

“So Different a Part of Town”: Nineteenth-century Chinese Travelers
in London and Paris

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In this paper I propose to offer a different perspective on “urban life in China” in the nineteenth century by examining how the first elite Chinese travelers to the Western world perceived and described urban life in European cities, more specifically London and Paris. The paper argues that their account was shaped not only by their experience and perception of urban life in their native culture, but also by the received rhetorical schemata of seeing the foreign world in Chinese tradition, by social class, as well as by the configuration of the modern city.