

# An Interesting Lottery Ticket At The End of Qing Dynasty

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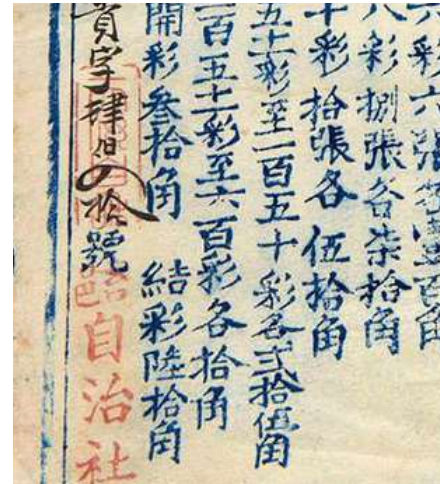
I collected a lottery ticket issued by “Taiyi Self-governing Society of Wutai County” at the 34th year of Emperor Guangxu’s reign. With so much fun, it not only reflects the situation of non-government-issued lottery at that time, but it also reveals from the other side rampant gambling activities in Shanxi region and the historical background of civil self-government at the end of Qing Dynasty.

At the time this lottery ticket was issued, the so-called networking sales had not come into being. When a lottery buyer purchased a number, the seller wrote it down with the writing brush on the lower left and right side of the lottery ticket, and then stamped his name seal and a cross-page seal to prevent those with ulterior motives from tampering or fraudulent claiming. The price of each ticket was 5 dimes of silver-dollar (Dragon Silver, currency issued at the end of Qing Dynasty). To reflect fairness of the lottery tickets, the issuing party made a pledge in particular for lottery buyers that they should “manage justly and manifest their trustworthiness to the general public”, to the effect that they promised without fail to ensure the activities were fair, just and open, and encouraged everyone to be at ease to purchase. Furthermore, it was explained clear as day on the lottery ticket all the information about the purpose of lottery issue, amount of prizes on each level, locations to cash the prizes and the date of lottery drawing.

A total of 10,000 tickets were issued, and the numbers would be drawn in about three months. Unlike commonly seen lottery tickets that have 5 or 6 different prizes, this lottery ticket had as many as 15 prizes including one first prize with the prize amount of 10,000 dimes of silver dollar, 400 last prize winners each getting 5 dimes of silver dollar, at the exact amount to recover the cost. The prize-winning coverage was comparatively wide, with as many as 1000 winners and the winning rate was as high as 10 percent. At the time of prize redemption, please go to “Yuantaiyong Money Shop of Dongye Town, in Wutai County to cash. Prize amount could be cashed against the lottery ticket, instantly paid off and exactly at the prize amount with no discounts or delays.”

Lottery tickets of different themes and forms were issued in Qing Dynasty at the reigns of Emperor Guangxu and Emperor Xuantong. This lottery ticket was one of the earliest non-government-issued tickets in the history of our country. As a matter of fact, the lottery tickets that appeared earliest in China were “the foreign firm tickets” sold in China by foreign merchants. The earliest ticket appeared in the 8th Year of Emperor Guangxu’s reign, namely the Big Luzon Ticket in April 1882, which was issued and sold by HSBC Shanghai and foreign firms. At the time, Shanghai was the “city open to the outside” in Qing Dynasty. Due to its semi-colonial nature, foreign investments could drive so straight into the city that they could even enter the restricted zones like lottery, which should well be called “the lottery invasion”.

## The Joy



By contrast, the lottery ticket I collected may be called a native “domestic product”. It is a sheet of solid evidence of the development history of native Chinese lottery industry. From it, we can also make out roughly a landscape of lottery tickets issued by non-governmental institutions at late Qing Dynasty.

The name of Taiyi Self-governing Society of Wutai County was mentioned in the lottery ticket. What is the concept of a self-governing society? What was the historical and humanistic background when the lottery ticket was issued?

This ticket involves a period of little-known history. Historical data records: to the southeast of Shanxi Province, the mountains lie line to line with basins, “its land is barren and clod-winded, and yields only one harvest a year. There were multiple wastelands and frequent droughts and the five cereals were repeatedly in crop failure.” The standard of living for common people could be imagined. Ordinary families lived on wild herbs, tree bark, chaff and blighted grains. Middle class families could manage to live on chaff with wild herbs for half a year and the other half year grain for food. The most affluent could have two meals each month cooked with a mixture of bean flour and middlings flour on the 1st and 15th day of the month respectively. Only on the New Year Day could they have one or two meals cooked with wheat flour. The famine at the 3rd year of Emperor Guangxu’s reign came to the extent of “men eat men, dogs eat dogs, small mice eat half a brick”. Poverty was getting worse day after day. Since the late Emperor Qianlong’s Reign, the Court got increasingly corrupted, which affected rivers and villages. Many villages that had been “nice and good in virtues and customs, with everyone satisfied with his own trade”, became until the end of Qing Dynasty “people evil in heart and customs decadent day by day.” Such a poor and immoral situation bred gambling. Records of gambling activities in the villages were rarely seen before Emperor Qianlong’s Reign. However, by the end of Qing Dynasty, gambling was so rampant that it affected the normal orders of towns and villages in Qing Dynasty. Therefore, the towns and villages voluntarily initiated activities to ban gambling. The so-called self-governing meant exactly self-disciplined and self-managed. Villages and societies made efforts in improving customs and habits by erecting stone monuments with engraved inscriptions. It was villages and societies instead of the government who led the banning of gambling. The founding of self-governing societies was based on the environment at the time. The self-governing societies’ issued lottery tickets for the purpose of raising funds, nonetheless, another objective which was more important was to divert the gamblers’ addiction to gambling.

A lottery ticket issued by a civil institution in Shanxi region at the end of Qing Dynasty not only enables us to know about the beginning and development of the lottery industry in China, but it also tells us a period of little-known history which is still inspiring to people of our era. This explains why there is so much fun and how it is so thought-provoking in collection. ■



## 有趣的一张清末彩票

郭潇



作者收藏了一张光绪三十四年由“五台县台邑自治社”发行的彩票，趣味甚足。它不仅反映了那个年代非政府彩票发行的状况，另外还从另一个侧面反映出清末山西地区赌风盛行和民间自治时代背景。这张彩票在那个年代还没有所谓的联网销售，所以彩民购买号码时，售票之人都是用毛笔在彩票的左下角及右侧写下号码，然后盖上印章及骑缝章，以防止别有用心之人进行篡改和冒领。每张彩票的价格是银元五角（清末发行的龙银）。为了体现出彩票的公正性，发行方还特别向彩民保证一定会“秉公经理，昭信大众”，意思是一定会保证把活动办得公平、公正、公开，请大家放心购买。另外，发行目的、各等奖的金额、兑奖地点、开奖日期等事项，这张彩票上都解释得一清二楚。

这张彩票总共发行一万张，大概会在三个月以后开奖。和现在我们常见的彩票一般分五六个奖别不同，这张彩票的奖别多达十五个：头奖一人，奖银元一万角，末等奖四百人，每人奖银元五角，正好可以收回成本；获奖面也比较宽，多达一千名，中奖率高达一成。兑奖时到“五台县东冶镇元泰永钱庄兑现，凭票取，立即如数给清，并无折扣拖延”。

在清代的光绪、宣统年间都有发行过不同题材样式的彩票，这张彩票是我国历史上早期由非官方发行的彩票之一。其实最早在中国出现的彩票是外商在中国销售的“洋行票”，最早出现在光绪八年，即1882年4月的大吕宋票，由上海汇丰银行和洋行发售。当时的上海是清朝的“对外开放城市”，由于它的半殖民地性质，使外资能够长驱直入，所以彩票这样的禁区外资也同样可以进入，说起来这应该叫做“彩票侵略”。相比之下，笔者收藏的这张彩票可谓是地地道道的“国产货”，它是中国本土彩票行业发展历史的一张实证，并从这张彩票中，我们可以约略的看出晚清时期非政府机构发行彩票的大致面貌。

彩票中提到了五台县台邑自治社，自治社这个概念是什么呢？这张彩票发行的历史人文背景又是什么呢？

由这张彩票牵出了一段鲜为人知的历史。史料记载：山西东南部，山岭与盆地相间，“其地土寒风肃，岁止一熟，荒旱频仍，五谷屡欠。”。百姓生活水平可想而知。一般人家过着吃野菜树皮、粗糠秕谷的生活，中等人家能达到半年糠菜半年粮的程度，最富裕的人只能在每月初一、十五吃两顿豆面和粗面粉相掺的二和面，大年初一才吃一两顿白面。光绪三年的灾荒，到了“人吃人，犬吃犬，小老鼠啃吃半头砖”的程度，贫困日甚。自乾隆后期开始，朝廷日益腐化，影响到了泽潞村落。很多村落原本“风清美俗，各安本业”，可到了清末却“人心不正，里俗日颓”。如此贫穷丧德的境况进而滋生了赌博。在乾隆以前，鲜有看到村落有赌博活动的记载，可到了清末，赌博之风的盛行已经严重影响正常的清代乡村秩序。乡村社会因而自发的开展了禁赌活动。所谓自治，就是自我约束，自我治理的意思。村社通过刻碑立字，进行了风俗改良的努力。禁赌的主导者是村社而非官府，自治社的成立就是基于当时的环境。而自治社发行彩票，一是为了集资，而更重要的目的是为了转移赌徒们的好赌之心。

一张清末山西地区的民办机构发行的彩票，不仅使我们了解了中国彩票事业的开端及发展，而且向我们讲述了一段鲜为人知的历史，鞭策今人。这可谓是收藏的乐趣和其中耐人寻味的奥妙所在吧！