business and demanded a modern restaurant to conduct business and hold meetings. In Dadaocheng, several large restaurants were built to meet new demands resulting from the new Japanese administration. Many large scale restaurants were established due to the new demand, such as the Penlaige, the Donghuifang, and the the most famous of all, Jiangshanlou. These restaurants clustered in areas like Dadaocheng. Those who went to these restaurants were not the general public but those who had great influence over society. The general public could not afford to go to these restaurants, and thus these locations became stages for literates and the well-to-do, most of whom were of the upper social classes.

Wu Jiangshan established a luxurious restaurant, Jiangshanlou, in 1921. Jiangshanlou was famous for its architecture, cuisine and management. The magnificent building of the Jiangshanlou was an attraction itself. By the time it was completed, it was the third largest building in Taipei. Wu selected good-quality building materials, designed the interior with modern decorations and supervised the construction himself. The interior design was luxurious and the owner's collections were exclusive and chic. Under Japanese rule, only big restaurants were able to afford the exclusive culinary materials;

with good chefs like Wu Tienyo, Taiwanese cuisine was improved and became an attraction of Jiangshanlou. The cuisine was made with high quality materials and ingredients. By serving high quality Taiwanese cuisine to its customers, Jiangshanlou made its cuisine popular amongst Japanese and Taiwanese elites. The owner, Wu Jiangshan, intended to attract customers of the upper social class and thus created a literary image of the restaurant. Whether he was a literature lover or not, he collected literary works and invited the gentry as well as celebrities to write for Jiangshanlou. Many famous gentries and celebrities left their mark in the restaurant as well as Japanese officials. In addition, the good management and smart marketing strategies also built up the good reputation of the restaurant. As revealed from the *Taiwan Nichi-nichi Shimpo*, the manager was good at marketing the restaurant and ran the business well enabling it to become an exclusive restaurant. It catered to Japanese officials and businessmen as well as many Taiwanese elites. Jiangshanlou was a popular restaurant and social arena that the gentry usually frequented. The popularity and importance of the Jiangshanlou could be proved by the fact that when the Japanese Prince Imperial, Hirohito, visited Taiwan, the Jiangshanlou was designated to serve the meals of the future emperor of Japan. Under Japanese governance Jiangshanlou had a high position among all the restaurants in Taiwan.

Many businessmen were promoted to the gentry and became “gentry-businessmen”, who had great influence in society. Under Japanese rule the gentry was composed of literati and wealthy businessmen, and many of them performed well in politics, business, education and culture. As demonstrated by this paper, many frequent cultural exchanges between Japanese officials and Taiwanese gentries took place at Jiangshanlou, which served as the social political and economic center for both officials and local elites. The Japanese administrators wanted to draw the elites to their

side; on the other hand, the Taiwanese gentries needed to socialize with the Japanese for business or to get support for the rights of Taiwanese people. For these purposes, restaurants were the best social location.

The local Taiwanese saying “[The elites] ascend Jiangshanlou, taste Taiwanese cuisine and appreciate geishas’ performance” reveals that going to Jiangshanlou demonstrated the customers’ economic background. When going to Jiangshanlou became a way to boast in public, the restaurant was certainly of considerable importance. The refinement of Jiangshanlou can be proved by many news releases, reports and even the recipe column for Taiwanese cuisine in the *Taiwan Nichi-nichi Shimpō*. Through examining the news reports in colonial Taiwan, we can picture Jiangshanlou’s vicissitudes and its role in gentry’s social activities.

Jiangshanlou is now remembered by only a few people, many of whom remembered it as merely as a brothel. However, Jiangshanlou used to be a fancy restaurant with pleasant services, where many business associations held meetings and banquets. Jiangshanlou’s position under the Japanese administration can be compared to the current Grand Hotel in Taipei, which was also a social political and economic center for elite socializing<sup>1</sup>. The business of Jiangshanlou declined after the Second Sino-Japanese War broke out in 1937. In order to survive, it had to change its operating model and sustained its business by relying on geishas, most of whom became prostitutes. Subsequently Jiangshanlou became a byword for brothel. When the R.O.C. government took over Taiwan, Jiangshanlou was used as a dormitory for the staff of the Central Printing House. Now it is an apartment building for approximately a

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<sup>1</sup> The Grand Hotel in Taipei is also a popular tourist hotel for foreigners, especially for the Japanese tourists.

hundred people. The Jiangshanlou should not be remembered as a byword for brothel, because it was a restaurant with a glorious past when Taiwan was under Japanese governance and it contributed to Taiwanese history. In other words, the Jiangshanlou was a social arena for Japanese officials and Taiwanese gentries, a location where Taiwanese and Japanese cultures intertwined, and was a restaurant that promoted Taiwanese cuisine. In its heyday, it was the equivalent of the “Grand Hotel” in Taiwan.