

Fears that people had about the early tramways, and how they turned out

In the early days of the trams, people expressed various fears about how popular attitudes might interfere with their smooth operation. For the most part, these fears came to nothing, but there were a few issues.

On the one hand, there were worries that Europeans would refuse to ride trams together with Chinese, thus forcing the Company to choose between the revenue from first class and third class passengers. (An intermediate second class was originally planned, but abandoned when people concluded that it did not serve any particular market.) For the most part, this turned out to be untrue. The one genuine problem attributable to racial prejudice was that, in the early days, there was no set-up for trams to turn around at the end of the line; the conductor would simply move to the back end of the westbound tram, which would become the front of the eastbound tram. But this meant that some 3rd class seats going in one direction became 1st class seats in the other; there were Europeans who objected to that, saying that they did not want to sit where supposedly “unhygienic” people had just been sitting. This problem, and some others, were solved by creating loops for trams to turn around.

A more serious problem was that the gauge of the tram lines happened to be the same as that of many of the carts pulled by men carrying goods through the streets, and going along the rails was easier than going along the pavement (since there was less friction between the wheels and the rails). This had the potential to interfere with tram traffic, and even when it didn't it caused extra wear and tear on the track. A city ordinance issued in 1916, at the Company's request, not only prohibited driving carts on the tracks, but insisted that all carts built in the future had to have a different gauge than the trams'.

There were a number of accidents caused in early years by passengers getting off the trams abruptly, between stops, and then falling. English newspapers ridiculed people for this behavior, with some going so far as to say that it showed that many Hong Kongers did not have a sufficiently “modern” mentality to use mechanized public transport. But in fact, this behavior disappeared quite quickly as word got around of the injuries it could cause.

Finally, some people expressed fear that the city's ricksha pullers, who already lived very difficult lives, would be further impoverished by the trams, and might resort to violence to block the competition. But this never happened in Hong Kong

– unlike in Beijing, where ricksha pullers did riot against an expansion of the city’s tram system in 1923. (As it turned out, some rickshas remained in use in both cities for many more years.)

關於人們早期對於電車的擔憂以及後續轉變

電車投入服務初期，人們擔心主流態度會影響電車是否能夠順利運營。雖然這些擔憂大多都只是虛驚一場，但也存在小部分問題。

一方面，人們擔心歐洲人會拒絕與中國人同乘電車，從而迫使電車公司在頭等車廂和三等車廂的乘客收入之間做出選擇。（最初計劃開設二等車廂，但由於沒有特定受眾而棄置。）在大多數情況下，事實並非如此。種族偏見導致的真正問題是：早期電車沒有在路線末端設置調頭裝置；售票員需要移動到西行列車的末端，使之成為東行列車的前端，以此實現調頭。但這意味著，原本的部分三等席調頭後成了頭等席；有些歐洲人對此表示反對，稱其不願坐在所謂“不衛生的”人坐過的席位。最終，這個問題連同其他問題，因為可調頭電車環路的出現而得以解決。

更嚴重的問題是：電車線路的軌距與街道上運貨的人力手推車軌距相同，運貨工人沿著鐵軌拉車比沿著人行道拉車要輕鬆得多（因為車輪與軌道之間的摩擦較小）。但這可能會干擾電車運行，即使沒有干擾，也會對軌道造成額外的磨損。**1916** 年，應電車公司要求，政府頒佈了一項城市法令，禁止在鐵軌上使用手推車，同時也要求今後的手推車必須採用與電車不同的軌距。

早年間曾發生多起乘客在到站前突然下車並摔倒的事故。英文報紙發文嘲諷此類行為，甚至表示：這類事故頻頻發生表明很多香港人沒有足夠的「現代」意識來使用機械化公共交通工具。事實上，這種行為很快就消失了，因為人們知道了這種行為會讓自己受傷。

還有人擔心，生活本就艱難的人力車夫會因為電車的出現變得更加艱難，他們可能會通過暴力解決電車帶來的競爭。但這種情況在香港從未發生。不過，**1923** 年，北京市擴建電車系統時確實引發了人力車夫的暴動。（事實證明，人力車夫這一職業在電車出現後依舊在香港和北京兩地存續了多年。）