

SCHOOLING AND SOCIETY IN LATE QING CHINA

BY

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DECLARATION

This thesis is my own work.

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ABSTRACT

In the years 1901-1905 a school system modelled on those of Japan and Europe was introduced in China, after much debate, by a government anxious to use education to strengthen the country internally against the foreign threat. Contradictions unforeseen by its sponsors arose between the new system and the society to which it was introduced. Deep-rooted indigenous educational institutions, especially the *sishu* or traditional private school, showed surprising powers of resilience. The new schooling was intended to be universal but did not reach the masses, who merely provided the money for the new schools through taxes. Instead, it retained the elite associations of its predecessors. Access to the elite was altered by the predominantly urban location of the new schools, which demanded a level of professional expertise and material equipment unknown to the old. Urban gentry and business families were able to use the schools as a vehicle for social mobility; in addition, the foundation of schools afforded immediate advantage in terms of finance and prestige for the men who operated them. Confidence gained through school management fuelled demands for self government among the gentry, while the visible ineffectiveness of attempted centralization brought out the weakness of the government.

Where the old schooling had been flexible and, at the upper levels, had made the student responsible for his own progress (I use 'his' deliberately, since both the old and the new schooling made little provision for women), the new imposed unfamiliar standards of punctuality, uniformity and external direction by impersonal rules. Much of the turbulence of late Qing schools can be traced back to the clash between their rigid discipline, derived from the demands of modern industrial society, and the mores of the society in which they were set. As with calls by the gentry for greater autonomy vis-a-vis the government, the dissatisfaction of students and staff was frequently expressed in political language acquired from the West. A significant minority espoused revolution.

The system of schooling in force under the Qing and the Republican government was more a divisive than a unifying force: it marked off its

beneficiaries from the mass of the population. It was not until the establishment of the People's Republic that a beginning was made in extending an understanding and acceptance of the concepts, values, and habits of modern industrial society to the mass of people, and to resolving the contradiction between 'foreign' and 'Chinese'.

Note on Romanization

The Pinyin system of romanization has been used throughout in the transliteration of Chinese words, with the exception of Peking for which I have preserved the common English spelling.

Note on Citation

Figures in square brackets have been used to indicate the pagination of the reprinted edition of a text.

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I N T R O D U C T I O N

The subject of this thesis is the interaction of schooling and society in the last decades of the Qing, a period which saw the transplanting into China of a school system on the European/Japanese model. The majority of the work deals with the period from the Sino-Japanese War to the Revolution of 1911, with excursions into earlier or later periods to trace the origins or observe the persistence of the institutions under discussion. The latter date has been chosen because, as Marianne Bastid observes: 'L'intrusion de la république soulève des problèmes neufs'.¹ I have not attempted to cover all forces then at work in the field of education, especially when these have been ably dealt with by others: mission schools, for example, have been touched on only in passing.² Still less has it been my intention to give an educationalist's survey, with chapters on primary school, middle school, university, teacher and vocational training; this has been done for the new system not once but many times. I have largely taken for granted the political and military context which led to the decision to look to the West for a model of reform, since this too has been covered in a number of monographs.³

I started with very concrete questions in examining both the old schooling and its competitor: how many hours were spent in the classroom? Where was the school located? How much were school fees? What were the teachers' wages? How many pupils attended a school, and how far was the school from their homes? These led into questions on the motivations of the state in patronizing and the people in pursuing school education, which

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1. Marianne Bastid, *Aspects de la réforme de l'enseignement en Chine au début du 20^e siècle: d'après des écrits de Zhang Jian* (Paris, 1971), p. 5.
 2. See, for example, Jessie Lutz, *China and the Christian Colleges, 1850-1950* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1971), and Kwang-Ching Liu, 'Early Christian Colleges in China', *Journal of Asian Studies*, XX : 1 (1960), 71-78.
 3. See, for example, Kwang-Ching Liu, 'Nineteenth Century China: the Disintegration of the Old Order and the Impact of the West', in Ping-ti Ho and Tang Tsou (ed.), *China in Crisis*, Vol. I, Book 1 (Chicago, 1968), pp. 93-178, Paul A. Cohen, 'Ch'ing China: Confrontation with the West, 1850-1900', in James B. Crowley (ed.), *Modern East Asia: Essays in Interpretation* (New York, 1970), pp. 29-60, and Paul A. Cohen and John E. Schrecker (ed.), *Reform in Nineteenth Century China* (Cambridge, Mass., 1976).

in turn opened up into wider issues of the nature of state control and social organization in pre-industrial and industrialized societies. It has naturally been impossible, in the short space of a thesis, to make an exhaustive analysis of themes of such magnitude, even for a single society over a limited period, but I believe that the lines of enquiry opened up are fruitful ones.

I have used the words 'modern' and 'traditional' as well-known shorthand references to point in a series of historical events. By 'modern' I refer not necessarily to the institutions of the present day, but to what was 'modern' to China in the 1900's: the forms of society evolved in industrializing Europe and passed thence to the East. More detailed explanations of 'modern' with regard to schooling will be given in the text.

Sources

Writing on education in China has hitherto had a strong bent towards the political, understood as a record of government activity; and the intellectual, understood as the mental development of a few outstanding men or as shifts in educational philosophy. This is particularly marked in the many histories written from the point of view of professional educationalists such as Yu Shulin, Chen Qingzhi, and Chen Qitian.⁴ With the exception of Chen Dongyuan,⁵ writers on the history of education in China have tended to limit their material to edicts, memorials, and regulations on the one hand to the writings of educational theorists on the other. Shu Xincheng, one of China's outstanding educational writers, unfortunately never attempted a full-scale history of recent education, though he covered many aspects of its development.⁶

4. See bibliography.

5. See bibliography.

6. As well as compiling collections of historical source material, Shu wrote historical monographs on Chinese educational thought (*Jindai Zhongguo jiaoyu sixiangshi* [Shanghai, 1932]) and overseas study in Japan (*Jindai Zhongguo liuxue shi* [Shanghai, 1927]).

Attention to theory on the part of educational historians is matched by a disregard for aspects of reality not readily assimilable to their theoretical premises. By this I do not mean that such writers are over-idealistic or uncritical of the direction taken by the development of education, but that their criticisms and proposals are made within the limits of certain assumptions. The *sishu*, for example, being outside both Chinese and Western systems of education, was largely ignored by all the writers named above except Chen Dongyuan. Yu Shulin devoted several pages to the official school system crowned by the *guozijian*, which in the late Qing had no teaching functions, but only one to the *sishu*, which taught tens of millions.⁷ Such neglect has led to a curious situation in which the *sishu* is known to every Chinese over forty, many of whom attended one in their youth, but is almost unknown outside China.

Other secondary works on Chinese education over this period are relatively scarce. One of the main topics which has drawn the attention of general historians has been the connection of students with revolutionary movements preceding the fall of the Qing.⁸ Others have singled out outstanding figures connected with the introduction of the new schooling.⁹ Articles by David Buck and Richard Orb introduce the determinants and consequences of educational reform, but neither has produced a full-length study.¹⁰ The same applies to Abe Hiroshi, whose articles give valuable insight into many commonly neglected aspects of the new schooling, such as peasant riots against the new schools.¹¹

I have used official documents with caution, preferring to check and supplement them with material from contemporary periodicals, autobiographies, and even fiction. Since periodicals are standard historical sources, I shall not comment in detail on my use of them. I found most useful the

7. Yu Shu-lin, *Zhongguo jiaoyushi*, pp. 821-28, 852.

8. For examples, see works by Esherick, Rankin, and Rhoads listed in the bibliography.

9. See studies by Su Yunfeng and William Ayers listed in the bibliography.

10. See bibliography.

11. See bibliography.

Dongfang zazhi, started in 1904, and the *Jiaoyu zazhi* (Shanghai), started in 1909; to fill a gap in the early 1900's I turned to the *Shuntian shibao*. In general, I did not find newspaper reporting on education sufficiently detailed to make newspapers an important source.

Autobiography provides the researcher with a great deal of information, both subjective and objective, on schooling and the pupil's reactions to it. For the traditional schools or *sishu*, data as basic as that on hours of schooling, texts, fees, the size of classes and the school year have to be derived from informal autobiographical material, as no systematic treatment of these subjects exists. In the case of Western-type schools regulations and decrees issued by Peking governments provide copious but misleading information: here autobiography can be a valuable corrective to the versions of educational authorities. A case in point is Guo Moruo's account of his experience with 'modern' schooling in Sichuan from 1906 to 1909: where educators envisaged professionally trained teachers inducting eager twelve year olds into Western sciences, Guo's class of adults, diverted unexpectedly from their preparations for the imperial examinations, faced ill-prepared graduates of the same examinations who lectured on topics such as the five elements and the eight hexagrams.¹²

Such are the advantages of autobiography as a source. At the same time, it has its limitations. Autobiographies and memoirs are scarce, random, subjective, and usually written long after the event. Their accounts are not representative of the experiences of the mass of people, or even of the middle ranks of society - for the most part, autobiographies are written by a tiny fraction of a minority group, the highly educated who become prominent in later life. Most of this group came from gentry families; reminiscences by those of peasant stock are as rare as they are valuable.

The use of fiction as a source is unusual in historical writing, but has obvious value when one wishes to study not only historical events but the reactions and responses of participants in and observers of these events.

12. Guo Moruo, *Wo de younian*, pp. 166-68.

In addition, fiction, like memoirs, has the advantage of offering unexpected perspectives on events treated in standard fashion in more orthodox chronicles.

The thesis is grouped into four sections of two chapters each. The first two deal with the indigenous educational institutions still operating at the end of the Qing, with special emphasis on the *shu*. In chapters three and four, I look at the question of acceptance and rejection of schooling modelled on the Western/Japanese system in theory and actuality: most of this section deals with the period leading up to the adoption of a modern school system. Chapters five and six examine political and administrative aspects of the new system at the national and local level from 1901, and chapters seven and eight relate it to the social context.

CHAPTER ONE

Indigenous Educational Institutions

Nature of imperial control - rural compact -
examinations - academies - community schools -
charitable schools - *shu*

In this chapter I propose to discuss the educational institutions of pre-industrial China in the late Qing period in terms of their role in its social and political structure. I shall be dealing with the examination system (*keju* 科举), the rural compact (*xiangyue* 乡约), the academies (*shuyuan* 书院), and different types of community or private school - the *shexue* (社学), *yixue* (义学), and *sishu* (私塾). I hope thereby to bring out some salient features of the nature and degree of control and standardization possible in Chinese society at that time.

Nineteenth century China was a state whose rulers were deeply concerned with ideological control at all levels. This control was centralised mainly in punitive or prohibitory terms. The central government might order a book-burning or the suppression of a heretical sect, or require that the death sentence be approved by the emperor, but for prescriptive control it relied largely on the internalization of a body of precepts almost immanent in their diffusion, the Confucian 'norms and constants' instilled in every chanting schoolboy.

The court was less concerned with administrative control, which was negligible in terms of China's size and population. Organs of government went down only as far as the county, an administrative unit comprising tens of thousands of households. The county magistrate's chief task was to dispense justice and collect taxes, retaining some for expenses and remitting the rest to the centre. The central government was a consumer of revenue; it was not set up to allocate or distribute it.

A masterstroke of earlier emperors had maximized the limited administrative functions of the centre by combining the selection of officials who performed them with examinations in the classics, a touchstone for the rectitude of the scholar-gentry. The possibility of being chosen for prestigious and remunerative positions in the bureaucracy ensured the voluntary compliance in an imperially improved course of study of millions over whom the government could exercise no direct control.

Only one in seventy of some two million who sat for the lowest examinations passed at any one session. Even if one allows for repeated attempts by candidates originally unsuccessful, the ratio of successes to

failures could not have been higher than one in twenty. Those who passed obtained the title of *shengyuan* (生员) becoming nominal students in a network of government school-temples which no longer had any educative function.¹ Approximately one in a hundred of those successful in the lower examination gained the degree of *juren* (举人) at the triennial provincial examinations which qualified scholars for selection for government office; one in ten thousand would become *jinshi* (进士) at the metropolitan examination which ensured it.² Thus each locality had a large group of men to whom the government had given status but not employment, as well as numerous outright failures. For such men, no other career could compare with the prestige of officialdom. Many wasted their lives waiting in vain for an opening. A contemporary observer of office-seekers who congregated in Hubei's provincial capital towards the end of the century wrote 'Most owe their rent and board and have pawned all their clothes. They can't think of going home. It is hard to find words for the awkwardness of their position and their loss of shame.'³ Mean occupations were below the dignity of a scholar; *shengyuan* were forbidden to undertake employment as store bookkeepers, yamen runners, and so on.⁴ Respectable but undistinguished positions as personal secretaries or shopkeepers required connections in commerce or government; the work of a teacher or a doctor was often ill-paid

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1. The county *xuegong* (学宫) began in the Song as government schools. Thus to become a *shengyuan* was known as 'entering school' (*Jin xue* 进学). By the late Qing, they had no resident students and gave no teaching. Their ritual functions are discussed in Stephen Feuchtwang, 'School Temple and City God', in G. William Skinner (ed.), *The City in Late Imperial China* (Stanford, 1977), pp. 581-608. The word *gong* means literally 'building' or 'palace'.
 2. These figures derive from those given in Chung-li Chang, *The Chinese Gentry: Studies on their Role in Nineteenth-Century China* (Seattle, 1970 [1955]), pp. 155-37, and in Ichisada Miyazaki, *China's Examination Hell*, trans. Conrad Schirokauer (Tokyo, 1976), p. 38.
 3. Tang Caichang, family letter (31 May 1895), quoted in Su Yunfeng, *Zhang Zhidong yu Hubei jiaoyu gaige* (Taipei, 1976), p. 56.
 4. See Ho Ping-ti, *The Ladder of Success in Imperial China* (New York, 1964), pp. 36-37.

and arduous. Many scholars resented their failure to advance.

The Qing government was highly sensitive to the trouble which could be stirred up by dissatisfied scholars.^{4a} At the beginning of the dynasty, it had tried to outlaw *shengyuan* involvement in political activity. The eight regulations designed to keep *shengyuan* apolitical repeated some Ming prohibitions:

Shengyuan are not allowed to make submissions on civil or military affairs. A single proposal will be considered a breach of the regulations, and the offender will be stripped of his degree and punished.

and added new ones, among them one designed to prevent the repetition of scholar cliques formed in the last decades of the Ming:

Shengyuan are not allowed to form parties, sworn alliances, or societies and dictate to officials or make themselves arbiters in the countryside. They may not publish at will what they write. Offenders will be punished by the proctors (*tidiaoguan* 提调官).⁵

Tablets bearing the injunctions were placed in the government school-temples in which the *shengyuan* were nominally students. There they took their place among other symbolic representations of an ideal world. Pious exhortation was insufficient to prevent the gentry from manipulating their privileged status to their own advantage. Many scholars continued unruly, litigious, and combative, pressing their demands on officials and domineering over the common people.⁶ The existence of the regulations meant, however, that their approach to government had to be indirect and informal, dependent on personal connections. The prohibition of associations and open political debate explains the note of daring on which study groups

4a. For an example see Shang Yanliu, *Qingdai keju kaoshi shulu* (Peking, 1958), pp. 326-27.

5. *Qinding Da-Qing huidian shili* (Taipei, 1963 [1899]), 389:1a-b [10228]. Hereafter referred to as *Shili*. The injunctions were engraved on the lying-tablet 卧碑 laid to the left of the Minglun Tang 明伦堂. See Shang, *Qingdai keju*, p. 45.

6. See Hsiao Kung-chuan, *Rural China: Imperial Control in the Nineteenth Century* (Seattle, 1967), pp. 246-249, for examples of 'bad scholars'.

on matters of national import were introduced in the 1890's. A conservative critic of such a group objected not to its undue Westernization but to its resemblance to the outlawed secret societies.⁷

Imperial concern with law-abiding behaviour did not stop at scholars, but extended to all sectors of the population. The Sacred Edict of the Kangxi emperor enjoined on all the observance of Confucian teachings on harmony, frugality, and respect for learning, adding to them such civic duties as full payment of taxes and refusal to harbour fugitives from justice. Government schools were to be promoted 'to bring into line the behaviour of scholars'; at home, the young should be instructed to eschew wrongdoing.⁸ Education was valued as a means of transforming conduct. In the words of the Qianlong emperor, 'studying the classics and debating philosophical principles is no education at all' unless based on the practice of Confucian virtues.⁹

The *xiangyue* or rural compact originated in the Song. It was revived at the beginning of the Qing for the edification of a wider audience than could be reached by ill-attended and irregular lectures at the school-temples. Local officials were to appoint scholars to expound the maxims of successive emperors, most frequently the Sacred Edict of the Kangxi emperor and the Amplified Instructions of the Yongzheng emperor.^{9a} Great confidence was expressed in the powers of this instruction. If faithfully carried out, it would 'open the minds of its hearers. Not only will the careful and compliant delight in it; even the wild and unruly will feel some constraint'.¹⁰ Imperial enthusiasm was rarely shared by local

7. Memorial of censor Wenti impeaching Kang Youwei in Su Yu (ed.), *Yijiao Congbian* (Taipei, 1970 [1899]), p. 85.

8. Gao Zongchi (comp.), *Huangchao wenxian tongkao*, 21, Zhiyi [5047].

9. *Shili*, 398: 6a [10352].

9a. For these texts see Shang, *Qingdai keju*, p. 44. For Wang Yangming and the *xiangyue*, see his *Collected Works*, 17.

10. *Shili*, 398:11b [10354].

officials, who had more pressing tasks to attend to than the supervision of moral uplift. No funds were provided by the centre; they had to be raised locally from reluctant tax-payers. A conscientious official might deliver the readings himself. Elsewhere, the task fell to reluctant commoners or unsuccessful scholars, or was completely abandoned. Where the *xiangyue* persisted, it changed its character, becoming assimilated to local defence or policy organizations or even to tax-collection. It could serve as the venue for the transaction of business between the magistrate and members of the gentry, who thus circumvented the rules forbidding them to frequent the yamen.¹¹

The Qing emperors' hopes for the elevation of their subjects through acquaintance with the imperial views on the conduct of life faced two obstacles: they could not rely on their subordinates to propagate these teachings, and they could not rely on the people to follow them. A surface harmony might have been created if every villager or townsman had been familiar with these precepts, a goal constantly urged by the emperors. That the content of the Amplified Instructions could be used effectively to foster consensus was shown by the Japanese leaders of the Meiji period who manipulated imperial rescripts modelled on the Instructions to build national unity.¹² In China, however, there was no administrative framework to support the implementation of propaganda programmes at the level of the village or market-town.

From the point of view of the state, education performed two functions: the transformation of the masses (*jiaohua* 教化) and the training of talent for office (*yu cai* 育才). It was not until the end of the century that they were conceptually united in the idea of a universal schooling which would at the same time nurture talent and transform the customs and morals of the masses. Throughout the greater part of the dynasty, the two were carried out by separate institutions: the *xiangyue*, aimed at the common

11. See Hsiao, *Rural China*, pp. 201-5.

12. See Miyazaki, *China's Examination Hell*, p. 23. *Sheng-lun Kuang-hsun* is an erroneous transcription by the translator; it should read *Sheng-yu Kuang-hsun*.

people, and the *keju* or examination system aimed at prospective officials. I shall discuss the latter in the following pages.

Unlike the *xiangyue*, the examinations were highly centralized. The chain of command was headed by the emperor himself. At the lowest level, the examination for *shengyuan* status, the final sessions were conducted at the prefectural seat by the provincial director of studies, an official appointed by the emperor who acted independently of the governor or governor-general and reported back to the court on the completion of his three year term of duty. The provincial examinations were given by specially appointed officials sent out from Peking, and the final metropolitan and palace examinations gathered scholars from all over the empire at the capital. Quotas were set by the country for the lower examinations and by province for the higher in an attempt to give fair representation to each area and to ensure that no single one dominated the system.

No separate Board of Education existed. The examinations were under the jurisdiction of the Board of Rites; appropriately, since they were probably the most widely observed of the dynasty's rituals. The ritual was a secular one, linking man and man - scholar and examiner or fellow-student - rather than man and the divine, though spirits were called in to supervise the proceedings.¹³ The successive examinations were in a sense stages in an initiation process whose cruel trials welded together those who underwent them. A lasting relationship subsisted amongst those who had passed at the same examination and between them and their examiner, whose 'disciples' they were henceforth. Partly for this reason, the final examination was given by the emperor himself in an attempt to ensure that successful candidates owed their first loyalty to the throne.¹⁴ Common survival of a gruelling ordeal and common achievement of scarce honours gave graduates a tendency

13. Wu Jingzi, *Rulin waishi*, chapter 42, contains a description of the invocation of spirits by officials presiding over the examinations. The passage is quoted in Chen Dongyuan, *Zhongguo jiaoyushi* (Shanghai, 1937), pp. 388-89. Chen comments that Wu's account accords with the memory of elderly scholars; thus the ceremony was evidently still being carried out late in the dynasty. *Rulin waishi* has been translated into English under the title *The Scholars* by Yang Hsien-yi and Gladys Yang (Peking, 1957).

14. See Miyazaki, *China's Examination Hell*, pp. 74-75.

to close ranks against outsiders, whether these were men who had purchased their rank or those who had obtained educational qualifications outside the regular system. This cohesion contributed to scholarly reluctance to change the examination system.

The regulations and conventions governing examination procedure were a mixture of genuine testing - of stamina, tractability, and meticulous care as much as of intelligence - bureaucratic precaution against abuse, such as the body search of candidates entering the examination hall, and social reinforcement. The last was a major component. The public posting up of the results at the site of the examinations, official banquets for successful candidates, mounted messengers bearing homewards the news of their triumph - the panoply of success not only encouraged the victors but spurred on laggards to another try. A *shengyuan* high on the list would be famous throughout his district; the scholar who came first in the palace examinations brought glory to his whole province. Miyazaki has pointed out that the element of chance in examination success was rationalized in popular Taoism - in beliefs held by the gentry as well as the common people - as being the working out of a candidate's stored-up karma.¹⁵ A similar superstition held that success derived from the geomancy of the candidate's native place.¹⁶ Such beliefs strengthened the legitimacy of scholarly prestige and of the court as its patron.

At first sight, the examination system of Qing China appears to possess the characteristics of a 'modern' institution: it was centralized, operated on a national scale, and fulfilled (in the selection of officials) a rational bureaucratic function implemented through a series of impersonal, universalistic regulations. On analysis, the similarity appears superficial. To say that the proclaimed universal and rational values of the examination system were shot through with irrational beliefs and operated for the maintenance of particularistic interests is not to differentiate it from the institutions of our own society, in which the same is the case. The difference is rather

15. *Ibid.*, pp. 95-99. For popular Taoism and the examinations, see also Tadao Sakai, *Chūgoku zensho no kenkyū* (Tokyo, 1960), especially chapter two.

16. See Ho, *The Ladder of Success in Imperial China*, pp. 138, 146-47.

that in Qing China the examinations were almost the only point at which the central government cut deeply but briefly into lives normally little affected by events outside their locality.

The functions of the central government were limited by its funds. Its writ extended through the yamen and the examination hall but not necessarily far beyond. Local society had its own dynamics, and suffered under or resolved its own problems in defence, agriculture, education, and social relations with little direct assistance or interference from the centre. A large proportion of local worthies had no degrees; many whose talents the government had formally acknowledged with the award of the title of *shengyuan* led lives of straitened obscurity. One might say that the wide mesh of the examination system represented the maximum extension of direct control of which the central government was capable; more was not financially, technically, administratively or politically possible.

The examination system was created by the state for its own purposes. Those who were scholars from avocation rather than ambition often felt uneasy within its rigid constraints. The pull of divided loyalties is expressed in the words of a Ming scholar: 'the examinations are the system of our sacred dynasty; for scholars not to practice for them respectfully is to estrange the present and oppose the past, and is thus not in accord with the principle of Heaven. If Confucius and Mencius were reborn, they would sit the examinations'. Nonetheless, he continues, a mechanical approach to classical studies undertaken simply as a stepping-stone to degrees fetters the scholar.¹⁷ Qing scholars faced the same dilemma in attempting to reconcile pure learning with preparation for the examinations.¹⁸

The academy or *shuyuan* originated in the Song as an alternative for the scholar who did not wish to pursue an official career. It was at that

17. See Liu Boji, *Guangdong shuyuan zhidu yange* (Shanghai, 1939), pp. 413-14.

18. C.P. Ridley discusses the attitude to examination requirements of some noted Qing thinkers in his doctoral dissertation, 'Educational Theory and Practice in Late Imperial China: The Teaching of Writing as a Specific Case' (Stanford University, 1973), pp. 73 and 465-66.

time a centre of free discussion and research, largely independent of the system which selected men for office. Succeeding dynasties saw frequent attempts by the government to bring academies under official auspices, while at the local level gentry and aspirant gentry tended to use them as a convenient means of practice for the examinations to the detriment of independent research. Below, I shall discuss the process of dual subordination - to the central government on the one hand and local interests on the other - which took place in the Qing.

The Qing dynasty overcame an initial suspicion of the academies and made them objects of official patronage and regulation. The Yongzheng emperor made grants from the treasury of 1000 taels to twenty-one leading provincial academies in the hope that they would be centres at which 'virtuous and accomplished provincial scholars studying there will expound and recite the classics morning and evening, strictly ordering themselves and their behaviour, their attainments inspiring scholars from near and far to emulation'.¹⁹ Academies were thus intended as a means of bringing scholars and scholarship under control. The Qianlong emperor continued his predecessor's policies. In a revealing edict, he ordered that the 'highly inappropriate' title of *shanzhang* (山长) (literally, mountain leader - a term suggesting hermit scholars, used since the Song for the heads of academies) be replaced by the bureaucratically neutral *yuanzhang* (院长).²⁰ These gentlemen were to serve no longer than six years, after which if their service had been meritorious, they could be recommended by the provincial officials for official rank.²¹ Both rulings were widely ignored. As with the *xiangyue*, the centre had no means of enforcing compliance even had it wished to do so.

Direct grants by the central government to academies were unusual. Yongzheng's signalled imperial favour rather than economic support, since a

19. *Shili*, 395: 1b [10321].

20. *Ibid.*, 395: 6a [10323].

21. *Ibid.*, 395: 3b [10322].

For deliberate leniency towards scholars in the reign of the Kangxi emperor, see Hellmut Wilhelm, "The Po-Hsüeh Hung-ju Examination of 1679", *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, LXXI (1951), 60-66.

thousand taels would swiftly be used up in annual running costs.²² Academics were normally funded locally, through endowments of land or money from which rental income or interest could be drawn to meet current expenses such as the head's salary or student bursaries. Deprived to a large extent of the opportunity to propagate independent views, they became organs for the advancement of the material interests of local individuals or groups.

The Qing dynasty saw both an increase in the absolute numbers of academies and an increase in the proportion of those founded through official sponsorship, though an influx of commercial capital tended to reverse this trend in certain areas in the late Qing.²³

The quality of an academy tended to depend on its proximity to sources of income. By the late Qing, the majority were urban foundations, with those in the provincial capital enjoying the highest reputation.²⁴ They thus contributed to the attractions of urban life for gentry members.

The setting up of academies involved the co-operation of different sections of the elite. As Grimm points out,

It is seldom easy to disentangle the precise roles of gentry and officials in the foundation of particular academies. From the very beginning of the process, official approval and recognition were required... But since the local social unit invariably stood to gain by a new *shu-yüan*, through enhanced reputation and improved chances in the competition for the coveted degrees, its leading gentry were consistently and strongly motivated to found and sustain one... Thus one can seldom be certain in the case of a founding

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22. By the Jiaqing period, some academies in Guangdong had annual expenses of nearly 5,000 taels. Expenditure appears to have been lower earlier in the eighteenth century. See Liu Boji, *Guangdong shuyuan zhidu yange kao*, pp. 209-11.
23. See Tilemann Grimm, 'Academies and Urban Systems in Kwangtung', in Skinner (ed.), *The City in Late Imperial China*, pp. 482-83, for Guangdong. For further details on merchant support of academies, see Okubo Hideko, *Min Shin jidai shoin no kenkyū* (Tokyo, 1976), pp. 221-361.
24. For the relationship between the urban and the academic hierarchy, see Grimm, 'Academies and Urban Systems in Kwangtung', pp. 487-90.

recorded as "official" whether it was the magistrate (using his bureaucratic power as necessary to extract contributions) or the local gentry (manipulating the magistrate as a convenient figurehead) who took the initiative and played the leading role.²⁵

The position of academic head was often held by former magistrates, or (an unauthorized practice) by local educational officials.²⁶ Academic cooperation with officialdom was institutionalized through the practice of holding two essay competitions a month, one set and marked by the head of the academy and the other by the magistrate. Outside scholars were permitted to compete for the small cash prizes offered and often used the occasion to polish up their examination technique.

The legitimate and illegitimate advantages of having an academy in one's district merged into one another. Their use as an adjunct to the examinations was not in itself forbidden; indeed, the Qianlong emperor had ordered that the monthly tests continue to use the eight-legged essay form, although within the academy its study was to be confined to the duller students.²⁷ Elsewhere, he stated that preparation for the examinations should be the Confucian scholar's last concern.²⁸ Imperial exhortation was in no position to compete against local self-interest, however, and many of the best academies owed their reputation to the number of graduates they had trained. Few stood out against the eight-legged essay and pursued pure scholarship.

At its extreme, the domination of the examination system led to a distortion of the original role of academies. Frequent edicts censured the

25. *Ibid.*, p. 478.

26. Liu Boji, *Guangdong shuyuan zhidu yange*, p. 293, shows that out of 515 recorded appointments of academic heads in Guangdong 52 were former county magistrates and 104 educational officials. Educational officials were supposed to have relinquished their official posts before taking up a headship but did not always do so.

27. *Shili*, 395: 5a [10323].

28. *Shili*, 395: 2b-3a [10321-22].

appointment of unqualified heads and the use of personal connections in the appointment of staff and the admission of students. It became common for heads to draw their salaries without giving lectures or even putting in an appearance in the academies in which they were supposed to reside. Similarly, students either attended solely for the small bursaries they received or drew their money and stayed away. The compiler of the *Huangchao xu wenxian tongkao* prefaces the section on academies with some comments on their decline:

The post of head was filled by tired, decrepit persons; scholars vied with one another in frivolities. What the latter read day and night did not go beyond eight-legged essays. But the general run of them [stayed] merely for the tiny allowances; some of them even refused to leave when their hair had turned white.²⁹

It is easy to join the chorus of condemnation which arose at the end of the nineteenth century from those who wished to see the academies replaced by modern schools. Such condemnation, however, is anachronistic; for the majority of scholars in the Qing, there was nothing wrong with an academy's producing examination graduates. On the contrary, this was a testimony to its success. For those who wished to pursue pure learning, this was also possible in such famous academies as Guangdong's Xuehai Tang (学海堂) and other centres of the school of Han learning, the Qing dynasty's major contribution to Chinese scholarship. In their own way, these continued the tradition inaugurated by Zhu Xi (朱熹) in the Song dynasty.

The rules of various academies reflect the tension between their lofty goals and the petty preoccupations of daily life. Even those students who had the benefit of daily contact with Zhu Xi must have found his rules

29. Liu Jincan, *Huangchao xu wenxian tongkao* (Taipei, 1963 [1915]), 100 (Xuexiao: 7) [8589]. I have followed the translation given by Hsiao Kung-chuan in *Rural China*, p. 236. The passage is written from the point of view of an advocate of reform and gives a one-sided picture.

for the White Deer Cave Academy a counsel of perfection. They enjoined on students the observation of Confucian virtues in social relations and personal ethics, and 'wide learning, deep enquiry, careful thought, clear discernment, and sincere practice' in study. Students were to put fame and profit last, and seek understanding for its own sake.³⁰

Heterodox in his own day, Zhu Xi had become a paragon of orthodoxy by the Qing, and his rules were held up by the Qianlong emperor as a model for all academies. For a course of study, the emperor recommended that drawn up by one of Zhu Xi's followers and based on the master's work.³¹ This course cannot be taken as the equivalent of a modern school curriculum any more than Zhu Xi's rules can be taken as the equivalent of modern school rules. Both were predicated on individual self-cultivation under the guidance of a master; neither set a fixed term to learning, nor was it assumed that all students would be doing the same thing at the same time. Some academies did attempt to introduce a certain group discipline into academic life, though not into the actual sequence of studies - these continued tailored to the individual student's rate of progress. An early set of rules called on all students to rise, wash, and dress at the first stroke of the board at dawn. By the second stroke, they were to be at their desks reciting or in the lecture hall making obeisance to past sages, depending on the time of the month.³² At their most strict, however, rules for academic conduct were in the nature of outward and visible signs of an inward and spiritual grace, intended to instil in scholars a dedication to learning, respect for their teachers, and a fraternal regard for their fellow-students by making habitual the behaviour associated with these qualities. They were not rules of convenience externally imposed to facilitate the management of large numbers of people (academies rarely had more than a few score students) but the outward manifestations of the scholarly self-cultivation developed by the neo-Confucians.

30. See Chen Dongyuan, *Zhongguo jiaoyu shi*, pp. 285-86.

31. *Shili*, 395: 3a [10322].

32. Yuan dynasty study rules, quoted in Liu Boji, *Guangdong shuyuan zhidu yange kao*, pp. 420-423.

Many sets of rules for academies drawn up in the Qing follow the hortatory model set by Zhu Xi. Others, slightly more realistic, show by their limited goals the extent to which academies diverged from the ideal. One academy in Guangdong had 'the establishment of a course of study' among its aims, an indirect comment on the frequent absence of any defined course; another provided penalties of ten days' loss of bursary for the plagiarism of a whole article, but only five days if only half the article was copied.³³

Academies can be thought of as part of the 'training of talent' or *yucai* (育才). The idea of using classical training as a means of improving manners and reforming customs among the masses - *jiaohua* (教化) - existed in the Qing but was not carried out through government agencies. Rather, it was left to the people of each locality to arrange for themselves: to the family, clan, village, or business. The state was nominally concerned with the provision of public education through community schools (*shexue*), but this institution, which had had sporadic success under the Ming, its founding dynasty, was practically defunct by the nineteenth century. Grimm suggests the possibility that those still functioning may not have been 'schools' at all, but simply 'staging points for admonishing the local populace to behave'.³⁴

Although the government would gladly have extended the Confucian precepts on which its rule was founded to the lower orders, the Qing economy did not have sufficient surplus resources for the achievement of universal literacy. In its absence, the masses were supposed to acquire the teachings of Confucianism from the example of their betters. Many Confucian tenets filtered downwards. One writer describes the distress of a tenant farmer who lost his pigtail in 1911 at having damaged part of the body he had inherited from his parents: 'Hsun-hsin was quite illiterate, but as the sayings of Confucius and his disciples were perpetually quoted in our daily

33. *Ibid.*, pp. 424-25.

34. Grimm, 'Academies and Urban Systems in Kwangtung', p. 480.

conversation, he knew them and strove to obey them.'³⁵ Apologists for Chinese illiteracy attempted to rationalize its prevalence: 'To us, at least to the village folks, education does not necessarily include the mechanical appliance of reading and writing. It rather consists in the apprehension of lofty ideas and the understanding of the philosophy of life'.³⁶ It was education of this nature that was purveyed by readings of the Sacred Edict. 'Lofty ideas' usually meant such teachings as were conducive to order and stability.

Despite the quotation above, the idyllic view of education as simply possession of the right ideas tended to originate with the gentry for peasant consumption. No gentleman would leave his son ignorant of reading and writing, while the popular term for an educated man was simply 'a man who reads books (*dushu ren* 读书人). Schooling was not conceived of as a means of raising the status of a whole group, but rather of admitting selected members of lower groups to elite status.³⁷ It was essential to perception of the fair operation of the system that the poor but talented should have an opportunity to compete. Since the criteria for talent were determined by the elite as being exclusively literary, and since such talent made its appearance only after the child had already embarked on a course of study, the majority of the population were not even entrants in the race. In practice, the deserving poor were most often scions of gentry families

35. Chiang Yee, *A Chinese Childhood* (London, 1940), p. 52.

36. Y.K. Leong and L.K. Tao, *Village and Town Life in China* (Taipei, 1974 [1915]), p. 19.

37. To use an American sociologist's distinction, the Chinese system resembles the 'sponsored mobility' of English education, 'in which the elite or their agents choose recruits early and carefully induct them into elite status' rather than the 'contest mobility' supposed to characterize American education, in which 'elite status is the prize in an open contest'. Although in China competition for elite status was theoretically open to all males except those of mean origin, the rules of the game ensured that entry depended on the early internalization of elite values. See Ralph Turner, 'Sponsored and Contest Mobility and the School System', *American Sociological Review*, XXV: 6 (1960), 855-67.

who had fallen on hard times - a common occurrence, since the nineteenth century rate of mortality and morbidity left many families without a breadwinner.

Charitable schools, or *yixue*, were one main means of equalizing educational opportunity. They functioned rather like academies, in that they too derived annual running costs from an original endowment of land or money. Standards varied; higher level schools offered an education equivalent to that which could be gained in the less ambitious academies, others took students at all levels, but the majority were for elementary schooling for the poor. They were by no means capable of providing schooling even for that fraction of the population which qualified through inclination and ability to attend them. One study shows that Zhili had an average of slightly over five charitable schools per administrative unit, or 838 for the whole province,³⁸ which then had a population in the vicinity of thirty million. Such schools did not usually take more than a few dozen pupils, though a large one might have over a hundred at different levels. Most were established in administrative centres or the larger market towns.

The case of Wu Xun (武训) (1838-1896), who devoted his life to begging for money to set up charitable schools, is an instructive one. The particulars of his life are so atypical - an illiterate beggar who accepted, indeed welcomed, all humiliation and hardship for the single purpose of setting up schools which would perpetuate the ideology which enslaved him - that they can tell us little about the normal operation of charity schools in his time. It is the virtual canonization of this eccentric figure which is revealing. Despite later attempts to make him an apostle of universal education, his life was predicated on the right of a small literate elite to dominate the uneducated masses; he did not wish to change this, but merely to ensure that lack of money did not

38. Richard A. Orb, 'Chihli Academies and Other Schools in the Late Ch'ing: an Institutional Survey', in Paul A. Cohen and John E. Schrecker (ed.), *Reform in Nineteenth-Century China* (Cambridge, Mass., 1976), p. 232.

prevent those with an aptitude for study from entering the ruling classes. The school he founded produced several students who passed the lowest examinations.³⁹ He himself could not read or write, so took his place humbly at the bottom of the social ladder. On the opening day of the school his money had set up, he 'made his obeisances to the teacher and then to the pupils. When food was brought out to feast the teacher, Seven [Wu Xun] stood outside the door. When the feast was over, he ate up what was left, saying "I am a beggar, and would not presume to contest the teacher's place of honour!"' It is not surprising that Mao Zedong threw him out of the temple of model worthies.⁴⁰

Both academies and charitable schools played a marginal part in Chinese education. Its true parameters were the examination system, crowning the education edifice, initiated by and corresponding to the needs of the apex of Chinese society, the central government; and the lowly *sishu*, or traditional one-teacher private school, which arose in response to the demands of the family units that formed society's base. I shall go into more detail on the organization of *sishu* in the next chapter. For the present, I shall simply outline some of the differences between *sishu* and other educational institutions in late Qing China.

Sishu, unlike academies, community schools, or charitable schools, were purely private, as their name indicates. Not only did they receive no support from officials, they received no recognition in any form. Gazetteers or official compilations did not include them under the heading of 'schools' (*xuexiao* 学校); no public funds were diverted towards them; no registration or supervision was provided. This absence of *sishu* from the bureaucratic dictionary had serious consequences for later Chinese educational policy, in that the government never considered using *sishu* as a base for the new school system.

39. Liu Zizhou, 'Yixuezheng Wu Gong zhuan', in Li Shizhao, (ed.), *Wu Xun xiansheng de zhuanji* (Shanghai, 1948), p. 6.

40. Chen Daiqing, 'Wu Qi xiaozhuan', in Li , *Wu Xun xiansheng de zhuanji*, p. 11. Chairman Mao's criticism of the cult of Wu Zun in 1951 started a campaign to assess Wu's life in terms of Marxist class analysis. For a typical product of the campaign, see Wu Xun lishi diaocha tuan, *Wu Zun lishi diaocha ji* (Peking, 1951).

Academies provided bursaries for all their scholars, and charitable schools charged no fees. Unlike them, the *sishu* were invariable fee-paying. Since *sishu* provided, to all intents and purposes, almost all elementary education, this meant that at the base of a system meant to operate on merit rather than wealth was a built-in inequality. Nonetheless, the need for literacy in daily life and the respect accorded to learning meant that there was a widespread demand for schooling, a demand filled by a constant supply of educated men seeking to make a living from their years of classical study.

The classical education in which the *sishu* specialized exclusively was available to most families with any disposable income. Thus schooling was not confined to an elite, though it derived a large part of its prestige from association with elite culture and a large part of its utility from association with elite power.

The examination system mixed rigorous external regulation with a kind of abandonment of the candidate to a solitary wrestle with his fate; the academy attempted to realize the ideal scholarly community through rules designed to inculcate self-discipline, but found them dissolved through indifference and neglect until 'the name remained but the reality disappeared'. The *sishu* differed from both, running through its hourly, daily, yearly routine with a total absence of systematic regulation. *Sishu* practice was dictated by custom and individual need, not by externally imposed rules. The *sishu* teacher was integrated with the surrounding community, but independent of the hierarchies above him. It is this combination of autonomy and integration which I wish to examine in the next chapter.

CHAPTER TWOThe *Sishu*

Modern schooling - integration of curriculum -
segregation of organization - the *sishu* -
types of *sishu* - availability of schooling -
motivation for schooling - the school and
the scholar - segregation of curriculum -
integration of organization

China's indigenous schools had moulded themselves to fit the contours of a society very different from the industrialized West or industrializing Japan. The school systems of the latter were not isolated developments, but grew up in conjunction with 'modern' hospital and penal systems, disciplined armies, and, subsequently, police forces, and with increased regularization of the tasks and control in the organization of the labour force in the manufacturing sector.¹ New technology and new institutions interacted in a spiral of increasing political and economic integration, which provided channels for the diffusion of ideological and the strengthening of administrative control. Below, I shall outline the salient features of the Western school system and contrast them with those of China's *sishu*.²

In modern Western society schooling has normally taken a uniform pattern involving attendance of all male and female children between certain ages regardless of the will or wealth of their parents. Although entry to school is at a fixed age, there is no concept of that age as a turning point, as marking a new period of one's life, as can be seen from the fact that the content of a child's activities during the first year of school overlaps to a large extent with that offered to children in a middle-class home - games, stories, constructive play. Despite early similarities in the content of activity, the structure of activity within school differs from the beginning from home life. The child becomes a member of a class - one of twenty or thirty, or, in the old days, of forty, fifty, or sixty. For the first time, he or she is a unit in a large group, and embarks on a process of habituation to co-ordinated, regulated action which will later suit manners to tasks in the factory, the army, the public service or the business world. The discipline required for the management of large groups

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1. For the latter see E.P. Thompson, 'Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism', in M.W. Flinn and T.C. Smout (ed.), *Essays in Social History* (Oxford, 1974), pp. 39-77.
 2. Basil Bernstein's 'On the Classification and Framing of Educational Knowledge', in Michael F.D. Young (ed.), *Knowledge and Control* (London, 1971), pp. 47-69, afforded some starting points for this analysis, though I did not find his typologies directly applicable.

is inculcated along with the ABC, as the child learns to arrive punctually, respond to bells and words of command, stand at attention or march in line, begin and end activities in unison with classmates (even if these be of no more gravity than an afternoon nap). As the child's body performs these actions, their virtue is imprinted on his mind and 'rules' and 'obedience' take their place among his earliest abstract concepts.

The curriculum soon evolves from its original formlessness to differentiation - nature study, arithmetic, reading, writing - and further differentiation - history, geography, calculus, French, physics, chemistry. Especially in primary school, subjects are supposed to follow closely the child's natural interests and immediate surroundings. At high school, knowledge is still understood in 'practical' terms as giving the pupil information about the operation of the natural and social world. Thus the information given in school is understood to be no more than a distillation of observations made outside it. Texts are written by authors whose standpoint in time and space is not far distant from that of the pupils who use them (with the exception of those used in literature classes, school textbooks are rarely more than a generation behind their readers).

The apparent relevance of the message of these classes is contradicted by their medium. Lessons take place in a classroom built for the purpose and never used for any other, equipped with items of furniture, such as blackboards, rarely found elsewhere. They are given by a teacher who has been trained and employed to deliver them, and who is not usually encountered by pupils in any other capacity. Similarly, textbooks are written for use in schools and never read outside them. School subjects are thus drawn into a world of their own, set in a frame which implicitly denies the connections which pedagogical theory explicitly claims.

The class is a unit of the school, itself a discrete, articulated organism. Except in rural areas, a school will usually have hundreds of pupils and a dozen or more members of staff. Within the school, progress is sequential by age and work covered; a year is normally spent at each level. The school, again, is a unit in the whole educational system. Horizontally, a school is set up in each area with sufficient children of the required age to support one; vertically, it is a stage in tripartite,

graded system whose divisions, like those of hospitals and penal institutions, fall along broad age groupings. The school differs from these institutions in that length of stay has, up till now, been an advantage in later life.

The major part of the educational system is, as a rule, run and funded by public instrumentalities. Even institutions not directly under state control, such as universities and private schools, are subject to government regulation and must conform to standards it sets down. Government bureaucrats and professional educators co-operate to regulate the operation of schools by determining their texts, the qualifications of their staff, the school calendar, and the level needed for graduation; thus the school system is characteristically highly centralized. Differences of opinion may occur between professionals and bureaucrats over questions of priority or principle, but the right of each to play a role in the formation of the system is not questioned. The same does not hold true for the parents, who participate only at the base level and then in a token, marginal role.

Although the pattern of schooling is uniform, differences in the quality of teaching, facilities and equipment mean that not every child gets an identical education. Differences of provision compound with differences of background, as pupils enter school with a varying array of vocabulary, concepts, attitudes and habits, depending on their parents' occupation and education. Quantity of education received, in terms of number of years spent in educational institutions, correlates closely with family origins, and in turn determines the student's future occupation and status. Despite the apparent egalitarianism of universal education, it is one of the main mechanisms for formalizing the streaming and selection of the occupants of different social strata.

The paragraphs above outline in broad strokes the common characteristics of the 'modern' school systems which grew up in Europe and the United States in the nineteenth century in response to particular economic, political, and technological conditions. This system was not necessarily the only or the ideal form for an industrialized society, and is now in some respects being superseded in its place of origin, but by virtue of the prestige which military and commercial might conferred on its original possessors it became the model for the school system developed in Japan from

1872 on and thence transferred to China in the early twentieth century.

The *sishu* differed fundamentally from the type of school outlined above both in its place in society and in its internal organization. I shall outline these aspects of its operation in the pages below.

The *sishu* had existed in the same form in China for several centuries. Typically, it consisted of one class taught by one teacher. Its numbers varied from school to school and fluctuated at different times. Surveys show average class sizes ranging between eight and twenty-four.³

Average class size of course gives no idea of individual variation. Class size may have varied with concentration of population. It rose when a teacher was known and respected.⁴ One schoolmaster recalled having started with very few students - their combined fees equivalent to only four yuan a year - but having subsequently earned two hundred yuan over ten years, which bespeaks, if his fees remained constant, a rise in the number of pupils at least five-fold.⁵ The highest figure for *sishu* attendance is given by a Yunnanese writer, whose father was school manager, or chief sponsor, for *sishu* with 'thirty or even fifty or sixty students'.⁶ A *sishu* of this size would have taxed the ability of

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3. I have no figures for *sishu* predating the introduction of the new schools. *Sishu* in Shangyuan County averaged fifteen pupils in 1910 (*Jiaoyu zazhi* II : 3 (1910), Jishi, 20) as did those in Peking in the same year (*Xuebu guanbao*, [1909], Jing wai xuewu baogao, 17a). One must remember that smaller schools were less likely to attract the notice of investigators and had more reason to hide from them, since size was a partial qualification for approval by the education authorities. Incomplete statistics from 1935 show a national average of seventeen. Shandong has the smallest classes, averaging eleven pupils; Anhui follows with thirteen. Classes in Beiping, Tianjin, and Nanjing average between twenty-two and twenty-four. (*Jiaoyu zazhi*, XXVI : 12 (1936), p. 136. The same caveats apply to these statistics as to those of the Qing period. If the figures for these city *sishu* are reliable, they may indicate a demand for education rising with increased population and/or the influence of the larger size of the new schools.
 4. Liao T'ai-ch'u, 'Rural Education in Transition', *The Yenching Journal of Social Studies*, IV : 2 (1949), pp. 47-50.
 5. Zhou Shizhao, *Women de shibiao* [Biography of Xu Teli 徐特立] (Peking, 1958), p. 9.
 6. Li Zonghuang, *Li Zonghuang huiyilu* (Taipei, 1972), p. 42. William Liu remembers classes in his village near Guangzhou of the same size (interview).

one teacher; nonetheless, the one-room, one-teacher *sishu* remains the norm.⁷

Sishu pupils were not subdivided into groups on the basis of age, ability, or achievement. Rather, each pupil was a single teaching unit, proceeding through the curriculum at his own pace. His work was appraised individually, not automatically graded in relation to his fellows. From this point of view the teaching scheme could be said to be individualism run rife, but it derived not from a respect for 'individual development' but from the limits imposed by custom and convenience.

Although the master's teaching might be delivered to a group by way of a single lecture or text, its apprehension had always been a matter for the individual student; tradition dating back to Confucius and strengthened by Zhu Xi militated against togetherness in learning.

There were practical obstacles, too, to the institution of graded group learning as we know it in the West. Before the development of good roads and public transport, a school had to be within walking distance of its pupils unless they boarded away from home. Its catchment area being limited in size, so were its classes, even supposing the amalgamation of two or three *sishu* in a large village or small market town, the thirty or forty pupils thus brought together would be insufficient for the economic operation of groupings similar to those of the Western type of school system; nor was the schoolmaster, usually wholly dependent on his pupils' fees, likely to welcome any partial diversion of these to an assistant or colleague.

Sishu attendance was not universal, compulsory, or free. No school of thought advocated universal attendance regardless of sex or ability, although it was believed that poor but talented boys should have the opportunity to study. The government's attitude to popular schooling was

7. I have encountered only one example of a three-teacher *sishu*. It was run by members of three generations of one family, two of whom held the first degree, and indicates an exceptional concurrence of talent and longevity. (Zhang Moseng, *Li Zongwu zhuan* (Taipei, 1970), p. 59.)

one of benign neglect; not only were no subsidies given to the general run of elementary schools, they were neither certified nor inspected. The government bureaucracy impinged on the schoolmaster only as the possible destination of an exceptionally fortunate pupil; the master was employed not by the state but by his pupils' parents.

I indicated above that modern schooling 'grades' its pupils not only in the classroom but in their adult life, usually through school-associated examinations. The results of this sorting appear to correlate closely with family origin, but family origin alone is generally powerless without appropriate certification.

In China, the formalization and legitimization of officially recognized social stratification was carried out through the examinations independently of schools. Schooling itself offered no formal qualifications, but merged with family background as one of the intangibles affecting success or failure in the examinations.

Below I shall discuss the inter-relationship of family background and type of schooling received. For purposes of discussion I shall deal first with the family school or *jiashu*, secondly with the communally set up clan or village school, and finally with the school set up by a teacher on his own and accepting any applicant on a cash basis.⁸

8. There is no universally accepted definition of *sishu*, and no clear dividing line can be drawn between the different arrangements discussed below. A family school which advertised for pupils on the street corner was difficult to distinguish from an open-entry school; the clan school lay somewhere between an extended family school and a restricted village school (given that in the south the single surname village was common); a school independently set up by the teacher might enjoy the 'moral and material assistance' of sponsors in the same way as a village school. (For the latter case see Liao, 'Rural Education in Transition', *The Yenching Journal of Social Studies*, IV : 2 [1949], 34.) For Liao, the charitable school or *yixue* is a type of *sishu*. Another author lists the village school as a type of family school, and gives a definition indicating that it is managed solely by the teacher (Yu Shulin, *Zhongguo jiaoyu shi* [Taipei, 1961], p. 852). Yet another distinguishes the *jiashu* from the *sishu* (Zhou Zuoren, *Zhitang huixianglu* [Hong Kong, 1970], p. 21). Usage sanctions *sishu* as a generic term for traditional schools, in contradistinction to all forms of 'modern' or 'foreign' schools.

In the first case a family hired a tutor for the education of its own children. The class might be swollen by the children of neighbours or relatives, but basically the arrangement was an exclusive and thus relatively costly one, especially if the teacher lived on the premises. Education at home was the prerogative of a privileged group, purchased on the understanding that it would contribute to the maintenance of privilege. Teacher and employer often came from the same social stratum, and had a prior relationship based on kinship or acquaintance. Memoirists recall receiving their early lessons from a relative or friend.⁹ Even where the link was not a direct one, a teacher might well have been recommended by a friend.¹⁰ Both the existence of prior ties and the family head's right to determine his son's tutor mark off this arrangement from the typical modern school, in which parents are unacquainted with their children's teacher before and often during the course of their education.

The greater intimacy of the relationship did not guarantee the teacher's status. If he was a young man temporarily pressed into service by friends or relatives while studying for the examinations or pursuing other avocations, or an old one doing a favour for a friend, teaching might be regarded as a mutual convenience.¹¹ One who had made a career of elementary teaching, however, was almost by definition without sufficient property to live off and without hope of advancement through the examinations. He was in a dependent and precarious position.

Although some teachers were old retainers, or even enjoyed an almost hereditary position, this appears to have been the exception.¹² The fact

9. Among them Luo Dunwei (*Wushi nian huiyilu* [Taipei, 1952], p. 5), Ling Hongxun (*Qishi zishu* [Taipei, 1968], p. 6), Hu Shi (*Sishu zishu* [Shanghai, 1941], p. 23), and William Liu (interview), were taught by relatives, Gu Jiegang by a friend of his grandfather's (*Gushi bian I* [Hong Kong, 1968], Zi xu p. 7), and Ma Xulun by a former student of his father's (*Wo zai liushi sui yiqian*, [Shanghai, 1947], p. 4).

10. Bao Tianxiao, *Chuanyinglou huiyilu* (Hong Kong, 1971), p. 4.

11. See Chen Tianxi, *Chizhuang huiyilu* (Taipei, 1968), p. 34.

12. Guo Monuo's tutor had been in the family since before he was born, (Guo Monuo *Wo de you nian* (Shanghai, 1930), p. 47). Chiang Yee's 'had been my brother's teacher; his father had been my father's teacher; his son was going to be my nephew's teacher, (Chiang Yee, *A Chinese Childhood*, p. 85).

that a teacher's office was called into being by the needs of a specific child or children meant that his appointment was at best tied to their years of schooling. Apart from this, a teacher might leave his job because of age or illness, or have his services terminated as a strain on the family budget. Sometimes a teacher would follow his patron away from his native place. It was not impossible for a wife to follow her husband on his travels if he lived separately from his pupils.¹³

A rather cavalier attitude towards the appointment and retention of teachers at the elementary level reflects the fact that these men had no special qualifications either in subject matter or teaching method. Although guidance on teaching the young was given in works such as Wang Xun's *Jiao tongzi fa* 教童子法, these were not required reading. The science of education, with concomitant prestige for its practitioners, could not be said to have been elaborated in nineteenth century China. A further problem appears to have been an oversupply of would-be teachers, seduced into a literary career by hopes of examination success which did not materialize.

The teacher's dependence could be abject where personal connections did not mediate a cash relationship. A comic play from Shandong records the desperation of an unemployed teacher grasping at a contract to teach a miller's two dull sons for six thousand odd cash a year and his keep (two meals a day, for the sake of economy, straw bedding and a dogskin coverlet); for this he must provide not only mental but manual labour.¹⁴

Unless obtained at a discount, as in the case above, a teacher's board was costly. An urban clientele with a modest income, if desirous of the benefits of home education, would often hire a teacher to come in daily. This practice, involving the teacher's coming to the pupil rather

13. Xiao Gongquan in Sichuan was taught successively by two fellow-provincials from Jiangxi (*Wen xue jian wang lu* [Taipei, 1972], pp. 17-18.) Chiang Yee's teacher was not a native of the place where he taught (*A Chinese Childhood*, p. 85).

14. A. Smith, *Village Life in China*, (New York, 1899), pp. 67-68.

than vice versa, was regarded as somewhat degrading: the Book of Rites was quoted as evidence that in ancient times the opposite was the case. A parsimonious employer might add insult to injury by 'not providing meals but making the teacher walk home to eat them, in bitter cold and burning sun... and there are poor fellows, penniless scholars, whose pay is in arrears... though they beg for it, their pleas are ignored...'.¹⁵ The education received under these conditions was probably no better than the conditions of employment, but this may have been a matter of indifference to a father who simply wanted a business assistant.

Miyazaki's conclusion that "'teachers from whom we receive instruction" [as opposed to examiners] were not given much credit. In what was a hard, clear-cut business transaction, the students considered their obligations to teachers fulfilled when they paid the exact tuition fee' may be an overstatement in the case of higher education.¹⁶ Even at the elementary stage, the teacher's lowly position was often softened by personal ties, as I have shown above. Nonetheless, Miyazaki's words are a useful corrective to the view that the teacher-pupil relationship was sacrosanct in traditional China.¹⁷ Writers recalling the teachers of their childhood may do so with dislike, affection, indifference, or pious respect (though the latter is less mandatory for teachers than for mothers), but they rarely indicate that the relationship persisted in any form in later life. Only children owed their teacher unqualified respect, and this they outgrew

15. Weng Yanzhen, 'Gudai ertong duwu gaiguan', *Tushuguanxue jikan*, X : 1 (1936), 138.

16. Miyazaki, *China's Examination Hell*, p. 57. Recognition of a teacher's role in his pupil's success was more readily claimed than acknowledged. For a fictional account of a teacher's hopes for his pupils in the lower examinations, see Li Liuru, *Liushi nian de bianqian* (Peking, 1952), pp. 66-70.

17. The appearance of 'teacher' (*shi* 師) in the family shrine as an object of reverence in the same context as heaven, earth, emperor and parents is often adduced as evidence of the high esteem in which teachers were held in traditional China (see Ma, *Wo zai liushi sui yiqian*, p. 15, and Chiang, *A Chinese Childhood*, p. 79). Such reverence appears to have belonged purely to the conceptual realm, in which 'teacher' had honoured associations with Confucius.

with their childhood. The teacher's relationship with his pupils was often based on past ties, but was rarely the foundation for future ones.¹⁸

Although women were not allowed to sit the examinations, they were, in gentry families, more commonly given an education than is sometimes believed. Daughters frequently attended classes with their brothers until they reached their teens, when they were taken off to learn women's work. There was no objection to women's education *per se* especially when no extra cost was involved. Later conservative opposition to girls' schools was directed largely against the impropriety of young ladies' being seen in public outside the home and not against their being taught to read and write.

A village or communally run school had a more catholic intake than the family school in that it catered for a lower range of incomes, though since it provided schooling outside the home and since fees were charged per pupil it was rarer for girls to attend. Such a school was set up through the joint efforts of a number of families. The most detailed account of this process dates from the 1930's, when a sociologist from Yenching University surveyed *sishu* in the Shandong county of Wenshang.¹⁹ Since his account is the fullest, I have used it as a basis for the following description. Supplementary evidence from late Qing sources and the recollections of participants attest the diffusion and durability of the methods he witnessed.

According to Liao, family heads would form a board dominated by 'the village elders, or at least prominent members of the community possessing land, prestige, or ready cash'. One or several of their number would be

18. Exceptions to this generalization can be found in cases where the teacher offered advanced training and the relationship was reinforced by other ties. Chen Tianxi records three marriages which took place within two generations between his own family and that of his father's teacher (Chen Tianxi, *Chizhuang huiyilu*, p. 32).

19. Liao T'ai-ch'u, 'Rural Education in Transition', 19-67.

responsible for hiring the teacher, either locally or from outside,²⁰ while others would drum up enrolments by canvassing all families with children of school age. Since each family's circumstances were known to the canvasser, his propaganda was exactly targeted. Liao T'ai-ch'u writes of the admissions officers, 'They were...known for their knowledge of the locality, of the people, and also for their eloquence. They would talk to [the father of every potential pupil], persuade him, tell him the usefulness of Confucius' teachings... After talks of this kind no father could find courage enough to resist such a temptation unless he was absolutely bare and had not a cent to spare for his child's future or not a minute his child could stay away from his work in the farm. Even if this was really the case, his child might also be admitted free of charge and could be allowed to come any time he wanted through the recommendation of the admissions officer'.²¹ Liao takes a rosy view of the ease with which *sishu* could be entered; elsewhere, however, he indicates that *sishu* schooling was confined mainly to families owning more than 120 ares of land, that 23% of independent peasants owned less than 46 ares, and that nearly 20% of peasants were tenants. He mentions farm labourers but does not give their number.²² Remission of fees appears to be an occasional indulgence rather than a regular means of enabling the children of the poor to attend.

It is interesting to compare the canvasser, as a one man propaganda team, with later Communist attempts to enlist the support of peasants for worthy but not necessarily popular causes - with house-to-house visits to encourage contraception, for example. The school system introduced from

20. Arthur Smith states that it is 'uncommon' for a scholar to teach in his own village, but 'does often happen'. The preference for outside teachers apparently rested on the expectation that they would not be in a position to make troublesome demands on their pupils in later life (A. Smith, *Village Life in China*, p. 74). Liao's survey of Wenshang in the 1930's found that '83% ... were natives of Wenshang and again 65% were members of the same village or township in which they taught' (Liao, 'Rural Education in Transition', p. 35).

21. Liao, 'Rural Education in Transition', p. 34.

22. *Ibid.*, pp. 24, 45.

the West in the late Qing and continued under the nationalists conspicuously lacked mechanisms of enlisting popular support of the grass-roots level.²³

It was to the interest of most of the participants to have as many children attending the school as the teacher could control, since this would spread the burden of his hire. This contributed towards a flexible attitude towards school fees. Relative ability to pay was normally taken into account in assessing these. Their general level was low, possibly because of a surplus of would-be teachers; according to a Shandong proverb, 'the number of those who wish to teach school is in excess of the number who can read.'²⁴

Arrangements for schooling were social as well as educational. Their dual character is exemplified in the process known as *yi xue* (议学) or discussion of schooling, by which school fees were fixed each year. An account of its operation in his own schooldays is given by the educationalist Shu Xincheng.

At the Qingming Festival, family heads would gather at the school bringing plentiful supplies of wine and food. The teacher was kept busy receiving them, and though we were at school we had no lessons that day. After a little chat they'd all move out of his way and go to discuss in a room opposite how much each should undertake to pay in the way of school fees. Once this had been decided, each would write his share on a piece of red paper, and one of the older men present would be selected to hand the paper from his sleeve to the teacher with a few congratulatory words. Then the wine

23. The operation of the canvasser, or *yaodong*, is also recorded for Hunan in the 1890's. See Shu Xincheng, *Wo he jiaoyu* (Shanghai, 1945), p. 17.

24. Smith, *Village Life in China*, p. 67. Another foreign observer quotes a Cantonese proverb, 'If I'm poor I'll teach, if I'm hungry I'll scrape the rice pot'. (T.K. Dealy, 'Mr E.H. Parker's China', *The China Review* 25: 4 (1900-1901), 201.) Since, in principle, 'a Confucianist does not become a farmer, craftsman, merchant or shopkeeper, the only [careers open to him] are to be an official or to teach the young'. (See Wang, 'Gudai ertong duwu gaiguan', 138). As few could obtain the former position, many sought the latter.

and food each had brought were put on a table with dishes prepared by the teacher, and they would sit down at table and drink together while the pupils ate at the side. This was called 'discussing schooling'; that is, family heads would weigh up each family's financial situation as the basis for apportioning school fees. Once the amount was settled, it would be written in a book and given to the teacher. Further installments would be paid at the Duanwu and Mid-autumn Festivals. This sum was to support the schoolmaster's family. As far as his personal life at the school was concerned, each sponsoring family would take turns in providing him with oil, salt, firewood, rice, and meat and vegetables each month...²⁵

A foreign observer refers to the compilation of 'a red card, called a school list (馆单) [guandan], with the names of intending pupils on it, prepared by mid-Autumn, the winter solstice, or the end of the lunar year.'²⁶

Procedure naturally differed somewhat in charity schools, where the teacher's salary was not paid by parents, but the contract of the Shen Longjiang *yixue* makes similar provision for a feast at the teacher's arrival and for seasonal payment of his salary.²⁷

Installment payment, payment in kind, and the fitting of fees to circumstances meant that it was not difficult for families with some surplus income to send at least one son to school. If the canvasser did his work well, supply and demand would be a close fit. A subtle and sociable arrangement; small wonder that the flat rate charged by later schools on the Western model condemned them in the eyes of the old-fashioned as 'roping in students to soak them for the fees'.²⁸

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25. Shu, *Wo he jiaoyu*, p. 17. For other mentions of the 'discussions of schooling' see Li, *Li Zonghuang huiyilu*, p. 42, for Yunnan in the late 1890's-early 1900's, and Liao, 'Rural Education in Transition', p. 56, for Sichuan in the mid-1940's.
26. Smith, *Village Life in China*, p. 74.
27. Wang, 'Gudai ertong duwu gaiguan', p. 139.
28. Shan, 'Beiping sishu de yanjiu', *Xin beizhen*, II : 10, (1936), 1067.

The system was not as egalitarian as it appears on the surface. I have already pointed out that farm labourers and many tenant farmers and small landholders living at or below the subsistence level could not have afforded even the most modest fees. Within the *sishu* itself, differential treatment was often given according to the amount of fees paid. Low fees simply entitled one to a place in the classroom; generosity meant a large share of the teacher's attention. Thus Shu Xincheng was permitted to start school for only 1200 *wen* (文) per year in cash, two fat hens and a few dozen eggs simply because, being less than four years old, it was assumed that he would not require much attention.²⁹ Conversely, Hu Shi's mother paid record-breaking fees of twelve yuan a year, six times the normal, to ensure her son special treatment.³⁰ A hostile short story makes the point through caricature: of a poverty-stricken schoolmaster who took his meals at each student's house in turn, surreptitiously stuffing his sleeves with food for his wife, 'everybody said that he taught his students not according to their level but to the quantity of food and drink provided.'³¹ From the schoolmaster's point of view, deficiencies in fees could be made up in number of pupils, since owing to the teaching methods used, an increase in numbers did not necessarily mean a commensurate increase in effort.

The third form of schooling, the school set up by the teacher, I shall discuss only briefly. It is of interest not so much because it differs greatly from the arrangements already discussed, but because such differences as there are take it in the direction of a modern school in the sense that no personal relationship, direct or mediated, necessarily exists between schoolmaster and parent. In such a school, no formalities of appointment were required, and the schoolmaster could simply hand up a signboard and wait for pupils. This act assumes a certain number of pupils in the vicinity (for few would attend a school not in walking distance of their homes), and thus an urban location, or at least a large village and popular teacher. Its *ad hoc* organization could lead to even greater

29. Shu, *Wo he jiaoyu*, p. 17. Shu states that it took his mother only three half-days of work picking wild cotton to earn the cash part of his fees.

30. Hu, *Sishi zishu*, p. 25.

31. Tian Lusheng, 'Xuejiu jiaoyu tan', in *Yueyue xiaoshuo*, 12 (1907), 33-38.

flexibility in attendance and payment of fees; it was possible to pay by the month, or even, for very poor families who could not afford a large single outlay, by the day.³² Like the hiring of teachers on the open market, this transaction held the potential of shedding its social elements and becoming purely the sale and purchase of services. The process does not seem to have been carried to its conclusion; even in Peking in the thirties, *sishu* pupils still tended to come 'from relatives in the neighbourhood'.³³

A variation on this type was the *da guan* (大館), or school for advanced students, at which a well-known scholar would prepare pupils for the examinations. Such schools might be residential (since scholars of such standing were not to be met with in every village, their instruction formed an exception to the rule that schooling was usually obtained in the pupil's home locality). They took pupils from their teens into their thirties. In Wenshang, they were known as *cuan ju* (爨局) from the fact that those who attended did their own cooking. Shu Xincheng's autobiography shows a contrast between the self-reliance nurtured in this type of school and the hand-and-foot service offered in the modern school which he later attended.³⁴

The division of schooling was not formalized as it is in the Western or modern system. One master, if sufficiently capable, could teach all levels from beginners to advanced in the same class. A school's level depended on the teacher's reputation; only the best could afford to turn away lower-level students.

Few pupils received all their education from one teacher. A typical case is that of Chen Heqin, who in six years of *sishu* education studied under four masters at three schools.³⁵ If a family head did not change his

32. Leong and Tao, *Village and Town Life in China*, p. 96.

33. Dan, 'Beiping *sishu* de yanjiu', p. 1067.

34. Shu, *Wo he jiaoyu*, pp. 38-39 & 52.

35. Chen, *Wo de ban sheng*, p. 60.

child's teacher because of dissatisfaction with his performance, he did so because of a change of abode or fortunes. (Many students changed from family to outside schools or switched to self-study for economic reasons; others had their education broken off altogether).

Chinese scholastic lore has always exalted the role of individual application in studious achievement. A modern study takes a more cynical view, concluding that in the examination system, 'the advantages were heavily in favour of those who had wealth and influence'.³⁶ Schooling, standing at the juncture between family means and individual effort, showed the influence of both. At the elementary level, texts and teaching methods were similar in all schools, but even there individual attention - of the type automatically obtained in a small family school, and purchased at extra cost in others - helped ensure that the child memorized and reproduced his lessons accurately, a desideratum in an examination system which penalized inaccuracy. The acquisition of more abstruse skills depended on the possession of a family environment which permitted a prolongation of studenthood, sometimes into old age. Examination success depended to some extent on the utilization of one's forerunners' experience. Though books of model eight-legged essays could be bought, the training given by one who had himself passed the examinations was preferred. Those with the right connections and income might even obtain the aid of a *juren*.

Even deeper than the divisions between those who enjoyed different levels of schooling was that between those who obtained schooling of some kind and those who had never crossed the schoolroom threshold. There has been some debate in recent years about the literacy rate in Qing China.³⁷ Given the dubious quality and limited quantity of statistics for the period,

36. Chang Chung-li, *The Chinese Gentry*, p. 183.

37. See F. Mote, 'China's Past in the Study of China Today', *Journal of Asian Studies*, XXXII : 1 (1972), 107-120. Evelyn Rawski's forthcoming book on literacy in the Qing should be a useful contribution to this field.

a single exact figure is unlikely to be obtained.³⁸ My own estimate would be that some forty per cent of males attended a *sishu* at some time in their childhood; many of these did not learn to read while they were there, and others would subsequently have lost their rarely used skills.

Material garnered from memoirs and literary fragments can add to uneven statistics to give a picture of the *sishu* in the mental landscape of the Chinese. The common derogatory term for a village schoolmaster, 'Mr Winterhearth of Three Family Village' (*sanjiacun donghong xiansheng* 三家村冬烘先生) indicates his ubiquity.³⁹ In Wenshang in the 1930's,

38. Liang Qichao suggests a literacy rate of 'less than thirty per cent', ('Lun xuexiao: youxue', *Shiwu bao*, XVI (1897) [1033]). His fellow-reformer Xu Qin gives a hyperbolically low estimate of five per cent. ('Zhongguo chuhai yi', in Shu Xincheng (ed.), *Jindai Zhongguo jiaoyushi ziliao* (Peking, 1962), Vol. III, p. 963. No attempt to survey the rate of literacy was made during the Qing, nor were national statistics collected on the number of *sishu*. (Their very existence goes unmentioned in the statistical compilations of the Ministry of Education). The researcher is thrown back on local figures of uncertain validity compiled after the introduction of the new system and on extrapolation from surveys of the twenties and thirties, made when the new system was on the way to ousting the old. Peking was said to have over seven thousand *sishu* pupils in 1909 (*Xuebu guanbao* LXXXII (1909) Jingwai xuewu baogao, 17), and Shangyuan County to have three and a half thousand for the same year (*Jiaoyu zazhi*, II : 3 (1909) Jishi, 21 [01529]). It is unlikely that these or subsequent statistics include private family schools, which by their nature did not advertise their presence. The Peking figures certainly and the Shangyuan ones possibly were collected in the course of a drive to reduce *sishu*, which would certainly have meant that any schoolmasters aware of this intention would have tried to avoid notice; this makes under-reporting highly likely. Apart from defects in the figures as collected, it is possible that the proportion of children in school in comparison with the number in *sishu* was deliberately exaggerated by educational officials interested in establishing a reputation for promoting schools and discouraging *sishu*. The caveats above apply equally to official statistics of the Republican period. The first national survey, made in 1935, showed 101, 027 *sishu* still existing, with 1,757,014 pupils. Another source of figures is independent surveys: Buck's shows 30% of the male population to have been educated in *sishu* in the mid-1930's, (J.L. Buck, *Land Utilization in China* (New York, 1964), pp. 373-4.)

39. 'Winterhearth' refers to the practice of teaching children from farming families in winter, the slack season in agriculture. See Leong and Tao, *Village and Town Life in China*, p. 97.

Liao T'ai-ch'u found 'at least 1 szu shu in every village - big and small. In big villages and townships one expected more than one'.⁴⁰ Writing of Shandong forty years earlier, a foreign observer found the desire for education everywhere present, prevented from realization only where a village was too poor to hire a teacher.⁴¹ Shu Xincheng's home, a Hunan village of twenty or thirty households, supported two elementary *sishu* at the turn of the century. At that time, he reflects, the sound of chanted lessons was to be heard in every hamlet of ten houses. (The amount of noise from such chanting served as an index of an area's cultural standing: the more noise, the more culture.)⁴²

In terms of distance, the *sishu* would have been within reach of prospective pupils in all but thinly populated areas. Nor were there class or occupational barriers to attendance. Those from 'mean families' - entertainers, boat-people, yamen clerks, and other groups defined as disreputable - could not sit the examinations but were not prevented from attending school, though the lack of possible advancement dampened their enthusiasm for learning.⁴³

The main barrier, then, was financial. Well-to-do families would hire a tutor as a matter of course. Below them was a wide band of households whose small surplus income could be used for schooling if other expenditure was curtailed. Given that a schoolmaster would eat up - sometimes literally - this surplus, what determined whether the possibility of schooling was realized?

In looking at the factors which made schooling a desideratum, one must remember that it did not affect the individual alone. Education was a family investment, made with hopes of benefiting past, present, and future generations of the family. It was not superimposed on other goals, but

40. Liao, 'Rural Education in Transition', p. 48.

41. Smith, *Village Life in China*, p. 73.

42. Shu, *Wo he jiaoyu*, p. 10.

43. See Xu Qin, 'Zhongguo chu hai yi', in Shu (ed.), *Ziliao*, p. 963.

was an integral part of their attainment.

Two of the main motivations behind the pursuit of schooling were family honour and material advantage. Family honour was served by members who were successful in the examinations. Such success, to a far greater extent than that of achievement in the modern school, reflected on the family as a whole, 'bringing glory to one's ancestors'. Ma Xulun's mother urged him to his studies with the twin goads of his grandfather's high degree, which had to be emulated, and his father's failure, which had to be redeemed.⁴⁴ Honour was a potent motivation not only among the gentry but in families only a generation away from manual labour. Shu Xincheng writes: 'My mother's hopes for me were especially earnest: she wished me on no account to follow in my ancestor's footsteps and become a horny-handed farmer, but prayed reverently before all the gods and Buddhas in the locality that when grown to manhood I might be an educated man and get some sort of office to make notable the forbears of the Shu and Xu families'. (Xu was the maternal line).⁴⁵

Women appear to have been particularly sensitive to the demands of family honour as defined by the examination system. Shu's mother is not an isolated example. In some cases widows championed their son's claims to education singlehandedly against indifferent relatives - Hu Shi and Luo Dunwei were the product of such maternal enterprise.⁴⁶

44. Ma, *Wo zai liushi sui yiqian*, p. 4. See also Chen Qitian, *Jiyuan huiyilu*, (Taipei, 1965), p. 10.

45. Shu Xincheng, *Wo he jiaoyu*, p. 5. Shu's maternal grandfather had at one time been a teacher; his daughter had married into a family of well-to-do tenant farmers. Her hopes for her son may have reflected the standards of her own family rather than her husband's. Parallel examples of upward social mobility fuelled by maternal ambition for education can be found in eighteenth century England, where the optional, private character of schooling was similar to that given by *sishu*. See Victor E. Neuberg, *Popular Education in Eighteenth Century England*, (London, 1971), pp. 54-55.

46. Luo's mother berated him for 'shaming his ancestors and his parents' when he was rude to his teacher (Luo, *Wushi nian huiyilu*, p. 5). Hu's 'placed all her hopes on my insubstantial, unforeseeable future', (Hu, *Sishi zishu*, p. 19). The note of doubt is Hu Shi's; his mother's wish to see him a graduate was unequivocal and tenacious.

Maternal influence has played its part in Chinese education since Mencius' mother moved house three times to give him suitable surroundings for study in the fourth century B.C. It is hard to tell the extent to which the role of virtuous wife and mother was projected on to women by men, or to what extent it represented their own response to a male-dominated society. Memoirs written by men serve both to record and reinforce desirable feminine behaviour. One writer remembers 'In the evening, mother would be spinning cotton by the tiny flame of the oil lamp, or sometimes twisting threads, while we brothers would sit round the table chanting our lessons in loud voices. That picture of "teaching one's sons in the lamp-light" still springs of itself from my pen'.⁴⁷ The literary flavour of the last passage reflects the interplay between reality and stereotype in descriptions of the maternal role.

Although one must assume that most of the incidents recorded in memoirs actually took place, they are strained through the mesh of conventional piety; it is rarely that a woman emerges from her son's autobiography as a living human being.

Failing the memoirs of Qing matriarchs, one can only conjecture why women valued so highly the education of their sons. There was a certain basis of realism to their hopes: if she outlived her husband, a woman would be financially dependent on her son and thus it was naturally to her interest that he should have the status and income hoped for from education. Then there were the social rewards, such as the esteem of neighbours, and the emotional satisfaction of having carried out the duties proper to one's sex in an exemplary manner, and finally, perhaps, an unconscious gratification at having fulfilled through one's son goals which one was not permitted to entertain for oneself.

Schooling was also expected to offer material advantages,^{47a} or at least to provide against loss. The common people valued literacy as a

47. Luo, *Wushi nian huiyilu*, p. 5. For more homely recollections of maternal supervision, see Chen Bulei, *Chen Bulei huiyilu*, (Hong Kong, 1962), p. 3.

47a. See the verse quoted on pages 42-43 and the Chinese sayings 'in books there are golden mansions, in books there are faces of jade' (shu zhong zi you huang jin wu, shu zhong zi you yan ru yu 书中自有黄金屋, 书中自有颜如玉), and 'become an official and make money (sheng guan fa cai 升官发财).

form of self-defence against the extortions of the lettered. Shu Xincheng's greatgrandfather, a tenant farmer who worked his own fields, had his grandson attend a few years' school 'because he had once been cheated'.⁴⁸ A Zhejiang author recalls his father's stories of family humiliation; the latter had received an education because ' [grandfather] believed that once in the charmed circle of scholar-officials, all humiliations would be left behind'.⁴⁹ A degree was the most powerful armour - its holders were immune from the grosser forms of physical punishment - but failing this, the ability to read official documents, receipts or bills, was obviously of use in dealing with yamen underlings or rapacious neighbours.

More particularly, literacy was necessary for the conduct of litigation. As late as the 1930's certain areas of Shandong were known for their beautifully written complaints and accusations, the product of the high standards of the local *sishu*.⁵⁰ Among boys sent to school with this accomplishment in mind was the future Chairman of the Communist Party of China, Mao Zedong, who recalled 'my father...wanted me to master the Classics, especially after he was defeated in a lawsuit because of an apt Classical quotation used by his adversary in the Chinese court'.⁵¹

So far I have been speaking of schooling in the context of reflected advantages for the family unit. In a sense, however, schooling performed this function only by first drawing the pupil out of his family and into the community of scholars. This is evident in the ceremony surrounding the child's first lesson, known as *po meng* (破蒙) or *qi meng* (启蒙) (literally, the breaking or enlightening of ignorance).⁵² This marked his

48. Shu, *Wo he jiaoyu*, p. 4.

49. Cao Juren, *Jiangfan liushi nian* (Hong Kong, 1957), p. 19.

50. Liao, 'Rural Education in Transition', p. 32.

51. E. Snow, *Red Star over China*, (Harmondsworth, 1972), p. 156.

52. The account below is based on Ma Xulun's recollections of his experience in Zhejiang in 1889, (Ma, *Wo zai liushi sui yiqian*, pp. 1-3), Bao Tianxiao's of Suzhou in 1880 (Bao, *Chuanyinglou huiyilu*, pp. 5-6), and Chen Hequin's of Baiguan, Zhejiang, in 1899 (Chen, *Wo de bansheng*, pp. 48-50.)

departure not only from his individual childish ignorance, but from the ignorance which enshrouded all who were unfamiliar with Confucian teachings. The lesson was prefaced by obeisance towards an altar to Confucius and by the pupil's formal acknowledgement of the teacher to whose care he was entrusted. The choice of a first teacher was held to be of great importance, not necessarily for the sake of his pupil's school career - for the first teacher might disappear after the first lesson - but for what it presaged about the future. Ma Xulun's father invited the first-place *juren* in the previous year's provincial examinations to give young Ma his first lesson, an index of his hopes that the boy would follow in his temporary mentor's footsteps. (The *juren* was on his way to Peking for the metropolitan examinations, and does not reappear in the narrative.) The young student, outfitted with a varying assortment of the tools of his new trade - schoolbag embroidered with auspicious symbols, the 'four treasures of the study' (paper, brush, ink-stick and inkstone), and the Four Books or another suitable text, would then recite after his teacher a line from the classics or a later Confucian text until he had memorized the characters of which it was composed. Around this Confucian core grew up accretions of custom and superstition designed to ensure the harmony of the pupil-teacher relationship and the pupil's future success. The ceremony could be preceded by an offering to the 'boddhisattvas' - Taoist gods who had insinuated themselves into the Confucian canon, where they presided over the examination fortunes of scholars.^{52a} At its conclusion, offerings might be made to the ancestors, or friends and neighbours - if the family was a rich one - invited to a feast for the teacher. Such festivity would not be repeated again in the student's scholastic career unless he passed the examinations. Within the classroom, the cakes brought by the new pupil signified, by a play on words, a high position in the examinations: Suzhou shops made specially shaped cakes for the occasion. Bao Tianxiao recalls that his schoolbag, embroidered with a first-place *jinshi* on a white horse, was turned inside out by the teacher as he left; this stood for a scholar called to high office. This goal was reinforced by inspirational verse:

The emperor values heroes bold, and writing would have you learn.
 Other occupations are lowly in rank; study alone is high.
 As a little child you must study hard; writing can make your career.

52a. For orthodox Confucian opposition to the cult of these intruders in the Ming, see Liu Ts'un-yan, *Selected Papers from the Hall of Harmonious Wind* (Leiden, 1976), p.130.

The court's full of nobles in purple and pearls; scholars, every one.

In the morning, a farmer he was; at eve, he ascends to the palace. Generals and ministers are made not born; a boy should make his own way...⁵³

These rituals were all designed for men, who alone could sit the examinations. Women had their part to play, however, in the provision of delicacies or embroideries, and thus enjoyed a vicarious involvement. In Suzhou, it was the wife's brother who took the child to his first lesson rather than the father, and her family outfitted the pupil.

Such academic ritual illuminates popular attitudes to schooling during the late Qing. School attendance was a single aspect of deep-rooted beliefs about the purpose of study and the relationships involved. On the one hand its present participants - teacher, pupil, family - were linked through the preparation and conduct of these rites; on the other, ancestors, gods, and the First Teacher, Confucius, were called to witness. The ceremony bespeaks the integration of schooling with intellectual, religious, and social life.

In all these particulars traditional Chinese schooling differed from the modern system. Although the content and purpose of the latter have socially recognized significance, no sanctity attaches to its forms. No ancient rite demands that a child who reaches a certain age in the course of a year be taken to a place within a fixed distance of his home and left there for six hours. These are bureaucratic dictates, designed for the smooth functioning of the system they regulate, but possessing little intrinsic meaning for the households they affect.

China's traditional schooling differed from that of the modern West not only in the nature of its ties with the family and the government but in its internal organization, which, in many respects, could be said to be the mirror image of that of modern schooling. The modern school

53. Chen Dongyuan, *Zhongguo jiaoyu shi*, p. 419. These sentiments, in particular the line exalting study above other occupations, were the subject of attack during the anti-Confucius campaign in China in 1974.

integrates its curriculum with the outside world, but as an institution cuts off all links with it. The *sisu* closed off its curriculum from everyday life, but (in rural areas especially) was organizationally integrated into the surrounding community.

In the modern school, teaching methods and curriculum purport to be practical, related to daily life, or at least to the principles governing the operation of the natural and social worlds. Children's readers may show an artificial life, but it is one which their unimaginative creators take as lying around every child. Later specializations - modern languages, the social and physical sciences, mathematics, domestic and industrial crafts - are supposed to be relevant to the interests and careers of older pupils.⁵⁴ Such tuition is not necessarily devoid of moral content. Especially at the junior levels, primers are often the vehicle for the diffusion of national myths and the encouragement of civic virtue. This was especially true of the Japanese system, which from the 1880's onward introduced an emphasis on ethics not found in its Western models. Even here, the beliefs inculcated were state-selected rather than a reflection of values already held by the community. At advanced levels, subject matter tended to be insulated by its specialization from ethical and religious beliefs.

In China, the traditional curriculum was more remote from everyday life but less compartmentalized. Its subject matter was unitary. Compared with the 'modern' curriculum, it did not show clear lines of demarcation. The *Three Character Classic*, the child's first reader, was also a primer of history, bibliography, ethics and general knowledge. The Four Books could be regarded primarily as works of moral philosophy, but also served as sources of political history; the Five Classics included works of

54. The requirement, relatively recently abolished, of classical languages for entry into Oxford and Cambridge can be seen as a survival of an archaic system rather than as qualifications of a modern one; the same can be said of the emphasis on the memorization of Biblical texts which dominated the early stages of English elementary education.

history, poetry, and divination, overlaid with neo-Confucian interpretations. An educated man was expected to be familiar with his country's history, but neither his teacher nor the examination system demanded that he study history as a separate discipline. He could get by without reading historical sources for the post-Qin millenia. For the Confucian educationalist, the Classics were not merely *primus inter pares* as sources of knowledge about humanity; they were the records of the sages, imprinted with the perfections of their creators. Traditionalists looking at the new curriculum and its texts were baffled by the sight of modern men taking other moderns as their authority: 'Are textbook writers the new sages, then?' Kang Youwei asked.⁵⁵ A mastery of the classics could be followed but equalled never by studies in other fields. In *sishu*, practicality yielded to doctrine to such an extent that even arithmetic was seldom taught, a knowledge of the abacus being left to parent or employer to provide.⁵⁶ The advanced accounting skills needed for financial administration could be acquired from teachers who specialized in training young men as private secretaries to officials.⁵⁷

The Confucian classics and their preceding primers were remote from their young readers in that they were written in classical Chinese, the earliest dating from nearly three thousand years previously, the most recent a few centuries old.⁵⁸ Without explanation, they were unintelligible. Although the *Three Character Classic* emphasized the importance of explanation, it was customary for a student to have memorized the primers, the Four Books, and the Five Classics before he was taught their meaning. A harassed and often ignorant schoolmaster would concentrate on producing

55. Yu Jiaji, *Huiyilu* (Shanghai, 1948), p. 8.

56. See Shu, *Wo he jiaoyu*, p. 29, and Smith, *Village Life in China*, pp. 104-105.

57. See Chen Tianyi, *Chizhuang huiyilu*, pp. 34-35; C.P. Tang, 'Mu-fu System in China under the Ch'ing', M.A. thesis, ANU 1976, pp. 85-86.

58. Some writers (Hu, *Sishi zishu*, pp. 21-22, and Xiao, *Wen xue jian wang lu* p. 15), recall using material written by a parent or ancestor. These too were in classical Chinese, and were no more readily comprehensible than the models on which they were based.

value for money in terms of level of noise - from the recitation of texts - rather than level of understanding. It came to be taken for granted that children did not understand the books they read: Gu Jiegang's teacher expressed disbelief when the precocious Gu claimed to grasp the meaning of the *Zuo zhuan*.⁵⁹ Given that autobiographies are the records of a relatively privileged class, it is remarkable how many of their authors left the *sishu* understanding no more of the works they had memorized 'than a monk reciting the scriptures'. Ma Xulun, later to become a noted philologist, had to pass the usual hurdles in his youth. He recalls classes with 'ten odd students in a small room, all squawking non-stop... I got away with just opening my mouth and making noises with the best of them. All Mr Zhang required of his students was recitation... I was on the third book of Mencius, but didn't know what it was about'.⁶⁰ The Five Classics were even worse: Ma found the *Shi jing* and *Shu jing* 'a lot of nonsense syllables'.⁶¹ Even Gu Jiegang found the court poetry of the *Shi jing* an intolerable burden.⁶² The reform propagandist Zheng Guanying evokes the amazement of one who after ten years of intermittent schooling, finds almost accidentally that the gibberish on the page in front of him has an intelligible meaning.⁶³

If much of the continued use of these materials for young children was due to inertia and the vested interest of teachers in familiar methods, they nonetheless had both pedagogic and social utility. A student who had

59. Gu, *Gushi bian*, I, p. 7. Not only children had difficulty: in an article attacking the old education written in 1897, Xu Qin declared that 90% of those who studied the classics did not understand what they read (Xu, 'Zhongguo chu hai yi', in Shu (ed.), *Ziliao*, p. 964.

60. Ma, *Wo zai liushi sui yiqian*, pp. 3-4. Hu Shi received a better education only by dint of his mother's exertions; a fellow classmate of his could not even understand the salutation in a family letter. (Hu, *Sishi zishu*, p. 26).

61. Ma, *Wo zai liushi sui yiqian*, p. 6.

62. Gu, *Gushi bian*, p. 7.

63. Zheng Guanying, *Shengshi weiyuan houbian* (Taipei, 1968 [1909]), Xuewu, 2 : 51a [347].

completed the "Three Hundred Thousand" - the three basic readers, the *Three Character Classic*, the *Hundred Family Names*, and the *Thousand Character Classic* - would have committed to memory about two thousand characters, a sufficient base for further reading. These two thousand he would have acquired in a comparatively short time - the time taken to memorize about seven hundred three-or four-word lines of verse. Their content might be imperfectly understood, but it was of sufficient gravity to convince the young student and his relatives that he had begun the study of man's affairs. In contrast, primers written in China during the first half of the twentieth century tended to the repetitive vacuity of their Japanese or American models. These did no great injury to the Japanese or American child, who acquired through them a knowledge of the alphabet and its correspondence with semantic and thence semantic units, but retarded the progress of the Chinese learner. Since Chinese has a morphemic script, sound forms no bridge between the words in his vocabulary and the characters on the page, each of which has to be learnt as it appears. The concentrated recognition of characters is a necessary preliminary to his reading career, a task economically performed by the 'Three Hundred Thousand'.⁶⁴

The language of the Four Books was the language of the ruling elite. For those outside the scholar-gentry, its mastery meant the possibility of understanding and thence evading or manipulating the demands of those higher in the social scale. To have omitted them would have been to receive a second-class education. In addition, centuries of diffusion of Confucian precepts interacted with the strong family orientation of Chinese society to reinforce confidence in the Four Books as the fount of correct action in the home as well as abroad. So great was the influence of these works that in Sichuan in the 1920's, some country folk 'still insisted that their children must read the Four Books and the Five Classics, and didn't like [modern] textbooks.'⁶⁵ The content of modern works was suspect. According

64. For an analysis of the functions of these primers in the teaching of reading, see Zhang Zhigong, *Chuantong yuwen jiaoyu chutan* (Shanghai, 1962), pp. 3-26.

65. Liu Langsheng, *Nanchuan xianzhi* (Taipei, 1976 [1926]), 6 : 8b-9a [482 - 83].

to Liao T'ai-ch'u, in Wenshang 'some people even doubted whether the characters they taught in new schools were the ones "invented" by Confucius, or whether they created a different set.'⁶⁶

The *sishu* not only gave the child adult texts but demanded of him adult standards of behaviour, fitting the stereotype of the 'educated man'. In this union of the adult and the child's world it differed markedly from the 'child-centred' teaching methods evolved in the West in the nineteenth century by disciples of Froebels and Pestalozzi, which placed a high value on engaging the child's interest and allowing him freedom to play and run around. In China, most people sent their sons to school to get the childishness whipped out of them, not encouraged. A Hunanese proverb ran 'a boy is tamed by school, a girl by marriage'.⁶⁷ Others in the same vein are 'he won't grow into a man without beating; beat him into an official', and 'to rear without teaching is a fault in the father; to teach without severity is a fault in the teacher'.⁶⁸

Teachers who took such injunctions literally could make their pupil's lives a misery. Common punishments were blows with a ruler or bamboo rod, or kneeling in front of Confucius' picture for as long as it took an incense stick to burn. The supposed educative functions of these punishments was easily lost in casual brutality. Guo Moruo recalls that when he first attended school he was beaten around the head so often that his scalp was a mass of unhealed sores. His mother, in lieu of protest, made him a hard padded cap, but was powerless after the teacher discovered it.⁶⁹

With their classical texts, emphasis on rote learning, and severe discipline, the traditional Chinese curriculum and teaching methods could

66. Liao, 'Rural Education in Transition', p. 45.

67. Shu, *Wo he jiaoyu*, p. 12.

68. Herbert A. Giles (trans. and ann.), *San Tzu Ching* (Taipei, 1975 [1910]), pp. 11-12. (The translation above is mine).

69. Guo, *Wo de younian*, pp. 54-55. A similar ruse is recalled by William Liu, who put a stone wrapped in rags under his cap to fend against his teacher's blows; unfortunately the ruler knocked it off (interview).

be said to be remote and formal, their only kinship with the surrounding world that insinuated into it by generations of repetition and imposed on it by the imperial examinations. It was in these respects the opposite of the Western school as I have described it above.

In areas where the new schools imposed uniformity, compulsion, and rigidity, however, the *sishu* was arbitrary, fluid, informal, responsive. Those boundaries which define the modern school as being other, different from the outside world, were absent in the *sishu*. A *sishu* never had its own premises in the sense of having a building designed for its occupancy; this would have needed an administrative structure and income beyond the resources of the small community it served. Classes might be conducted in the study or spare room of a well-to-do household, in a room in the teacher's own house, or in public premises such as a temple or ancestral hall.⁷⁰ School furnishings were often brought from home,⁷¹ or, in the north where a heated brick bed was available, dispensed with. This simplicity meant that schooling could occur whenever teacher and pupil, books and writing implements, were brought together.

The role of the teacher was no more fixed than that of the room he occupied. I have mentioned that teacher and pupil were often related by blood, or at least mutual acquaintance. The teacher had a dual role in another sense: whether from economic need or good will, he would lend a hand in a variety of tasks to his illiterate and semi-literate neighbours. In a literary vein, he would write their letters, choose their children's names, compose couplets for New Year or a wedding or funeral notice. He wrote their pleas and complaints for lawsuits, and acted as their intermediary in other dealings with the outside world - the hiring of an opera troupe, for example, for a village festival. Many teachers doubled as doctors, another trade for which literacy was the main qualification; others

70. See Smith, *Village Life in China*, p. 75, and for examples, Shu, *Wo he jiaoyu*, p. 10, Zhou Zuoren, *Zhitang huixianglu*, p. 21.

71. Chen, *Wo de ban sheng*, p. 51.

dabbled in less reputable sidelines, such as fortune-telling or peddling.⁷²

The *sishu*'s adaptability was equally evident in its calendar, which was a movable one. Apart from those which offered winter classes, it was usual for *sishu* to open after the lunar New Year and close before it. In this they conformed to Chinese custom and the agricultural year, unlike the new schools which copied the Japanese system and opened in autumn. Traditional festivals such as Qingming and Mid-Autumn were celebrated with a holiday. Within this broad framework, every 'szu shu ran a different calendar... [and] every student had his own calendar'.⁷³ In a rural *sishu*, the school year was broken whenever pupils' help was needed in harvesting or other agricultural tasks, or when local festivals were held and opera troupes invited. A teacher with private business or public duties might close down the school or entrust it to an older pupil during his absence. To such permitted holidays, students added time taken off for visits to friends or relatives or simple truancy.⁷⁴

Attendance was easily broken off but as easily resumed. Nor was there a fixed starting age: a beginning reader of ten might be chanting the same lessons as a precocious four year old. A pupil who missed days or months of schooling because of health or money problems or a shift of residence would not find that his class had been promoted above him, or that he was so many lessons behind his fellows in a set text. The *sishu*'s simple curriculum could be taken up at any point. Tuition was individual rather than group, and each pupil proceeded at his own pace with only the tapping of the teacher's ruler to hurry him along.

This pattern of schooling does not appear to have been peculiarly Chinese, but rather to have been the common mode of pre-industrial but

72. See Liao, 'Rural Education in Transition', pp. 48-50, and for examples, Shu, *Wo he jiaoyu*, p. 20, Ma, *Wo zai liushi sui yiqian*, p. 5, Cao Juren, *Wo yu wo de shijie* (Hong Kong, 1972), p. 22, William Liu (interview), Smith, *Village Life in China*, p. 107.

73. Liao, 'Rural Education in Transition', p. 43.

74. For irregular attendance see Liao, 'Rural Education in Transition', pp. 42-43, William Liu (interview), Shen Congwen, *Congwen zizhuan* (Shanghai, 1946), p. 10, Hu Shi, *Sishi zishu*, p. 24.

commercialized societies in which education had left the home but had not yet taken up its abode in the elaborated structure of a school system. Contrasting persistent support for the old style of private school with parents' reluctance to send their children to the new, free public schools in nineteenth century Britain - a period of transition in schooling comparable to the first decades of the twentieth century in China - Thomas Laqueur writes

... the private school was more attuned to the rhythms of working class life than was its public competitor. The miners' leader, John Wilson, may have been an exception in attending a different school every few months as he followed his father, a navy, around the country. But attendance at school was sporadic for a working-class child - a total of eighteen months to two years of education between ages five and eleven accumulated from a few days here, a couple of weeks there, when the family could afford school pence and help was not required about the house... A London street seller, age thirteen, reported that he had been to an "academy" kept by an old man but that he didn't know the charge because... "the schoolmaster used to take it out in vegetables". The private school - with its lack of rules governing dress, appearance, and cleanliness; its easy admission and withdrawal procedures; and its unstructured curriculum - was the institutional analogue of this poverty-induced pattern of education.⁷⁵

Laqueur's connection of this type of unsystematic, uncoordinated schooling with poverty is broadly true, insofar as a substantial surplus of income over needs - whether in the domestic or national context - is necessary for the maintenance of continuous full-time education for every child of school age. But poverty does not appear to have been the sole cause of continued preference in England for the old schools - which, unlike the new, were fee-paying - nor was it the main reason why popular education evolved as it did in China.

The *sishu* answered the needs of a society in which informal parti-

75. Thomas W. Laqueur, 'Working-Class Demand and the Growth of English Elementary Education, 1750-1850', in Lawrence Stone (ed.), *Schooling and Society* (Baltimore, 1976), p. 201.

cularistic ties predominated over explicit vertical controls. Through it, the government received an adequate supply of 'the talented' without cost to itself; scholars replicated their image in the next generation; and the child of peasant or craftsman prepared for his upward ascent. The tendency for schooling to be identified with the social mores of a particular group rather than with the transformation of the whole people was reinforced by neo-Confucianist stress on self-cultivation rather than mass mobilization as the aim of education. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, these assumptions were challenged. My next chapter will deal with the new concepts of education which, contending victoriously with the old, led to China's adoption of a school system of the Western type.

CHAPTER THREE

Theories and Models

Advocates of schooling on the Western model -
compradores and converts - displaced scholars
- disaffected scholars - high officials -
Japanese influence

China's indigenous educational institutions were called into question less by their own defects than by the inability of the Chinese polity as a whole to resist Western and later Japanese aggression. In the words of Shu Xincheng, 'the changeover to a new system of education at the end of the Qing appeared on the surface to be a voluntary move by educational circles, but in reality what happened was that foreign relations and domestic policies were everywhere running up against dead ends. Unless reforms were undertaken, China would have no basis for survival. Education simply happened to be caught up in a situation in which there was no choice.'¹

Alternative models which could have been found in Chinese history either belonged to the far distant past, such as the school system of the Three Dynasties, or were attempted adaptations which, depending on their reception, had perished swiftly (the unsuccessful reforms of Wang Anshi) or gradually (the network of community schools set up during the Ming). Contact with the West provided both a new model and compelling reasons for taking it.

Had China not been defeated in battle, she might have retained her academies and examinations for centuries to come, and offered them as a model to admiring foreigners. There is some evidence that Chinese influence was indeed behind the adoption by Britain of a system of civil service examinations between 1855 and 1870. Teng Ssu-yu has shown that a trickle of information on the Chinese examinations had been flowing westward since the late sixteenth century, swollen from the eighteenth by information derived indirectly from the Jesuits and directly from British diplomats and missionaries.²

The reverse process, that of the introduction into China of the Western school system, came about through similar channels but under

1. Shu Xincheng, *Jindai Zhongguo jiaoyu sixiangshi* (Shanghai, 1932), pp. 6-7.

2. Teng Ssu-yu, 'Chinese Influence on the Western Examination System', *Harvard Journal of Asian Studies*, VII (1942-43), 267-312.

different circumstances. Four groups can be distinguished among the advocates of China's adoption of a national school system similar to the West's: that is, a centralized system offering universal education and practical courses. The first, whose activities began in the 1870's, consisted of treaty-port compradores and converts who had both a grounding in classical learning and a familiarity with Western institutions acquired through the more enlightened missionaries and through foreign travel. Two of their most distinguished spokesmen were Wang Tao and Zheng Guanying.^{2a} Towards the end of the decade, they were joined by a second group who may be called 'displaced scholars': that is, they were members of the scholar-gentry who found themselves overseas in an official capacity as part of the Qing dynasty's diplomatic counter-offensive. Among them were Guo Songtao and Huang Zunxian.^{2b} There existed a certain suspicion, expressed in hostility or contempt, between these two groups and the majority of the scholar-gentry who had not had the same experiences and consequently did not feel a need for change. This was shaken by the Sino-Japanese War, whose aftermath saw the espousal of educational reform by a third group whom I shall call disaffected scholars: Liang Qichao, Kang Youwei, and their associates. All of them were on the periphery of power. The new school system advocated by them was implemented only when it became the project of a fourth group, that of officials such as Zhang Zhidong: it was under their aegis that a national education system was finally set up between 1901 and 1906. The stages leading to the decision to adopt a new system of education form the first part of this chapter; the second will deal with the theories and models which influenced the new system during its formative years.

One of the earliest proposals for educating the mass of people appeared in the *Jiaohui xinbao*, a Shanghai missionary paper founded by Young J. Allen in 1868. The article, though appearing in a missionary publication, makes its point in a purely Chinese context:

In the old days, every village of five hundred families had an academy and every department a college... even in small villages, there were no uneducated young men... this way fell into disuse in later ages, as education (*jiaohua*) was no longer a priority, and boys from poor households without support could dream away their lives without getting

- 2a. Wang Tao (1828-?), scholar, translator, and journalist; Zheng Guanying (1841-1920), compradore and reformer. See pp. 57-60, 61-65.
- 2b. Guo Songtao, (1818-1891), scholar and diplomat; Huang Zunxian (1848-1905) diplomat, reformer, and poet. See pp. 60-61.

a teacher. Even though the benevolent set up free schools, these were mainly established in cities; in remote mountainous areas and village wilds there is not one to be seen in ten or a hundred *li*...

For scholars not to remedy this situation was to

... make naught of Heaven and Earth's intentions in producing talent, and disregard the court's favour in honouring Confucians and nourishing scholars.³

The educational initiatives suggested in this article - circulating teachers to give elementary classes in the villages - are too local and uncoordinated to constitute a school system, but the quotation from Mencius with which it opens prefaced almost every discussion of school systems in the succeeding decades. With various expansions and explications, it reappears in the writings of Zheng Guanying in 1892, Sun Yat-sen in 1894, and Chen Zhi and Liang Qichao in 1896. In the seventies it was not explicitly connected with China's adoption of a school system of the Western sort, but one may conjecture that the use of this argument from antiquity, among men who knew something of the West, was prompted by acquaintance with Western practice.

Ideas originating in the treaty ports had at first limited influence outside them. The *Jiaohui xinbao* was purchased largely by missionaries for their converts: in its first year its weekly sales averaged only 700 copies. Even in its subsequent incarnation as the better-known *Wan'guo gongbao*, sales did not rise above 1800 per issue.⁴

Popularizers from missionary or compradore circles had to contend with attitudes of the kind expressed in 1861 by Feng Guifen, one of the leading thinkers of the Tongzhi Restoration, who wrote 'Those who study with foreigners are called interpreters; they are all frivolous towns-

3. 'Xiaoxue yishu qi', *Jiaohui xinbao* (1870), in Shu (ed.), *Ziliao*, pp. 87-91.

4. Roswell S. Britton, *The Chinese Periodical Press, 1800-1912* (Taipei, 1976 [1933]), pp. 53-55.

people ... their nature is rough, their knowledge slight, and their motives base.' Feng knew of the schools started by foreigners for poor boys but thought them a failure; experience in his home district had convinced him that no talent was to be found in charitable or village schools.⁵ Feng stood out among his gentry contemporaries in advocating officially sponsored schools for Western learning, but this did not mean that he was prepared to countenance claims of knowledge or status gained independently of official sponsorship or gentry tradition. Until the 1890's, officials who believed in self-strengthening concentrated on the reform and supplementation of indigenous institutions rather than on their replacement or relegation to less than a dominant position.

Despite the scorn of scholars, proponents of reform speaking from outside their ranks did have some influence within them. Foremost among them were Wang Tao - degree-holder, missionary assistant, and journalist - and Zheng Guanying, an educated and wealthy comprador who had sat but not passed the examinations. Zheng had learnt some English at the Anglo-Chinese school run by John Fryer in Shanghai. Despite his lowly background, his talents and wealth were appreciated by officials such as Li Hongzhang, Zhang Zhidong, Zuo Zongtang, and Sheng Xuanhuai.⁶ Some of them may have been among the readers of an early version of his first major work, *Yiyan* (易言), which he had printed in 1875 in an edition of a few hundred copies for circulation to friends (it is no longer extant). The revised version was published in Hong Kong by Wang Tao in 1880. It was subsequently reprinted in Korea, Japan, and Shanghai. Most of the Chinese reprints were attempts to cash in on the success of Zheng's later work.⁷

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5. Feng Guifen, 'Cai xixue yi', *Jiaopinlu kangyi* (Taipei, 1967) p. 149. Feng Guifen (1809-1874) was a scholar and reformer in the Self-Strengthening Movement.
 6. For some particulars of Zheng's influence see Key Ray Chong, 'Cheng Kuan-ying (1841-1920): a Source of Sun Yat-sen's Nationalist Ideology?', *Journal of Asian Studies*, XXVIII : 2 (1969), 248.
 7. For a discussion of *Yiyan*, see Kwang-Ching Liu, 'Cheng Kuan-ying's *I-yen*: Reform Proposals of the Early Kwang-hsü Period (Part I) Zheng Guanying *Yiyan* - Guangxu chunian zhi bianfa sixian (shang)' *Tsing Hua Journal of Chinese Studies*, New Series, VIII (1970), 373-425.

Zheng proposed the introduction of a school system similar to the West's. His point of entry into the discussion of education was similar to that of the self-strengtheners, in that he was primarily concerned with the selection of talented men for government service. His travels and reading, however, had given him a much wider notion of 'talent' than that usually entertained. He was particularly impressed by the way in which Western countries combined practical training in military and other subjects with theory, in contrast to bookish Confucian education. Zheng first put forward an expanded and upgraded version of the limited initiatives already taken by reforming officials, suggesting that Western studies be insinuated into the examination system separately from Chinese. A supporting system of academies was to be established in each province manned by experts in the natural, applied, and social sciences of the West or by returned overseas students, with an intake of youths between fifteen and twenty with a grounding in Chinese and Western studies. Like existing academies, the academies of Western learning were to hold monthly essay competitions, but Zheng suggested a wider range of topics: textiles, banking, coinage, surveying, museums, peace conferences, diplomatic relations... Young men who did well should be sent to university at the capital.

Fearing that under such an arrangement the classics would still overshadow the new studies, Zheng favoured more radical change. In phrasing more moderate than the proposals which follow, he recommended 'keeping but broadening' the system of school-temples and academies. Under this plan, all schools and academies were to 'copy the Western mode' and be converted into a two-stream system of primary, secondary, and tertiary schools for civil and military studies. The former were to teach six branches of learning - literature, administration, language and law, natural science, and 'miscellaneous subjects' (commerce, mining, taxation, agriculture, and medicine), the latter, two - naval and army studies. State control did not extend below the primary schools (equivalent to the later higher primary schools) set up at the county level, but Zheng reiterated the democratic concern for popular education: 'Each district should set up family and public schools, so that rich and poor can all study books and learn skills'. His scheme set out the essential features present in

Western schooling and absent in Chinese: a fixed period of study, a fixed curriculum, annual promotion from one class to another depending on marks gained in school examinations. The classics were notable by their absence from this plan.⁸

Ideas similar to Zheng Guanying's were spread by others of the small circle of Chinese who associated with Westerners. Wang Tao, who opened a newspaper in Hong Kong in 1874, was one of the editors of the Shanghai *Shen bao* in the 1880's, and contributed to Allen's *Wan'guo gongbao* in the early 1890's, propagated his views in editorials written in lucid classical Chinese.⁹

Wang was a fierce critic of the current operation of the examination system, which he regarded as producing ignorant parasites.¹⁰ He favoured instead the establishment of a national system of schools (variously referred to as *xuexiao* [学校], *xueshu* [学塾], or *shuyuan* [书院]), teaching the humanities - an enlargement of the traditional curriculum including the classics, history, administration, and composition - and technical subjects such as geography, science, mathematics, astronomy, and law. Military schools were to supplement these.¹¹ Such schools were primarily for the training of civil and military officials. Wang was also sensible of the benefits of an educated citizenry. He justified mass education both in the vocabulary of Confucian moralism, as a barrier against heterodoxy and a solvent of disorder, restraining the people through propriety and righteousness, and in terms of a national need for people who would be of use in time of crisis. School attendance, he pointed out, should not be confined to the talented; the dull-witted could learn a trade there. His arguments show a confluence of indigenous and western

8. Zheng Guanying, 'Kaoshi' (1884), in Shu (ed.), *Ziliao*, pp. 897-902.

9. For Wang's career, see Paul Cohen, *Between Tradition and Modernity: Wang T'ao and Reform in late Qing China*, (Cambridge, Mass., 1974).

10. See Wang Tao, *Taoyuan wenlu waibian* (Hong Kong, 1883), 1 : 7b-8a, 3 : 10b-11a.

11. *Ibid.*, 2 : 4b, 8b-9a.

justifications for schooling.¹²

Wang and Zheng had both seen the operation of foreign institutions abroad, Wang in Europe, Zheng in Vietnam - and in the colony of Hong Kong. They shared this experience with relatively few educated Chinese. Overseas study had stopped after the closure of the Educational Mission sent to America in 1870. Emigration was legally prohibited, and in any case was confined mainly to those without means of support in China.

As China set up diplomatic missions abroad, a second group of men with first-hand experience of the West emerged from among the scholar-officials. One of the first of these, Guo Songtao, was in Britain in 1877-78. Passing through Hong Kong on route, he admired its prison and Government Central School, of which he wrote '(The master) can see and hear everything; so not a single boy can escape from or gloss over his work... the rules are well thought-out and severe... It would appear that the Europeans have inherited something of the ancients' ideal of forming and nourishing the talents of their pupils'.¹³ Publication of the diary in which he recorded these observations led to Guo's recall amidst a storm of protest. Admiration of the West was no more than could be expected from compradores and converts, but in a member of the gentry, an official, it was apostasy, punishable by excommunication. Guo dared not return to the court, and died in obscurity.¹⁴

The impressions of another diplomat whose travels began at the same time as Guo's, Huang Zunxian, were not published until 1895, when a more favourable climate of opinion existed. His *Account of Japan*, written on the basis of his experiences while at the Chinese embassy there

12. *Ibid.*; 8 : 7b-9a. The orthodox and enthusiastic tone of this passage may derive partly from the fact that it presages an appeal for funds (for a charitable school Yung Wing proposed to set up in his native county).

13. J.D. Frodsham, *The First Chinese Embassy to the West: the Journals of Kuo Sung-t'ao, Liu Hsi-hung and Chang Te-yi* (Oxford, Clarendon, 1974), p. 6.

14. *Ibid.*, pp. lx, lxi. Guo's recall was the result of personal enmities as well as ideological outrage, but it is significant that the latter was available as an excuse for the former.

from 1877 to 1881, appears to be an attempt to recapture for Confucians ground lost to the latter-day Mohists (as he regarded Christians, that is, Westerners), whose hospitals and free schools bespoke their public spirit but whose achievements would be vitiated by the same competitiveness which had brought them into being.¹⁵ The Japanese, Huang writes, could never have grasped the true significance of Confucian teachings, otherwise they would not have discarded them; on the other hand, it was only because of previous exposure to these teachings that they had had sufficient right spirit to restore the Meiji Emperor.¹⁶ Huang's emotional identification was with Chinese studies. His detailed, dry exposition of the Japanese education system shows little enthusiasm for its manner, though he praises its matter as being the revival of practical studies originally Chinese but long lost in their native land.¹⁷ For those seeking a blueprint, however, one could be extracted from Huang's work, which describes everything from the function of the Ministry of Education to the use of blackboard and chalk.¹⁸

The years between the experiences Huang recorded and his publication of them saw the continuation of piecemeal reforms in education, based on the segregation of Western studies in special schools.

By the 1890's, it was evident that neither students nor state derived much benefit from these schools, which were obviously failing in their *raison d'etre*, the repelling of foreign aggression. Hong Kong had been ceded to Britain, the Ryukyus lost to Japan. 'Strong neighbours press in daily, and Tibet and Korea are likely to topple any minute', Zheng Guanying wrote in *Shengshi weiyan*, his most influential work. 'And our country's

15. Huang Zunxian, *Riben guozhi* (Canton, 1898), 32 : 1a-2b.

16. *Ibid.*, 32 : 14a-15a.

17. *Ibid.*, 32 : 22b-24a. This argument in particular and Huang's caution in general may have been in part rhetorical devices designed to make more palatable to his countrymen his proposals for change. One should remember, too, that until the end of 1883 Japanese education was under strong American influence; that is, the system Huang saw operating was not identical with that later taken as a model by Zhang Zhidong.

18. *Ibid.*, 33 : 7a-13a.

schools have not been developed, our education (*jiaoyu* 教育) is incomplete, our technology and trade lag behind Japan's.¹⁹

Many advocates of reform had called for attention to a wider field of Western learning than that encompassed by military technology, starting with Feng Guifen in 1861, but Zheng appears to have been the first to locate China's salvation in the schoolroom. He asserted that 'In ancient and modern times, in China and abroad, every country has regulated its education (*jiaoyang* 教养) and gained its wealth and power primarily through schools. Now Japan has taken the West's excellence in education as its model in fostering talent, and the country's power has indeed risen greatly. How can our country fail to bend all its strength to this? In a word, one can say categorically that if we do not set up schools, no talent will emerge and if we do not abolish [examinations on] set literary forms, the schools will be no good to us.'²⁰

Zheng described in detail Germany's schools of medicine, technology, science, navigation, military studies and commerce, and the comprehensive system of compulsory education which enabled it to hold Europe 'by the ox's ear'. In the same section, he discussed the school systems of France, Germany, Russia, America, and Japan.²¹ Japan's classes in ethics were singled out for mention,²² as was her practice of military drill and physical exercises - tempered, in the case of women's education, into idyllic hours spent chasing butterflies and threading flower chains, as befitted their softer nature.²³ Lin Lezhi (Young J. Allen) was quoted on the benefits of female education, which he saw, in common with the majority of his fellow-countrymen at that date, in terms of greater fitness for motherhood.²⁴

19. Zheng Guanying, *Shengshi weiyan zengding xinbian* (Taipei, 1958 [1895]), Zixu, 3a.

20. *Ibid.*, 2 : 15a.

21. *Ibid.*, 2 : 3a-19a.

22. *Ibid.*, 2 : 2a.

23. *Ibid.*, 2 : 14a.

24. *Ibid.*, 2 : 18b.

In outlining the common features of Western education Zheng spoke of the remittance or reduction of school fees for the poor. He appears to have seen education for the poor as a charitable enterprise for relief of a small section of society necessitous beyond the average. His advocacy of technical schools 'for the sons and daughters of poor people without a trade' has an urban ring to it.²⁵ Zheng did not address himself seriously to the question of the particular problems of spreading the new education in China's vast rural areas.

Zheng's proposal for a three-tier school system under which tertiary institutions were to be set up by the province, secondary by the prefecture, and primary by the county, was the same as that set out in his earlier work. At the apex of this system he now placed a Ministry of Education, to preside over departments of infant, general, and specialized education, translating and editing school texts, accounting, examinations, and inspection, on the model of the Japanese system. Money for the schools was to be found through the joint efforts of local officials, gentry, and merchants.²⁶

Although Zheng did not see the state as intervening directly in elementary education (entry into 'primary school' was for those with a few years schooling), he gave detailed suggestions for the reform of lessons in *sishu*, on whose present teachers - 'stale scholars and aging students of the classics' - and teaching methods - 'teaching what [children] don't understand and omitting what they do' - he made a scathing attack. Children should be taught twenty characters a day until they knew two thousand, after which they could go on to edifying stories like *Twenty-four Tales of Filial Piety* or *Twenty-four Tales of Dutiful Brothers*. In addition to these, suitable stories and rhymes could be brought out in an illustrated book. The characters, he observed, could be learnt in local dialect - a possible reflection of his Cantonese origin? At the end of the first year, the child would know six thousand characters and be ready for snippets on the people and customs of different countries, from which he would progress to extracts

25. *Ibid.*, 2 : 3a-b.

26. *Ibid.*

from historical texts and thence, in his fourth year, to the classics. In writing, he should start with letters, stories, or items of news.²⁷

As the concept of education moved from that of an individual, private pursuit to that of an organized mass activity controlled from above, the language mirrored the change. A new word, or rather an old one retrieved from antiquity via Japan, came into use to describe this phenomenon: *jiaoyu*.²⁸

Traditional Chinese discussions of education had used a wide variety of terms, most containing the root *xue* (学), 'learn'. The Chinese spoke of 'promoting learning' (*xing xue* 兴学), 'learning matters' (*xuewu* 学务) - an administrative term), 'Ministry of Learning' (*Xue Bu* 学部). All these terms placed the emphasis on the relationship between the learner and the thing learnt. They continued to be the most widely used terms in the nineties, but alongside them was growing up a different concept of education reflected in a different vocabulary. Zheng Guanying's terminology was still fluid. He entitled the section on education in *Shengshi weiyuan* 'Learning' (*xueshu* 学术), subdividing it into sections on 'Schools'

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27. *Ibid.*, 2 : 21a-23a. Zhang's emphasis on beginning language training in the pupil's own dialect was not taken up by the new school system when it was finally established; instead, the schools were used to propagate the national language.
28. The verbal use of *jiaoyu* dates back to Mencius. When 'education' in the modern sense first came east, its nomenclature was uncertain. The Japanese Ministry of Education (*Mombusho* 文部省) is literally the Civil Ministry. When the section on education in Chambers' encyclopaedia was translated into Japanese, the word *gakumon* (学问) or learning was used; Fukuzawa Yukichi, the great popularizer of Western thought and institutions, used the same word. By the late 1870's, *kyōiku* (教育) was becoming the standard equivalent in Japan of the English word 'education'. The magazine of the Ministry of Education, previously *Mombusho zasshi* (文部省杂志) was renamed the *Kyōiku zasshi* (教育杂志). *Kyōiku* was used in the title of translated works in 1875, 1876, and 1877. By 1879, it had become naturalized, being used both in the title of the Americanized Educational Ordinance of that year and in the works of its conservative opponents. (See Nishihira Isao, 'Western Influence on the Modernization of Japanese Education, 1868-1912' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Ohio State University, 1972), pp. 267, 274, 278, 295, 375-77.)

(*xuexiao*) and 'Western learning' (*xixue*), but in the context of the state's organization of and duty to its subjects he several times used words containing the root *jiao* (教) ('teach'): *jiaoyang* 教養 (literally 'teach and nourish', *jiaohua* ('teach and transform') and *jiaoyu* ('teach and rear'). These connoted benevolent state activity. They had long had a verbal use in reference to the state's duty to scholars and people; they were now called in as translations of the foreign concept of education. The title of a work published in 1893, *Taishi jiaoyushi* (*A History of Western Education*), reflects the emergence of both term and concept. Henceforth, 'education' could refer not merely to methods of study but to an object of study. It had a life of its own.

The *Shengshi weiyan* is written in an easy direct style, requiring for comprehension only half the number of characters Zheng wished to impose on the beginning reader. It was a successful and influential book, running into several editions. Its readers ranged from the Guangxu emperor to the young Mao Zedong.²⁹

Zheng's views on education appeared privately, in Sun Yatsen's letter to Li Hongzhang in 1894, and publicly, in the Gongju petition of 1895. (I do not mean that these proposals were exclusive to Zheng. But until the emergence of Liang Qichao as a propagandist, Zheng was their most influential and coherent exponent.) Sun and Zheng came from the same county in Guangdong, and Zheng's literary influence was complemented by personal acquaintance. Sun had lived under British administration in Hong Kong, and like Zheng in Vietnam was impressed by the orderliness and prosperity of colonial rule.³⁰ In a letter to Li Hongzhang, Sun reiterated Zheng's points, adducing both the West and the Three Dynasties as evidence of the benefits of widespread schooling, and pointed out the need for more schools to avoid the present wastage of talent and for more specialization to provide training for civil, military, agricultural, technical and commercial

29. See Snow, *Red Star over China*, p. 156, Richard, *Forty-five Years in China*, p. 257.

30. See Key Ray Chong, 'Cheng Kuan-ying (1841-1920)', for the relationship between the two men.

occupations. The only hint of Sun's revolutionary fervour is his eulogy of the heroic temper, which, though in a commoner's breast, takes the charge of the empire on itself, and finds a way to achievement with or without government recognition.³¹ Li did not heed Sun's plea that talents of this type should be encouraged, and a few months later, the Xin Zhong Hui was set up in Honolulu.

Arguments for change were given added force by China's humiliating losses in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894, which made plain the inadequacy of previous attempts at self-strengthening. Hitherto, spokesmen for fundamental change had come mainly from the fringes of Chinese society, from new occupations - journalist, compradore, diplomat. The defeat brought on to the political stage a body of disaffected scholars who disregarded the prohibition on private discussion of government affairs and sought to replace the present unsatisfactory policies and office-holders with their own men and plans. Looked at in one way, their actions were those of an outside group - scholars out of office - seeking a voice in policy matters controlled by insiders - high metropolitan and regional officials. From another perspective, however, they can be seen as acting for the self-preservation of the scholar-gentry as a whole in claiming as part of their rightful competence all expertise in government, including those skills and policies at present monopolized by Western-oriented Chinese in the treaty-ports. The reformers did not regard the emerging bourgeoisie as natural allies against die-hard officials on the opposite side; Liang Qichao expressed considerable scorn for those Westernized Chinese without a background in Chinese learning who mixed with foreigners and picked up their habits.³²

The Gongju petition was presented to the throne by candidates gathered from all over the country to take the metropolitan examination of 1895. It was drafted by the iconoclastic Cantonese scholar Kang Youwei and signed by several hundred other candidates. The petition asked for changes in the

31. Sun Yat-sen, Letter to Li Hongzhang, in Shu (ed.), *Ziliao*, pp. 1014-15.

32. Liang Qichao, 'Lun xuexiao: keju', *Shiwu bao*, VIII (Taipei, 1967 [1896], [483]). See also Chen Chi-yun, 'Liang Ch'i-ch'ao's "Missionary Education"; a Case Study of Missionary Influence on the Reformers', *Papers on China* 16 (Cambridge, Mass., 1962), p. 112.

method of selecting talent for office and for extension of learning to peasants, craftsmen, and merchants ('talent' had by now lost its original exclusive connection with Confucian scholarship and government service.) These arguments are a simpler, more pointed version of those found in the *Shengshi weiyuan*. Kang's concrete proposals are conservative, even anachronistic. He presumably hoped to propitiate the court and unite his fellow scholars with a moderate programme, although in his unpublished *Da tong shu* he had envisaged a far more radically altered society. The Gongju petition maintained the existing structure of state examinations fed by students from academies who received their basic education under private auspices. Universal education was an optimistic afterthought: 'if large sums can be raised by the government and solicited from the people, every village should set up schools, so that the children of the common people can all go to school and study the meaning of words for common objects and their derivations, painting, mathematics, Chinese and foreign geography, and ancient and modern history, and there will be a superabundance of talent'. The main part of the proposals concentrated on the replacement of the military examination system with examinations in technical subjects, to be prepared for in technical academies parallel to but separate from those teaching the classics.

The petition combines the structure of Western school systems with that of the three levels of the state examinations in the proposal that different grades of technical schools should be set up at the county, provincial, and metropolitan levels. The curriculum was likewise a hybrid: each student had to be as competent in one of the classics as he was in his specialized field of study. The influence of Western schooling was most evident in Kang's insistence that each stage should occupy a specified period of time, that quotas should be abolished (unlike Wang Tao, he felt that the present examinations selected too few scholars, though he deplored the inappropriateness of the current criteria), and that degrees should be given on the basis of examinations held in the schools. Reforms directed to broadening the literary examinations and doing away with their empty formalism were also suggested.³³

33. Kang Youwei, 'Gongju shang shu', in Shu (ed.), *Ziliao*, pp. 917-19.

Over the next three years Kang's followers and their sympathizers propagated their reform programme in newly established journals, chief among which were the *Shiwu bao* (时务报) set up in Shanghai in 1896 with the assistance of Huang Zunxian, the *Xiangxue bao* (湘学报) published from Changsha, and the isolated but hardy *Zhixin bao* (知新报) in Macao, the only one of the three to survive the debacle of 1898. The *Zhixin bao* and *Shiwu bao* were similar in format and staffing, both being run by disciples of Kang's. Xu Qin, editor of the *Zhixin bao*, published his most famous article, *Zhongguo chuhai yi* (中国除害议) in the *Shiwu bao*. Both papers gave considerable space to translated articles on current affairs from the British and Japanese press. The *Xiangxue bao*, published in the interior, was less Western-oriented. Treading warily among the entrenched prejudices of Hunan scholars, it was at once more practical and more pedantic than its brothers, having a penchant for precedent and administration. It ran a question-and-answer section designed to put the new learning in a manageable perspective, preferably in a form suitable for essay competition. Some examples relating to education are: 'Q. The West has normal schools, and Japan took them as crucial to her reforms. Are there ancient precedents for this? A. In the *Rites of Zhou*...' ³⁴

Q. Should China have women's schools? A. This is the same thing as ancient China's women's studies...' ³⁵

No circulation figures are available for the paper, but since it was on sale only in central China (in Changsha, Hankow, Wuchang and Shanghai) its readership must have been limited geographically. The *Zhixin bao* also had a limited distribution.

Of the three papers, the *Shiwu bao* was most successful. According to Liang Qichao, its circulation passed ten thousand, 'a phenomenon unprecedented in the history of the Chinese press'. ³⁶ (The *Shen bao*'s sales were

34. *Xiangxue bao*, I (1897), 19.

35. *Ibid.*, II (1897), 13.

36. Zhang Jinglu, *Zhongguo jindai chubanshi ziliao* (Shanghai, 1957), vol. I, p. 92.

higher but presumably more localized.) The *Shiwu bao* could be ordered through eighty-three outlets - often modern creations themselves, hospitals, pharmacies, newspaper offices, steamship companies, telegraph offices - in fifty-six cities. Circulation figures other than the one given by Liang are not available, but extrapolation from figures for sales revenue indicates for the last half of 1897 an average sale of about one thousand in Shanghai and between six and seven thousand outside it.³⁷ The paper gained from official support both revenue and readers. In 1896 donations, mainly from officials, almost equalled income from sales.³⁸ Zhang Zhidong's action in subscribing to 288 copies on behalf of yamen and academies in Hubei was followed by officials in Zhejiang, Jiangsu, Hunan, Zhili, Shanxi, Jiangxi, and Guizhou,³⁹ who directed their subordinates to obtain the journal for official or academic consumption. Each paper purchased in this way could well have a score of readers. If average readership of one copy is estimated at ten, this gives a total readership slightly under a hundred thousand - around 5% of the number Chang Chung-li estimates to have been sufficiently highly educated to attempt the examinations.

The expansion of journalism in the late nineties was accompanied by an increase in the translation and composition of books on Western institutions. One is impressed in reading the *Xiangxue bao* by the range and quantity of information available to its authors. By 1898, a student of foreign education could read *Japan's Present Education, An Outline of Education, Pre-natal Education, Japan's School Regulations, Prospering the Country through Humane Studies, Curricula in Western Subjects, and An Introduction to New Learning in Seven Countries*, most of which had been published since 1895. The *Shiwu bao* sold out an edition of two thousand

37. *Shiwu bao*, LII (1898), [3577-80].

38. *Ibid.*, XVIII (1897), [1241-42].

39. *Shiwu bao* VI (1896), [357], XVIII (1897), [1193-94], XXV (1897), [1671], XXVI (1897), [1736], XXX (1897), [2018], XXXII (1897), [2156], XXXIII (1897), [2225], XXXIV (1897), [2291], L (1897), [3389].

guides to the new learning and printed a further three thousand.⁴⁰

Works such as these answered the question of how to set up an education system on the Western model. The editorials of Liang and his fellow reformers addressed themselves to the why. 'The preservation of what would otherwise be lost, the maintenance of what would otherwise be done away with, making the ignorant knowledgeable and strengthening the weak... all rest on schools', Liang wrote in 1896. Marshalling statistics from foreign countries and imaginative deductions from China's past - which yielded a three-tier system of schools, normal schools and schools for women, and technical training for merchants, peasants, craftsmen and soldiers - he recommended as the best policy the integration of examinations with government schools at the county, prefecture, and provincial levels. Primary schools should be established immediately for four hundred thousand pupils, middle schools for 11,840, and universities for 1850 odd, (the exactness of these figures derived from computation based on current Western statistics for attendance at different levels, scaled down to China's present capacity). This would give a minimum of eight thousand university graduates, more than enough to 'place in high and low positions, to change every system'.⁴¹

Those already in power were less enthusiastic than Liang at the prospect of a new contingent of men and policies. A vitriolic retort charged that 'Kang and Liang and their ilk ... get together and form cliques ... calling it a struggle between old and new, they use "opposition to the new policies" to entrap those whose views are different from their own'.⁴²

Whether or not one gives credence to such protests, they serve as a reminder that the conflict between the reformers and their opponents was one of interests as well as ideas. In terms of rhetoric, Liang's skill as a publicist had his opponents on the defensive; but rhetorical victories by an outsider could not alter established government policy. Change had

40. *Ibid*, XVIII (1897), [1240].

41. Liang Qichao, 'Lun xuexiao: zonglun', *Shiwu bao*, VI (1896), [342-45].

42. Su Yu (ed.), *Yijiao congbian* (Taipei, 1970 [1899]), Xu, [2].

to come through the correct channels. The first memorials asking for an increase in the number of schools met with a cautious reception. When Li Duanfen (in a memorial which may have been written by Liang Qichao, and which certainly expressed ideas similar to Liang's) asked that schools be set up at county, prefectural, and provincial levels, with a university at Peking at their apex,⁴³ the Zongli Yamen agreed to the university but declined responsibility for provincial schooling.⁴⁴

Among high officials, Zhang Zhidong was most active in urging the new schools on the court and the public. His *Quanxue pian*, published shortly before the Hundred Days' Reform, was read by the Emperor, who ordered it distributed to provincial officials. Among ordinary scholars demand was so great that manuscript copies circulated in Peking, while in Shanghai pirated editions appeared in rapid succession.⁴⁵ It has been claimed that a million copies were sold, but this seems an exaggeration given that this would have meant sales a hundred times higher than those of the *Shiwu bao*.

The *Quanxue pian* repeated the proposition that the strength of the West derived from its schools. Like previous advocates of a school system, Zheng used both ancient precedent and Western example to buttress his proposal that primary, secondary, and tertiary schools be established at the county, prefectural and provincial levels and in Peking. The new schools were to use the material base of the old, taking over the premises and other property of academies and charitable schools. This was to be supplemented - with Confucian disregard for popular religious feeling and entertainments - by acquisition of seventy per cent of Buddhist and Taoist temples and by diversion of money spent on religious festivals and operas.⁴⁶

43. Li Duanfen, memorial requesting extension of schools, in Shu Xincheng (ed.), *Jindai Zhongguo jiaoyu shiliao* (hereafter, *Shiliao*), (Shanghai, 1928), Vol. I, pp. 1-5.

44. Shu (ed.), *Shiliao*, Vol. I, pp. 5-7.

45. Ayers, William, *Chang Chih-tung and Educational Reform in China* (Cambridge, Mass., 1971), p. 150.

46. Zhang Zhidong, 'Quanxue pian', in *Zhang Wenxiang gong quanji* (Taipei, 1963), 203 : 9a-b, [3728].

The remaining costs were to be raised from wealthy local people, supplemented with official grants where necessary. The government was thus relieved of the major part of the financial burden of setting up new schools, but retained control through a Ministry of Education of their curricula and textbooks.⁴⁷ Other proposals included sending students abroad (especially to Japan), translating Western works, and reforming the examination system.

The *Quanxue pian* exhibits Zhang's characteristic style and concerns. It is a work of polemic and propaganda, directed to winning over followers of the old learning and reining in enthusiasts for the new. Zhang's eagerness to reconcile Chinese and Western knowledge did not lead to bland all-inclusiveness: he sharply dismissed Liang Qichao's claim (made in 'Xuexiao zonglun') that the restrictiveness of the examination system was designed to weaken the people vis-a-vis their ruler,⁴⁸ and inveighed against 'the disorder-fomenting policy of "people's rights".⁴⁹ Where Liang Qichao fought uninhibitedly on behalf of the new, Zhang foresaw the turning of the tide and struggled to prevent the erosion of the old.

Despite differences of emphasis, proponents of educational reform had several arguments in common. Loyal to their heritage, they sought from the Three Dynasties a prototype school system. The beneficial effects of schooling on the Western model were proven through reference to the power and prosperity brought by reform to Japan (a favourite example after the Sino-Japanese War), Prussia, France, or Britain. For many, the introduction of a school system was a panacea, a talisman which would transform weakness into strength. They retained a Confucian faith in the government's need for talented men, but were eager for their wider ingathering and more specific training. The common complaint that scholars learned what they couldn't apply and applied what they hadn't learnt reflects dissatisfaction with officials' lack of training either in admini-

47. *Ibid.*, 203 : 13a, [3730].

48. *Ibid.*, 203 : 3a-b, [3725].

49. *Ibid.*, Xu, 2a, [3702].

strative skills or the broader fields of government, history, and current affairs. Advocacy of practicality combined with appreciation of those Western sciences and techniques absent in China led them to applaud educational specialization as they understood it to be practiced in the West, in which, in the words of Liang Qichao, 'farmers have scholars in farming, craftsmen have scholars in craft, merchants have scholars in commerce, and soldiers have scholars in soldiery',⁵⁰ as distinct from the old conception which confined scholarship to one walk of life, that of the scholar-gentry, and to preparation for one career, that of an official. The question of a future over-supply of educated men did not arise - a country could never have too much talent. China's current difficulties stemmed not from having too many educated men, but from their being educated to no purpose. The new schools would ensure the unfettered growth of talent in fields of use to the country. The fact that their output of graduates might be higher than that of the old examination system would be no problem, since all would have occupations to go to.

Advocates of reform used the axiom that the wealth and power of Western countries lay not in guns and soldiers but in schools to attack Chinese ills. But the deeper such beliefs penetrated into the Chinese social fabric, the more remote they were from first-hand experience. Wang Tao and Huang Zunxian had both seen foreign institutions operating *in situ*, and Zheng Guanying was familiar with them in the colonial context. Until the overthrow of their reforms, however, Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao had never been out of China, nor did Zhang Zhidong ever travel abroad. Carried along by current Western ideas, Kang and Liang and their followers accepted a world-view of inexorable historical progression from a lower to higher stage, the latter represented by the 'civilized' institutions originating in the West and adopted by Japan. Mackenzie's *History of the Nineteenth Century*, 'a crude glorification of progress in the nineteenth century' became very popular in the mid-nineties:⁵¹ Liang Qichao recommended it as 'an

50. Liang Qichao, 'Lun xuexiao: zonglun', *Shiwu bao*, V (1896), [273].

51. See Philip C. Huang, *Liang Ch'i-ch'ao and Modern Chinese Liberalism* (Seattle, 1972), p. 33.

excellent book' in his bibliography on Western learning,⁵² and included it in the reading list for the Shiwu Xuetang, a progressive Hunanese school.⁵³ Some justice must be allowed in the accusation of one of Liang's opponents: 'As Mr Liang admits to never having travelled in the West himself, how does he know about the virtues of their laws and the thoroughness of their testing of officials? He has simply been moved by the exaggerated claims of the Western books he read, and thus taken up the thesis that pedants are the ruin of the empire and examination essays the ruin of China'.⁵⁴

The second-hand nature of the reformers' experience and the limitations of the medium through which they received it led in many cases to a simplistic and one-dimensional view of the operation of Western society. The *Shengshi weiyan* and the reform press did not raise such questions as whether mass literacy was the cause, accompaniment, or product of industrialization, nor did they analyse the presumed relationship between productivity and enlightenment. Western institutions were taken at their face value, and flaws in nineteenth-century industrialization - such as child labour in British factories - were merely unfortunate accidents.⁵⁵ Missionary persuasion reinforced Confucian tradition in attributing to education transforming powers. Reformers believed not that education itself had failed China, but that she had suffered from the wrong kind of education. Once the examinations were reformed and new schools set up, her ills would right themselves. It would perhaps be anachronistic to expect a more critical attitude; questioning of the role of education has been fairly recent in the West.

The untried optimism of the reform party led them to underestimate

52. Quoted in Chen Chi-yun, 'Liang Ch'i-ch'ao's "Missionary Education"', p. 112.

53. See Shu (ed.), *Shiliao*, Vol. I, p. 52.

54. Ye Dehui, 'Fei youxue tongyi', in Su Yu (ed.), *Yijiao congbian*, 4 : 72a [317].

55. See *Shiwu bao*, XXIV (1897), [1623].

what was involved in the transfer of institutions. They could be said to have grasped the message but not the medium; they had no concept of the problems or changes which would spring from the importation into China of institutions tailored to the mores of industrial capitalism. Once again, it was conservatives who sounded the alarm, either rejecting Westernization as proposed by Liang and Kang on the grounds that it would 'level monarch and subject, and reverse the roles of male and female',⁵⁶ or fighting a rearguard action, as did Zhang Zhidong, to maintain the benefits of reform and guard against its attendant ills. In the event, change was to prove less predictable but more far-reaching than either party foresaw.

The Hundred Days Reform of 1898 saw a three-tiered school system decreed and a party of officials sent to examine Japanese education.⁵⁷ The new system existed on paper only; most existing schools either provided specialized training at an indeterminate level or offered a melange of courses determined by their founder. Though the theory justifying a school system was by now full-blown, the scale on which new schools were founded was so minuscule that the Empress Dowager's rescinding of the reform edicts on education was a sanction of rather than a reversion to the *status quo*.

The inertia of established practice might have preserved indigenous institutions, with modifications, into the twentieth century, had not the powers continued their encroachment on China's rights and soil. The defeat of the Boxers and the occupation of Peking by foreign troops meant that reform policies were once again heeded. The long heralded school system was adopted in principle in 1901 and embodied in regulations drawn up by the Official in Charge of Education (*Guansxue Dachen* 学学大臣), Zhang Boxi, in 1902. Under Zhang's regulations, the new system exhibited the distinguishing organizational features of its Western and Japanese models: the division of learning into different stages was institutionalized in

56. Wen Ti, memorial impeaching Kang Youwei, in Su Yu, *Yijiao congbian*, 2 : 8b, [84].

57. Shu (ed.), *Shiliao*, Vol. III, p. 1.

primary, secondary, and tertiary education (with advanced colleges as a bridging stage to university, as in Japan), the curriculum was set out in subject divisions, and the state controlled the upper levels of schooling directly and the lower indirectly. As in France, educational administration was to be carried out through the school hierarchy; for example, all elementary schools had to make an annual report to the government-run county primary school. The apex of the system was the university at Peking.

The Japanese influence presaged by the tour of inspection made by officials in 1898 grew rapidly during the early years of the century. Wu Rulun, head of Lianchi Academy in Zhili and subsequently dean of studies of Peking University, records in diary entries for 1901 and 1902 conversations on education with Japanese visitors.⁵⁸ He noted Ito's warning that China should not concentrate on intellectual education at the expense of moral and physical education. (This trilogy, originating in Herbert Spenser's *Education, Intellectual, Moral, and Physical* (1860), had become acclimatized in Japan. Transferred thence to China, it was to be a staple of educational discussion for several decades.) Wu's reply, that knowledge of virtue presupposed intellectual comprehension of its teachings, revealed a Confucian conviction that intellectual and moral knowledge were inseparable.⁵⁹

Wu made a tour of inspection of Japanese education in mid-1902. Several provinces sent independent delegations for the same purpose. These appear to have been numerous but not necessarily useful; a report in a student paper in Japan criticized prefects and circuit intendants who spent their time drinking and sight-seeing instead of visiting schools.⁶⁰ As well as officially sponsored parties, private educators went on study tours of Japanese schools; among them were Yan Xiu and Zhang Boling, founder

58. Wu Rulun, *Tongcheng Wu xiansheng riji* (Taipei, 1963), Jiaoyu: 10a, 12b. See also *ibid.*, 9a, for Wu's notes on information on the Japanese education system supplied by the Japanese embassy. Wu (1840-1903) was a distinguished Confucian scholar.

59. Wu Rulun, *Tongcheng Wu xiansheng riji*, Jiaoyu, 12b.

60. *Jiangsu*, II (Taipei, 1968 [1903]), Jishi [137].

and first head of the famous Nankai Middle School (Zhou Enlai's *alma mater*).⁶¹ In the reverse direction, the head of Tokyo's Higher Normal School, Kanō Jigorō, visited China to inspect its educational reforms in 1902. Kanō had a longstanding interest in Chinese education; he had tutored the first Chinese students to go to Japan in 1896 and in 1899 had set up a school for them. This developed into the Kobun Shoin, largest of the Japanese schools catering to the Chinese student market.⁶²

In addition to this direct contact, an increasing number of works translated from Japanese were available in China. A Chinese bibliography lists five works on education published between 1893 and 1898, two in 1900, one in 1901, seven in 1902, and twenty-nine in 1903. Of the twenty-nine, nineteen were translations from Japanese.⁶³ This represented only a fraction of the total: by 1905, there were 680 volumes in Chinese on modern education, 97 of which were on sale from a single Japanese publishing firm.⁶⁴ In addition, numerous magazines and newspapers disseminated knowledge on education. Among them was Luo Zhenyu's *Educational World (Jiaoyu shijie)*, founded in 1901, which was at first wholly devoted to translations. Luo had been one of the party sent by Zhang Zhidong to examine Japanese education in 1901. When, in 1903, the first, incomplete regulations were revised by a triumvirate headed by Zhang Zhidong, Luo's ten-volume translation of Japanese regulations on education was almost certainly in their hands.⁶⁵

The new regulations, promulgated in 1904, reveal detailed study of Japanese practice both in letter and spirit. Departures from it were pains-

61. Wang Wentian, *Zhang Boling yu Nankai* (Taipei, 1968), p. 8. Yan Xiu (1860-1929) had held provincial office before retiring to Tianjin. Zhang Boling (1876-1951) began his career as an educator teaching for Yan, see p. 104.

62. Sanetō Keishū, *Chugukujin Nihon ryugaku shi* (Tokyo, 1960), 524, 526-7.

63. Lü Shaoyu, 'Zhongguo jiaoyu shumu huibian', in *Wenhua tushuguanxue zhuanke xuexiao jikan*, IV : 3-4 (1932), 301-368.

64. Cyrus Peake, *Nationalism and Education in Modern China* (New York, 1932), p. 52.

65. For Luo's translations, see Peake, *Nationalism and Education in Modern China*, p. 53, Zhang Jinglu, *Zhongguo jindai chuban shiliao*, Vol. I, p. 81; for Luo's visit to Japan, see Luo Zhenyu, *Xuetang zizhuan*, in *Luo Xuetang xiansheng quanji* (Taipei, 1976), Vol. 1, p. 15.

Luo (1866-1940), scholar, archeologist, and bibliographer. In his later years he became very conservative.

takingly justified: two pages, for example, were devoted to explanations of why Chinese children should learn poetry instead of singing songs like their Japanese counterparts.⁶⁶ The closeness with which the Chinese regulations followed the Japanese may be seen in a comparison of the aims of primary education in each country. The ordinance promulgated in Japan in 1890 stated that its aim was to 'while paying attention to children's bodily development, lay the foundation of education in morality and citizenship education, and also teach them the ordinary knowledge and skills necessary for the conduct of life'.⁶⁷ The Chinese regulations of 1903 run: 'the lower primary school... is to inculcate in them that knowledge necessary for the conduct of life and to lay the foundations of morality and patriotism, while caring for their bodily development'.⁶⁸ The majority of *sishu* were banished from the system as officially promulgated by a clause stating that only *sishu* of thirty or more pupils were eligible (after reform) to participate in it; an unconstructive step, given that the intention of the new lower primary schools was to promote literacy and virtuous conduct - exactly the *sishu*'s traditional tasks. These qualities were evidently useless unless under state control.

Two major differences between the Japanese system and the Chinese one promulgated in 1904 was the great emphasis of the latter on the teaching of the classics and its exclusion of women from participation in the new schools.⁶⁹ 'Girls' schools would give rise to many evils', according to the regulations (chief among them appears to have been the desire to imitate foreign women in choosing one's own mate). Instead, a curious compromise was offered: the inmates of widow's homes (a charitable institution) were to be taught childcare so that they could seek employment, but all other

66. Taga Akigoro, *Kindai Chugoku kyōikushi shiryō*, Shinmatsuhon, (Tokyo, 1972), pp. 303-304. Hereafter *Shiryō*.

67. Naka Arata, *Meiji no kyōiku*, (Tokyo, 1967), p. 257.

68. Taga (ed.), *Shiryō*, p. 297.

69. In Japan, lessons in the classics were not given in primary school, their customary subject matter being subsumed by classes in ethics and Japanese. Even before the Meiji reforms, the Confucian classics had not dominated Japanese education as they had Chinese.

women were to receive instruction indirectly through reprints and translations distributed in their homes.⁷⁰ The number of years of schooling were lengthened to seventeen (by comparison with the Japanese fourteen) in order to enable pupils to fit in a full classical education alongside their Western subjects.

Both these anomalies appear to have stemmed from Zhang Zhidong's personal views. Like his earlier work, the *Quanzue pian*, the regulations were fighting on two fronts: on the one hand convincing conservatives that the new scheme had a point, on the other trying to curb its already apparent dangers. The *Outline of Educational Principles* devotes several paragraphs to the former cause, many of which indicate the lack of acceptance of the commonplaces of modern education: 'The subjects of the different schools are really not complicated and difficult...' 'The sequential teaching of different subjects is established practice in all countries and has a deep significance'. Many more are devoted to the latter, both to the active preservation of China's threatened heritage, - there are several pages on why the classics and literature must be studied - and to the prevention of sedition and unruliness: students were not to interfere in national affairs, question school rules, take foreign works out of context, study military drill in foreign schools... In a rather disingenuous attempt to cloak the nature of their concern, the compilers professed anxiety for the purity of the Chinese language, which was being contaminated by such neologisms as 'association' (*tuanti* 团体), 'national soul' (*guohun* 国魂), 'representative' (*daibiao* 代表), 'sacrifice' (*xisheng* 牺牲), 'clash' (*chongtu* 冲突), and 'movement' (*yundong* 运动) - the catch-words of radicals.⁷¹

The regulations of the 1902-1904 school system were at the same time an example of Japanese influence and a means of propagating it: positively, through the institution of new courses and the importation of Japanese teachers, and negatively, through the lack of separate provision for adult students within the new system. The new schools' degrees could only be

70. Taga (ed.), *Shiryō*, pp. 309-312.

71. Taga (ed.), *Shiryō*, p. 214.

obtained in China through years of study; optimistic students abroad hoped to telescope lower and higher stages. Re-examination on return to China could lead to the award of degrees, whose holders were commonly known as 'foreign *juren*' (*yang juren* 洋举人) or 'foreign *jinshi*' (*yang jinshi* 洋进士), though these were obtained by relatively few.⁷² The majority of the several thousand students supported in Japan by heavy expenditure of government or private funds (annual fees ranged from 300 to 650 yen per student) were taking short term courses in schools such as the Kobun Shoin, specially set up for Chinese students. Their peak appears to have been reached in 1906-07; in 1907, the government restricted its scholarships to those pursuing higher education.⁷³ By 1910, many of the schools specializing in short-term courses for Chinese had closed down.⁷⁴

Many of the Chinese students studying in Japan took teacher-training courses. Japanese influence was particularly strong in the field of educational theory, since as I pointed out above, the idea of education as an object of study, an entity in itself, had not previously been familiar to the Chinese. Even *sishu* teachers were set to using the Five-step Teaching Method which, worked out by disciples of the German educator Johann Friedrich Herbart (1776-1841), had become a standard feature of Japanese teacher training.⁷⁵

In addition to government-approved channels of information there was another source transforming Chinese educational thought: banned magazines printed in Japan by the exiled Liang Qichao or by radical student groups. Their influence was especially strong in the early years of the century. The school system had been decreed; but what were to be its priorities and its aims? In an

72. For an examination of returned students and the degrees awarded to them, see Huang Fuqing, *Qingmo liu-Ri xuesheng* (Taipei, 1975), pp. 65-82.

73. Taga (ed.), *Shiryō*, p. 485.

74. Sanetō Keishū, *Chūgokujin Nihon ryūgaku shi*, p. 532.

75. For the Herbartian movement in Japan, see Nishihara, *Western Influences*, pp. 440-445. For the application of the Five-step Method in *sishu*, see reports of inspection of Peking *sishu* in *Xuebu guanbao*, LXLIII, (1909), Jingwai xuewu baogao, 19b.

article published in 1902 in *Xinmin congbao*, a periodical with a wide though clandestine circulation in China, Liang Qichao argued for a system of universal education built from the base up through a network of fee-paying locally-funded primary schools and decried the current concentration on advanced education. Schooling, he believed, should be compulsory.⁷⁶ In a later article Liang expanded on the virtues of compulsory submission to a uniform system, contrasting the freedom of civilization with the freedom of barbarism: the latter consisted in letting people do as they pleased, often at the expense of others, whereas the former was characterized by freedom under the law, in which 'every action is like the rhythm of a machine, every move is like troops marching in step'. Liang went on to relate the necessity for this imposed order to the struggle for survival in a competitive world.⁷⁷

Hubei xueshengjie, a magazine produced by Hubei students in Japan, took up the theme of threatened survival in two articles on citizenship education, understood as that which inculcated a spirit of nationalism, independence, and responsibility.⁷⁸ The magazine had limited sales initially, but according to a fellow journalist these soared when it was banned by the Hubei authorities.⁷⁹

Citizenship training combined with universal military preparedness introduced a new concept into Chinese, that of *junquomin jiaoyu* or education for military citizenship. By this was meant the extension of the discipline and martial spirit found in soldiers to the population as a whole. Like education for citizenship, it arose from a consciousness that China was, in Liang Qichao's words, like a lamb among tigers, defenceless

76. Liang Qichao, 'Jiaoyu zhengce siyi' in Shu (ed.), *Ziliao*, pp. 947-954.

77. Liang Qichao, 'Xin min shuo' (Er), *Xinmin congbao huibian: xukan* (Taipei, 1968 [1903]), 16a [113].

78. Zhang Jixu, 'Zhongguo dang zhong guomin jiaoyu', *Hubei xueshengjie*, I (Taipei, 1970) [1903] 197-208, and 'Guomin jiaoyu', *ibid.*, II, 331-339.

79. *Jiangsu*, II, Jishi, [372-73].

amid her enemies.⁸⁰ It seems likely that the Japanese education system played a part in the growth of this concept. Japanese normal schools were run on semi-military lines, with military drill, severe discipline, and soldier-like uniforms.⁸¹

Views on citizenship and military education gained wide currency among those concerned with modern education in China. They found formal expression in the Aims of Education, proclaimed in 1906 to supplement the 1904 regulations' limited goals of correcting erroneous tendencies and producing well-rounded talent. The preamble to the new aims emphasized that the training of an elite of talent - the *rencai* which centuries of Chinese schooling had sought to form - must today take second place to the education of the whole nation. The new aims summed up the virtues desirable in modern citizenry: a continued loyalty to the emperor and respect for Confucius, and in addition the ascription of a high value to the public good, martial spirit, and practicality or substantiality (*zhong jun* 忠君, *zun Kong* 尊孔, *shang gong* 尚公, *shang wu* 尚武, *shang shi* 尚实). It was recommended that education for military citizenship be included in children's textbooks through stories of battles, pictures of battleships and flags, and songs and poems about the Qing dynasty's prowess in battle. In sport, young children might play, but older ones should take up military drill to attain 'strictly ordered discipline'.⁸² Subsequent revision of the aims of education under the Republican government placed even greater emphasis on education for military citizenship, which with pragmatic education and aesthetic education was to complement education in morality.

The last years of the dynasty saw the disappearance of some of Zhang Zhidong's shibboleths - girls' schools were incorporated into the system in 1907, and in 1909 the number of subjects in lower primary was reduced from eight to five, and three of the Four Books eliminated from the course - and

80. Shu Xincheng, *Jindai Zhongguo jiaoyu sixiangshi*, pp. 114-115.

81. See Nishihara, *Western Influences*, pp. 416-419.

82. Taga, *Shiryō*, pp. 634-635.

83. Shu (ed.), *Ziliao*, p. 226.

the beginning of decreasing reliance on Japanese model and increasing interest in American education. Signs of the latter were the awarding of the first Boxer Indemnity Scholarships for study in America and the setting up as a preparatory school for American study of what was later to become Qinghua University. These provided institutional channels for the American influence which was later to dominate the Chinese educational world.

By the end of the Qing Chinese education could not be said to have entered a period of autonomous development; rather, educationalists were passing from one master's tutelage to another. In the transition, the modern education created during the Qing left a legacy of personnel - scholars and ministers trained in Japan, of institutions - schools and colleges founded during the Qing and still existing in the Republican period or even in the present day, - and ideas and vocabulary on the purposes and methods of education which formed a foundation for later discourse. The realization in practice of educational theories and ideals is another matter, with which I shall deal in subsequent chapters.

CHAPTER FOUR

Innovation and Resistance

Phases of reform - reform within tradition -
experiments with Western content - experiments
with Western forms - unpopularity of the new
schools - sequence of reform in elementary
schooling - persistence of the *shu*

In this chapter, I shall be looking at the transmutations and modifications of Chinese schools under Western impact and the varying forms assumed in the Chinese context by schools modelled on those of the West. I shall be discussing only tangentially those enclaves of Western learning set up from 1861 on to train a handful of men in the skills of defence and diplomacy, schools 'which were generally regarded by the Chinese as completely outside the regular concept and system of education',¹ and missionary schools, to which the same applied until the 1900's; detailed treatment here would only duplicate the excellent work of others. Neither type of school had sufficient influence to mould the remainder of Chinese education in its image. Enlightened missionaries had hoped that the neutral values of Western knowledge would sweeten their proffered faith, but the tendency was rather for the taint of the 'foreign religion' to discourage attendance at mission schools and even, by analogy, those set up by Chinese.

Changes in the mainstream of Chinese education effected by Western impact can be arranged in a sequence more logical than chronological; that is, the first example of each change may precede the first example of subsequent changes, but each new form co-exists with a number of previous ones. The rate of change was neither constant nor uniform; it varied between one province and another, between town and country, and between one social group and another, and any student could reverse the sequence by moving from a 'modern' institution to a traditional or transitional one. (As late as the 1930's a few graduates of normal schools chose to teach in *sishu*). With these caveats, I present the following three-phase sequence of development.

In the first, reforms were bounded by the traditional content and forms of Chinese education. This phase began with the reformed academies of the Tongzhi Restoration. In the second, the traditional forms were maintained but a new, semi-Western content injected into them; at the same time, the technical schools teaching Western studies began to broaden

1. Knight Biggerstaff, *The Earliest Modern Government Schools in China* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1961), p. 31.

their focus and offer an education more suitable to a gentleman. They retained, however, the severe discipline derived from their Prussian models. This occurred in the late 1880's and in the 1890's. In the final phase, in the late nineties, both form and content were Westernized, although no uniformity was reached until the 1904 school regulations were issued. By the late 1900's, all institutional traces of China's indigenous institutions of higher education - the examination system and the academies - had vanished. The same three phases can be discerned in the development of elementary education, with a certain time-lag. With one exception, it appears that (outside mission schools) no elementary schools on the Western model were started till the late 1890's. The indigenous type of elementary schooling, the *shisu*, persisted into the late forties and possibly the early fifties.

The first phase began with the confirmation of a change long discussed in scholarly circles: the dismissal of the eight-legged essay from the curriculum of certain academies. In the Chinese context, it was part of a trend towards *shixue* (实学) or solid learning, as opposed to the ornamental or empty, and towards the practical rather than the speculative. The concept *shi* (实) provided a bridge between Chinese and Western learning. It was incorporated into the first Chinese word for industry, *shiye* (实业). As enshrined in the ambiguous but authoritative wording of the 1906 educational aims, *shang shi* (尚实) could refer equally to respect for useful technical studies or to serious work on the classics.²

Two famous academies which banished the eight-legged essay were founded before the threat from the West became apparent: the Gujing Jingshe,

2. The Protean nature of this concept was first evident in Japan, where Fukuzawa Yukichi detached *jitsugaku* (实学) from its association with Confucianism and applied it to 'the forty-seven letters of the (Japanese) alphabet, the composition of letters, bookkeeping, the abacus, and the use of scales', as well as geography, history, natural philosophy, economics, and ethics, all of which latter subjects were to be studied from translations of Western works. (Fukuzawa Yukichi, *Encouragement of Learning* [Gakumon no Susume], 1872, translated in Herbert Passin, *Society and Education in Japan* [New York, 1965], pp. 206-207.)

set up in Hangzhou in 1801, and the Xue Hai Tang, set up in Canton in 1820. These were renowned centres of Han learning. Zhang Zhidong was following these models in establishing, during periods of office as provincial educational official, the Jingxin Academy in Hubei in 1869 and the Zunjing Academy in Sichuan in 1874, and subsequently, as governor of Shanxi, the Lingde Academy there. In doing so he was impelled not simply by philosophical preference, but by the wish common to statesmen active in the reforms of the Tongzhi Restoration: the restabilization of the state in the face of internal and external enemies. Over the same period, language schools were set up in Peking, Shanghai, and Guangzhou, naval schools in Fuzhou and Tianjin, and telegraph schools in Tianjin. Though some eventually expanded into wider areas of study, the narrowness of their original conception indicates the restricted role allocated to Western learning by the majority of Chinese officials, who were still seeking the answer to Chinese problems within their own tradition. Their attitude contrasts with that of that of the reformers of Meiji Japan, whose creed was that 'knowledge was to be sought for throughout the world'³ and who introduced a highly Westernized system of schooling in 1872.

Further modifications of the established pattern were made when Zhang Zhidong set up the Guangya Academy in Canton during his period of governorship in 1887. Students could study in one of four departments of classics, history, neo-Confucianism or government.⁴ This again was an example in which Confucian precedent and Western example were mingled. The famous Song educator Hu Anding had divided the prefectural schools he headed into departments of classics (*jingyi* 经义) and government (*zhishi* 治事), the latter being divided into military studies, water transport, mathematics and the calendar, and other subjects.⁵ Hu had few followers; normal Confucian practice subsumed all branches of learning under the study

3. The phrase forms part of the Charter Oath of the Meiji Emperor, made public in April 1868 (Passin, *Society and Education in Japan*, p. 63).

4. William Ayers, *Chang Chih-tung and Educational Reform in China* (Cambridge, Mass., 1971), p. 59.

5. Chen Qingzhi, *Zhongguo jiaoyushi* (Shanghai, 1936), pp. 238-39.

Hu Yuan (Hu Anding) lived from 933 to 1059 and was the author of Zhou yi kou yi and Hong Fan kou yi.

of the classics, and it was with Western learning that subject divisions were usually associated.

Zhang Zhidong was not, of course, the only patron of the reformed academy. Among their most prolific sponsors was Huang Pengnian who in the course of his official posts in the early Guangxu period resuscitated the Guanzhong Academy in Shaanxi, the Lianchi Academy in Zhili, and the Zhengyi Academy in Suzhou. The ancient Yuelu Academy in Hunan, Nanjing in Jiangsu, and Luoyuan in Jinan were also renowned centres of scholarly enquiry.⁶

That the traditional framework of the academy offered considerable scope for adaptation is evident from a list of topics set for the monthly essays in Suzhou in the early 1890's. In addition to questions set on the Five Classics 'subjects concerning current affairs are also frequently given out, as for example, the Best Methods of Military Defence; the Conservation of the Waterways; China's Relations with Foreign Countries, etc., etc.'⁷ The continued vitality of a revived Confucian scholarship can be seen in Shu Xincheng's account of the Hunan academy he attended in 1907. 'Luliang Academy', he wrote, 'belonged to what was called "the new school". We composed elucidations of the classics and topical dissertations instead of eight-legged essays, and old poems and ordinary regulated poems instead of the examination forms'. Shu found stimulating and inspiring the example of the head, who expounded the classics and history in a way Shu had never heard before, and shared with the students notes he made on his reading. The college was filled with a spirit of diligent emulation.⁸ From what Shu says of his own reading while at the academy and from the head's background as the teacher of numerous successful examination candidates, it appears that the stimulus derived from Chinese historiography and

6. See Xie Guozhen, 'Jindai shuyuan xuexiao zhidu bianqian kao', in Cai Yuanpei et al., (ed.), *Zhang Jusheng xiansheng qishi shengri jinian lunwen ji*, (Shanghai, 1937), p. 289.

7. A.P. Parker, 'The Government Colleges of Suchow', *The Chinese Recorder and Missionary Journal*, XXIV : 11 (1893), 538.

8. Shu, *Wo he jiaoyu*, pp. 44-46.

classical studies, with little Western admixture. Shu's academy was among the last to continue functioning: in 1909, this centre of advanced study was made into a lower primary school.⁹ The academy appears to have provided an equally satisfying environment for Li Zonghuang, who attended one in Yunnan from 1898 to 1903: he speaks with affection of his friends and teachers, and of the 'excitement' and 'enlightenment' he received from lectures on the Four Books and Five Classics.¹⁰

A parallel movement to the reformation of academies was that for the expulsion of the eight-legged essay from the examination system. Though argued for by numerous advocates of reform in the late Qing - among them Xue Fucheng, Zhang Zhidong, Chen Baochen, Yan Fu, Kang Youwei, and Liang Qichao¹¹ - change was slow in coming. Whereas alteration in the course of study or essay topics of an academy could be achieved by the injunctions of its official founder or benefactor, or through a change of heart or personnel among the scholars and officials who set the topics, the examination system could not be reformed piecemeal; as a unitary system, it had to be altered from the top. The abolition of the eight-legged essay was among the unrealised reforms of 1898; it was not until 1902 that the topical dissertation was finally substituted for it.¹² Some students had difficulty coping; much hilarity was caused by the incompetence of those who, for example, replied with an essay on 'taking a broken wheel' (*na po lun* 拿破伦), complete with classical allusions, when asked to write on Napoleon.¹³ Others made a smooth but superficial transition, concealing ignorance with the linguistic deftness born of their training in the eight-legged essay.¹⁴ Nonetheless, the new system made possible

9. *Ibid.*, p. 49.

10. Li Zonghuang, *Li Zonghuang huiyilu*, pp. 50-52.

11. See Hsiao Kung-chuan, *A Modern China and a New World* (Seattle, 1975), pp. 377-78.

12. For further discussion of these reforms, see Wolfgang Franke, *The Reform and Abolition of the Chinese Examination System* (Cambridge, Mass., 1963), pp. 43-53.

13. Song Xishang, *Li Yizhi zhuan* (Taipei, 1954), p. 6.

14. For a fictional example of the extempore ramblings undertaken by such students, see Li Liuru, *Liushi nian de bianqian*, p. 68.

for the acquisition and display of a broad range of knowledge on domestic and international affairs. Had the reformed examination system achieved the conjunction of stimulating topics, intelligent students, and enlightened markers, it might have been an avenue for the synthesis of Chinese and Western statecraft.

The second phase of the transformation of Chinese education, the incorporation of Western content into indigenous institutions, began with the introduction of mathematics into the curriculum. Mathematics encountered less resistance than other new subjects, since it was not only the mother of all Western sciences but possessed an indisputable Chinese pedigree. It was included in the curriculum of what appears to be the first academy to have incorporated Western learning, Weijing in Shaanxi. In 1885, two scholars at the academy set up a department teaching astronomy, geography, the classics and history, government, neo-Confucianism, and mathematics, hoping thus to 'bridge East and West, making use of the works of our predecessors, to redeem present dangers'. The last words indicate the common motivation of such enterprises, the sense of urgency which gripped those aware of the encroachment of the powers and of China's defeats.¹⁵ Mathematics was also one of the six departments planned for Zhang Zhidong's Lianghu Academy in 1890.

Where the examination system was concerned, the first concession to Western learning came in the allocation of places to students of mathematics who had also reached a high standard in the normal examination subjects.¹⁶ This ruling, important though it was in principle, had little effect in practice.

15. Huang Yanpei, 'Qingji gesheng xingxue shi', in *Renwen yuekan* I : 7 (1930), p. 1.

16. Zongli yamen, 'Huiyi suanxue qushi', in Shu (ed.), *Shiliao*, Vol. IV, pp. 79-81.

Schools, or *xuetang* (学堂),¹⁷ teaching Western techniques were developed parallel to and separately from the reform of indigenous institutions. The Self-strengthening School or Ziqiang Xuetang set up by Zhang Zhidong in Wuchang in 1893 appears from its title to have been intended as a further development of such schools. In its original conception, however, it had both a broader scope than they and a more traditionally Chinese organization, in that three of its four departments - mathematics, science, and commerce - were to offer monthly examinations to external students rather than having fixed courses. In the event, mathematics was transferred to the Lianghu Academy, which Zhang had founded in 1890 to teach classics, history, neo-Confucianism, literature, mathematics, and government (because of shortage of money, the last two subjects had been temporarily omitted);¹⁸ science and commerce were never started and the school continued its life teaching languages only.

The regulations Zhang drew up for its conduct consisted mainly of prohibitions. He was particularly anxious lest the students be seduced from their studies, either temporarily by the examinations or permanently by 'following base occupations, even to the extent of so far forgetting self-respect as to take employment with a foreign firm as an interpreter'.¹⁹ His strictures illustrate the dilemma facing the promoter of Western studies who would steer his course between entrenched scholasticism and defection to the enemy.²⁰

17. The word *xuetang* has a long history in a Chinese context. Its first use for one of the specialist schools are in 1866, when the Foochow Navy School (Chuanzheng Xuetang) was founded. The term was not used by missionaries who adopted the more common appellations of indigenous schools (*guan 馆* or *shuyuan 书院*), nor by the Japanese, who called their new schools *gakko* (*xuexiao 学校*).

18. See Su Yunfeng, *Zhang Zhidong yu Hubei jiaoyu gaige* (Taipei, 1976), pp. 52-57.

19. Missionary schools teaching English had the same problem of losing students to foreign firms. See Jessie Lutz, *China and the Christian Colleges, 1850-1950* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1971), p. 69.

20. Zhang Zhidong, 'Zhao kao Ziqiang Xuetang xuesheng shi', in Shu (ed.), *Shiliao*, Vol. I, pp. 13-16.

Zhang's next attempt at a modern school was the School for Gathering Talent (Chucai Xuetang), set up in Nanking early in 1896. As with the earlier school, Zhang's ambitions to expand the curriculum - to include international affairs, agriculture, industry and commerce - were defeated; his successor confined the school to training translators. Regulations were a blend of military discipline and Confucian decorum. Students had to rise at seven on four strokes of the gong, assemble for breakfast at half past seven on two strokes, and so on throughout the day. They were not to leave the grounds or receive visitors (in contrast to the freedom of academies, where a student might leave for days or months, or simultaneously hold a job elsewhere).²¹ 'The school being a place of decorum, students should behave as befits their junior position... in meeting their teachers they should stand with arms at their sides and answer respectfully if addressed... for foreign teachers they are to raise their hands to their foreheads as a greeting.'²²

Although half the time of its students was spent in Chinese studies, the Chucai Xuetang was basically a continuation of the schools which provided specialized technical training. The same applied to the other schools Zhang founded in the same year, the Military School (Lujun Xuetang) and the attached School of Mining and Railways (Kuanglu Xuetang) in Nanking, and the Military Preparatory School (Wubei Xuetang) in Wuchang. The peculiar ethos of such semi-modern schools was satirized in a passage of Lu Xun's reminiscences. He attended first the Jiangnan Naval School (Jiangnan Shuishi Xuetang, founded in 1890) and then the School of Mining and Railways in Nanking from 1898 to 1902. Of the first school, he recalls a swimming-pool built over when two students drowned in it. A temple to Guan Di was set up on the site to keep down their watery ghosts, and Buddhist masses said annually in the gymnasium for the repose of their unquiet souls.²³ His brother's comments on the school are less astringent but

21. For example, Tang Caichang's stay at Lianghu Academy was broken by an appointment elsewhere and for some time concurrent with a position as family tutor. See Su Yunfeng, *Zhang Zhidong yu Hubei jiaoyu gaige*, p. 56.

22. 'Jiangnan Chucai Xuetang Zhangcheng', *Shiwu bao*, XLII (1897), [2848].

23. Lu Xun, *Chaohua xishi* (Peking, 1973), pp. 56-60.

equally critical.²⁴

Like the School for Gathering Talent, the Naval School attempted to maintain an unfamiliar discipline. Students were supposed to regulate their lives by whistle blasts, although some recalcitrants lay abed till the school servants brought breakfast to their dormitories. In some respects, however, the school's organization was old-fashioned. It lacked that cardinal feature of the modern school, the alternation of different subjects during the day. Instead, a whole day or half-day was devoted to one subject. In Lu Xun's time, students spent four days on English, one on classical Chinese, and one on the composition of classical Chinese. Although the 1904 Outline of Education (*Xuewu gangyao*) had accorded 'deep meaning' to this alternation, the Naval School apparently persisted with its own method until the end of the dynasty.²⁵ Other aberrant features in terms of the new school system were the bursaries paid to the students and the custom of having both a 'regular' and a 'supplementary' intake.²⁶ The persistence of such anomalies illustrates the variable rate of change in Chinese education.

The innovations of the late eighties and early nineties - reforms in the examinations and a few academies, the founding of a few new schools - were the work of a small handful of men contending with an indifferent public opinion and the hostility of other court and provincial factions. The inadequacy of their labours was revealed by China's shattering defeat in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894. The segregation of Chinese and Western studies was discredited, but plans were not yet on foot to adopt wholesale the Western institutions the victor had made her own. Rather, a further period of uncertain but optimistic experimentation in synthesis occurred.

24. Zhou Zuoren attended the Jiangnan Naval School from 1902 to 1906. For a description of his schooldays, see Zhou Zuoren, *Zhitang huixianglu*, pp. 89-115, 148-150.

25. Zhou Zuoren, *Zhitang huixianglu*, pp. 96-98; Lu Xun, *Chaohua xishi*, p. 56.

26. Zhou Zuoren, *Zhitang huixianglu*, p. 92; Lu Xun, *Chaohua xishi*, p. 57. Bursaries were in part a legacy from the academies, in part a practical necessity to attract students when foreign studies were still unfashionable.

No fixed model existed, and the founders of each institution combined as they wished features of Western and Chinese schooling. In the words of a historian of education, schools in the years from 1894 to 1900 'were opened on the initiative of individuals, setting their own fashions, completely devoid of system; the gradation of levels was incomplete, and such names as higher, middle, and primary school had not been formally adopted'.²⁷ At one end of the spectrum, one finds the self-discipline and freedom from restraint of the traditional academy, at the other the rigid external regulation imposed in the specialist schools for Western subjects. The new foundations of the late nineties take up their place at varying points within this range.

One tending more to the academic model (though it claimed to be following the example of Zhang Zhidong's Ziqiang Xuetao) was the Dongshan Jingshe. This was set up by reforming Hunan scholars at the beginning of 1896. They proposed the same four divisions, but owing to lack of funds limited themselves to mathematics and a student body of twenty. As in academies, regular students were to receive monthly allowances dependent on their results in twice-monthly examinations, and the head of the school held the title of *shanzhang*. The rhetoric of the school's regulations, however, was modern; they invoked the example of Japan, and promised the purchase of reform journals and daily papers.

Other academies were set up or reorganized to teach both Chinese and Western subjects in Guizhou, Zhejiang, Guangdong, Fujian, Jiangsu, Hubei, and Shaanxi. In the last named, the pioneering Weijing Academy appears to have passed the torch of innovation to its younger offshoot, the Chongshi Academy, whose title signifies its respect for solid learning.²⁹ A former

27. Chen Qingzhi, *Zhongguo jiaoyushi*, p. 573.

28. 'Xiangxiang Dongshan Jingshe zhangcheng', *Shiwu bao*, II (1896), [85].

29. I have commented earlier on the bridging function of the word *shi* ('solid' or 'substantial'). It forms part of the title of the academy Yan Xiu set up in Guizhou and of one in Shaanxi. Another popular name was Qiushi (求是), part of the famous motto of the head of Nanjing Academy, 'shishi qiushi' (实事求是) - to seek the truth from the facts. It is interesting to note that this work-style is still recommended in the same words in China today.

Chongshi student remembered Weijing as being headed by an opium-smoking devotee of the eight-legged essay who kept a donkey in the middle of the rival academy's courtyard - a sad testimony to the Confucian belief that institutions are no better than the men who run them. Chongshi, like the Naval School, taught Western subjects alternately by the day. It followed academic practice in holding monthly examinations and twice-monthly lectures. Teaching appears to have been poor; students wrote satirical verses on their teachers.³⁰

At the same time as these transitional academies were set up, new schools or *xuetang* were founded which differed from them only in name. The most famous of these was the Shiwu Xuetang or Current Affairs School in Hunan, at which Liang Qichao taught. Its spirit has been aptly characterized by Shu Xincheng as that of 'the learned expositions of scholars of the old days';³¹ essentially, it offered a course of guided reading supplemented by lectures and essays in which scholars shared their perception of the meaning of classical works. The problem was Liang's interpretation of the latter; neighbouring gentry were incensed by the implication that Liang's party possessed the only valid interpretation of Confucianism, others being base examination hacks.³² Apart from such partisanship, study was undertaken in the spirit of such orthodox academies as Suzhou's Zhengyi, where students similarly kept a record of their reading, commented on their perceptions and doubts, and were assessed monthly on their achievements.³³ Because of its close association

30. Song Xishang, *Li Yizhi zhuan*, pp. 6-7. It is hard to know whether to give more or less credence to such memories than to official histories. One such states that both Weijing and Chongshi taught 'solid learning' (*shixue*). See Huang Yanpei, 'Qingji gesheng xingxueshi', *Renwen yuekan*, (1930), I : 7, 2.

31. Shu Xincheng, prefatory remarks to Liang Qichao, 'Hunan Shiwu Xuetang gongqi', in Shu (ed.), *Jindai zhongguo jiaoyu shiliao*, Vol. I, p. 40.

32. See Liang Qichao, 'Hunan Shiwu Xuetang gongqi', in Shu (ed.), *Shiliao*, Vol. I, pp. 40-61, and 'Miluo xiangren xuexue jiuwu' in Su Yu (ed.), *Yijiao congbian*, [333-39].

33. See Xie Guozhen, 'Zhindai shuyuan xuexiao zhidu bianqian kuo', pp. 291-92.

with the reform party, the Shiwu Xuetang closed down on their fall. Its successor, however, was also prepared to countenance the new learning, though not heretical interpretations of the old: even the name of the new school, the Qiushi Academy, indicated that it had joined the popular pursuit of solid learning.³⁴

The same name was borne by a new school set up in Anhui in 1897, the Qiushi Xuetang. This tended toward the rigid end of the spectrum, but retained many of the organizational features of the academy. It bore all the expenses of sixty regular students drawn from different counties (the emphasis on equitable geographical representation recalls the examination system), and in addition gave allowances on the basis of monthly examination results. In return, students had to agree to stay the four years required for graduation on pain of repaying all costs. Anyone who left to take a job elsewhere was required to repay five times what had been spent on him.³⁵ Such stringent requirements made many families hesitant about sending their sons to new schools. Especially when overseas education came into vogue, this unusual and enforced separation was sometimes feared final.

Of the educational institutions founded at the time, two founded by Sheng Xuanhuai foreshadowed most closely the hierarchy of the modern school. They can be said to be the first fruits of the third phase of the assimilation of Western schooling. The Tientsin Sino-Western School, set up in 1895, had a first or higher and a second or lower division, each taking four years to complete; 'skipping a level' (*lie deng 躐等*) was not allowed. A second school, the Nanyang Gongxue or Nanyang Public Institute, was set up in Shanghai in 1897. It improved on its predecessor in that four sections or *yuan* (院), were contemplated: an outer or primary school (*waiyuan 外院*), a middle school (*zhongyuan 中院*), higher school (*shangyuan 上院*), and China's first normal school (*shifan yuan 师范院*).

34. *Ibid.*, pp. 303-304.

35. See Gao Zhengfang, 'Qingmo de Anhui xinjiaoyu', (Shang), *Xuefeng*, II : 8 (1932), 32-33.

The school was also notable for issuing the first textbooks specifically for use in schools, a series of readers taken from English and American models.³⁶

At the turn of the century, the new schools were very much a tiny minority. It has been calculated that more than four thousand academies were in existence at the end of the nineteenth century. If one assumes that each of these had associations with several score scholars - through essay competitions, in most cases, rather than resident tuition - this means that approximately half a million men supplemented their income and their learning through the academies. By contrast, semi-modern schools and academies were numbered in tens rather than thousands, and their teachings were normally confined to a few score resident students.

The new schools were not only in a minority, they were unpopular. Although the 'public opinion' (*yulun* 舆论) formed by the *Shiwu bao* and other reform journals, by the writings of Zhang Zhidong and Zheng Guanying, was in favour of the new education, 'popular opinion' (*sulun* 俗论) was apathetic or hostile. Neither conservative gentryfolk nor the unlettered masses had a high opinion of the new schools.

Students attending schools of the Western type did so mainly because they were free. They came from gentry families fallen on hard times, or entrepreneurs disinclined to waste good money on schooling, with a sprinkling of the rich and idle who could not be bothered studying for the examinations.³⁷ The first government school teaching Western subjects, the Tongwen Guan in Peking, was at first filled with the dregs of an old official school for bannermen, whose families were ostracized by friends and relatives for surrendering to the West. Some even had difficulty in finding wives.³⁸

36. Sheng Xuanhuai, 'Zouchen kaiban Nanyang Gongxue qingxing shu, fu zhangcheng', in Shu (ed.), *Shiliao*, Vol. I, pp. 35-40; Nanyang Gongxue, 'Mengxue keben liang ke', *Shiliao*, Vol. II, pp. 251-52.

37. See 'Jiangnan Chucai Xuetao zhangcheng', [2846-2] for a warning against the characteristic faults of each group.

38. Qi Rushan, *Qi Rushan huiyilu* (Taipei, 1956), p. 27.

Prejudice was dissipated in one place by official support and approval of the new institutions only to return in another. By the late 1890's, the Tongwen Guan was attracting more students than it could handle;³⁹ In Guangzhou, however, students at the city's first non-missionary school of the Western type, Shimin Xuetang, were jeered at in the streets. A former student recalls 'The Cantonese gradually ceased to look down on Shimin only when the new school system was fixed [in 1904] and private and public schools opened up one after the other. I still remember how, before there was an Education Minister (Xuewu Dachen 学务大臣), Cantonese gentlemen would say we belonged to Kang Youwei's party, or if not that, then they'd call us Christian converts. If we chanced to cross the town, behind our backs would rise the derisive sound of curses and spitting, and when we met relatives and friends they would repeatedly urge us to leave the school.'⁴⁰

Resentment against the schools had both a cultural and a material basis. Many groups had a stake - of property, prestige, or profession - in the preservation of the old educational institutions and were reluctant to accept the new.

Among the threatened groups was the Buddhist priesthood, whose temple holdings were to be transferred in part to the new schools. Alarm was felt both among Buddhist priests at the court and at the local level: Ma Xulun recalls seeing in 1898 two agitated nuns carrying a bodhisattva away by night to avoid the threatened confiscation. Their alarm was premature but not groundless.⁴¹

Sishu teachers and the staff and students of academies made their living and owed their status to traditional education. For both ideological and financial reasons, many were reluctant to take their chances with

39. *Ibid.*, p. 36.

40. Huang Yanpei, 'Qingji gesheng xingxue shi' (Xu), in *Renwen yuekan*, I : 8, 1930, 10.

41. Ma Xulun, *Wo zai liushi sui yiqian*, p. 8.

the new system, which was tainted by associations with commerce, with barbarians, with the Christian religion. One *sishu* teacher is said to have rejected with scorn a proposal that he teach his pupil about geography, on the grounds that 'he had not converted to the foreign religion'.⁴² As late as 1907 *sishu* teachers in Guangxi were said to be spreading rumours and discouraging attendance at the new schools.⁴³

At the turn of the century, the future of schooling on the Western model must have seemed precarious. On one side was ranged progressive 'public opinion'; on the other, popular indifference or aversion, expressed in concentrated form by the destruction wrought by the Boxers in North China. Indigenous institutions were showing considerable powers of regeneration and absorption of the new learning without fundamental structural alteration. The balance was tipped in favour of foreign imitation by the foreign powers' defeat of the Boxers. Policies of naive chauvinism, or even of constructive reform within the Chinese tradition, were outdated: they could not compete with the allurements of the modern school system, blazoned with the successes of Germany and Japan and promising China equal strength.

The defeat of the Boxers meant the second promulgation of reform measures rescinded after the empress dowager's return to power in 1898. In 1901, an imperial edict ordered that a three-tier system on the Western model be set up and all academies be converted into schools. But standardization was not yet achieved, as the content of the edict was sufficiently unspecific to allow for a certain leeway in interpretation. In Anhui, for example, the provincial university, formed by amalgamation of the Qiushi Xuetang and the Jingfu Academy, enrolled all scholars at the provincial capital as supplementary students and conducted monthly examinations on topics set by provincial officials; in short, assimilated to itself the functions of an academy.⁴⁴

42. *Shuntian shibao*, 1 October 1902.

43. *Xuebu guanbao*, XXXIX (1907), *Jingwai xuewu baogao*, 395a-b.

44. Gao Zhengfang, 'Qingmo de Anhui xin jiaoyu' (Shang), pp. 35-36.

Educators' freedom of action was circumscribed by the 1902 regulations, and restricted even further by the detailed prescriptions of those of 1904. Although the setting up of a model by no means assured that it was universally followed - inexperience and inadequate resources meant that many new schools were such in name only - variations were henceforth illegitimate departures from a fixed system rather than valid forms of experiment.

The changes I have been discussing above had their greatest impact on advanced education. Elementary schooling exhibits similar changes - from a re-making of indigenous forms and content, through the introduction of Western content into Chinese forms, to the setting up of a prescribed Western model which outlawed all others - but the timescale was later and effects less easily achieved.

The first school founded by Chinese to move beyond the traditional scope of elementary education was the Zhengmeng Shuyuan in Shanghai, founded by Zhang Huanlun in 1878. It was divided into different grades and taught both Chinese and Western subjects; among other innovations was the introduction of games. Texts in classical Chinese were translated into the vernacular. Like Weijing in Shaanxi, Zhengmeng was set up out of a sense of national need (its aim was to 'understand righteousness and principles, and gain a knowledge of current affairs'),⁴⁵ and like Weijing it was in advance of its time: statesmen and scholars did not interest themselves in setting up similar schools until some twenty years later.

The lag is explicable partly in terms of the traditional autonomy of elementary education. The concept that schooling was primarily for producing 'men of talent' for government service, and was therefore sufficiently monitored by the examination system had left the government with relatively little interest in the schooling of the masses, and thus with little voice in it. Scholars who had themselves come to Western studies in their adulthood tended to regard them as qualifications for

45. Ding Zhipin, *Zhongguo jin qishi nian lai jiaoyu jishi* (Shanghai, 1935), p. 3; Chen Dongyuan, *Zhongguo jiaoyushi*, p. 475.

administration, and thus irrelevant to young children and to the mass of people. It was commonly believed that Western learning could be acquired by a few months spent reading new books. Furthermore, Western studies undertaken too young were a hindrance to the Chinese ones which were still the gauge of gentlemanly status, and might in addition involve the danger of the child's picking up foreign ways. Thus the educational reforms initiated in 1898 had as their base schools which would take boys from twelve up; elementary schooling was still not conceived of as a matter for the state.

This is not to say that there was no interest in how the child learnt to read or write. The principle that *xian ru wei zhu* (先入为主) - what is learnt first is dominant - had directed the attention of generations of scholars to early childhood education.⁴⁶ Like opposition to the eight-legged essay, criticism of meaningless rote learning had long been a counterpoint to the prevailing practice. The Qing educator Wang Yun (1784-1854) wrote 'Pupils are human being, not pigs or dogs; if what they read is not explained, it is like reciting the Buddhist scriptures or chewing wood-shavings'.⁴⁷ He also criticized the use of corporal punishment as a spur to diligence, recommending instead that the pupil's interest be aroused and that he be led according to his mental development.⁴⁸

Such views, originally confined to the unusually enlightened or indulgent, combined around the turn of the century with Western views on child development to produce a gradual change in attitudes to mental and physical discipline. The new attitude among educators was a compound stemming partly from a sense of national priorities, partly from ideals of the kind Wang Yun expresses. Such men believed that Children should not start studying too early or be supervised too strictly. When they were slightly older, and their minds more receptive, the

46. For a discussion of the views of Qing educators on this subject, see C.P. Ridley, 'Theories of Education in the Ch'ing period', in *Ch'ing-shih Wen-t'i* III : 8 (1977), 34-49.

47. Wang Yun, 'Jiao tongzi fa', in Shu Xincheng (ed.), *Ziliao*, Vol. I, p. 94.

48. *Ibid.*, pp. 94, 99-100.

teacher should skilfully entice them along the path of their inclinations.⁴⁹ One should note, however, that for the Confucian educator the child's inclinations were a means, not an end; education remained text-centred rather than child-centred.

I discussed in the previous chapter Zheng Guanying's suggestions for an improved curriculum for elementary education. Another to interest himself in the reform of elementary education was Wu Rulun, head of the famous Lianchi Academy in Zhili and subsequently Dean of Studies (*Zong jiaoxi* 总教) at Peking University. Wu was familiar with foreign educational practice from his reading (which included Zheng's *Shengshi weiyuan*, specialized works on foreign schools, and the press) - and from conversations with Japanese authorities. A plan he drew up in 1901 combined elements of Western education, such as the teaching of arithmetic and the distribution of approved texts to schools, with proposals made by Wang Yun and reinforced by Western example - teaching reading through simple classical poetry and character recognition through familiar objects and concepts. The words he suggests for the latter show how deeply engrained was the concept of education as training in ethics and statecraft: after words like 'sun', 'moon', 'father', 'mother', and 'teacher' come 'filial piety', 'loyalty', and 'good faith', followed by 'peace' and 'danger', 'good order' and 'disturbance', 'change', 'promote' and 'retrieve', all before the child has learnt to read a single sentence.⁵⁰

Parallel with the movement for reform on traditional lines was one which attempted to introduce Western subject divisions and knowledge of the West at the elementary stage. Wang Kangnian, a colleague of Liang Qichao's on the *Shiwu bao*, founded a public association for elementary studies in Shanghai in 1897. The association put out an illustrated paper for children containing lessons in English, Japanese, and Chinese, Western and Chinese history and geography, arithmetic, morals, and science. No field was too remote; articles were printed on the races of Europe,

49. For an example of this attitude, see Li Ji, *Gan jiulu*, p. 4.

50. Wu Rulun, *Tongcheng Wu xiansheng riji*, Jiaoyu, 10b.

geology and early Chinese dynasties.⁵¹ The pedagogic utility of this magazine is uncertain, but it is significant as one of the first attempts within China to divide the child's world from the adult by writing specially for him.

Few elementary schools were opened on the Western model during the first period of reform. Even after their setting up was decreed in 1901 and regularized in 1904, the young child's contact with Western knowledge was most likely to come within the familiar framework of the *sishu*, or to be precise, the family school - new ideas were slow to percolate down to the village school. Many writers recall their early lessons as being a mixture of old and new. Chen Guofu was taught rhymes about astronomy and geography (which 'left absolutely no impression' on him) in Zhejiang in 1899.⁵² Such jingles fitted easily into the existing curriculum, alongside or replacing time-honoured primers of general knowledge such as the *Three Character Classic*. The young Xiao Gongquan was nourished by a heterogeneous selection of ancient and modern texts: in 1902, he was studying a historical reader composed by a deceased ancestor, a manual for writing couplets and a selection of classical poetry (both common *sishu* texts), and the modern 'Song of the Globe'.⁵³ The mysterious syllables of the latter, with its recitation of unknown continents, were impressed on the infant minds of many of Xiao's generation. Ba Jin recalls that he and his sisters found the new verses as incomprehensible as the old.⁵⁴

The replacement of the eight-legged essay by the topical dissertation necessitated alterations in the curriculum of those *sishu* which prepared their pupils for the examinations. These alterations varied from the re-shuffling of traditional elements, such as the teaching of the Five Classics

51. See *Mengxue bao*, X (1898), 'Wulei shi', 'Zhongshi lidai shilei ge', and 'Yudi qimeng'.

52. Wu Xiangxiang, *Chen Guofu de yisheng (fu: Chen Guofu huiyilu)*, (Taipei, 1971), p. 40.

53. Xiao Gongchuan, *Wen xue jian wang lu*, pp. 15-16.

54. Ba Jin, *Zizhuan* (Hong Kong, 1956), p. 42.

before the Four Books (from which the eight-legged essay questions had been taken);⁵⁵ through reading collections of topical dissertations as models and studying Chinese history,⁵⁶ to utilization of such technological advances as the newspaper. One teacher even set his student to composing newspaper items for publication.⁵⁷

The most whole-hearted espousal of Western methods was that of the family school started by Yan Xiu in Tianjin. In 1898, he hired a young graduate of the Beiyang Naval School to give lessons in English, mathematics, science, and games to give boys from his family, who were subsequently joined by ten from outside.⁵⁸ This was the seed of the famous Nankai Middle school, Zhou Enlai's *alma mater*; it was later expanded and formed a university which still flourishes today.

One writer who spent his boyhood in Shanghai successively attended three *sishu* ranging from enlightened to ultra-conservative. The first, in 1902, used a modern language primer and taught grammar as well as recitation of the classics. The second, in 1904, 'was more conservative and used antiquated texts', but at least taught the author to compose topical dissertations. The last of the three he characterizes as taught by 'a reactionary old pedant who believed that Western learning was heresy'.⁵⁹ This writer's progress backward through different stages of the educational reforms of the late Qing is a salutary reminder of their fragmentation and disunity.

Many writers on educational reform in the late Qing speak as though the period from 1902 to 1911 saw the end of all traditional education.⁶⁰ In

55. See Chen Bulei, *Chen Bulei huiyilu*, p. 4.

56. See Li Shuhua, 'Cong sishu dao xuetang', in *Zhuanji wenxue*, XVII : 2 (1970), 61.

57. Wu Xiangxiang, *Chen Guofu de yisheng*, p. 41. See also Li Gufan, 'Tan wang lu', pp. 22-23, in his *Yunlu wushu* (Hong Kong, 1963).

58. Wang Wentian, *Zhang Boling yu Nankai*, p. 5.

59. Li Gufan, 'Tan wang lu', pp. 22-23.

60. For example, Chen Qitian writes 'in this period, the old education was completely overthrown'. (Chen Qitian, *Zuijin sanshinian Zhongguo jiaoyushi*, p. 29).

fact, during the last years of the dynasty and probably for at least a decade later the majority of those receiving any schooling acquired it in *sishu*. Under a superimposed structure of modern schools and a thin layer of reformed *sishu*, the old *sishu* continued in their wonted style, little affected by government decrees or the theories of educationalists.

One of the reasons for their continued predominance was the relatively small number and limited distribution of the new schools. For 1909, the last year of the dynasty for which statistics are available, 44,774 lower primary schools are recorded. Nearly half of these are in Zhili and Sichuan; Anhui is listed as having 421, Fujian as having 275.⁶¹ *Sishu* filled the gaps where modern schooling was not available.

Another element in the persistence of *sishu* was the sense that the *sishu* taught Chinese learning and modern schools Western; thus in some areas 'each major family had both a new school and an old-style family school. My own clan at the time [in 1909] had set up the Zizhi School, but we still had four or five family schools. Those who went to Zizhi were the ones whose families were less well-off. As late as 1920-21, when Zijin School was founded, some people still stood out on their own and had their own family schools'.⁶² Many in their fifties today started their schooling in *sishu* or attended them temporarily between modern schools.⁶³ The interpenetration of the two can be seen from the numerous educational administrators and school sponsors who continued to appoint a *sishu* teacher for their own children and from the ease with which teachers and graduates

61. See Taga (ed.), *Shiryō*, p. 103.

62. Yu Jiaju, *Huiyilu*, p. 21.

63. Personal communications from Liu Ts'un-yan, Lo Hui-min, and May Wang of the Australian National University.

from the new schools turned to *sishu* teaching as a career.⁶⁴

In addition to those with a foot in both camps were many who wanted nothing to do with the new schools. Those in humble circumstances simply wanted their sons to have a bit of culture and good behaviour knocked into them; there was a feeling that the new schools were 'not for the likes of us' but only for those of high social position. (This at least was the excuse proffered to anxious educationalists for non-attendance). Others felt that the abolition of the examinations was temporary, and that the classical education given by the *sishu* was a better preparation for their return than the fancy subjects of the new schools. Both the poor and the conservative found the *sishu* 'convenient'.⁶⁵ It taught decent, familiar subjects, not games or singing (the latter had a disreputable association with singing girls), and had a flexible schedule, easily bent to community or individual needs. Uniforms or even good clothes were unnecessary.⁶⁶ These virtues were particularly appreciated in the countryside, where the way of life was less exposed to foreign influences.

A further cause for rural reluctance to attend the new schools may have been the attitude taken to country people of those associated with the new education. From Liang Qichao's witticism in 1896, that having

64. Zhuang Yu, 'Lun xiaoxue jiaoyu', *Jiaoyu zazhi*, I : 2 (1909), Sheshuo, 23 [00113]. Liao T'ai-ch'u noted the same phenomenon in Shandong nearly thirty years later: '...18 *sishu* teachers out of the total of 198 ... had at one point in their career been government school teachers and even principals.' (Liao, 'Rural Education in transition', p. 36.) The figures for the national survey made in 1935 show that out of 101,813 *sishu* teachers, over 8% had had teacher training in a normal school or course, and another 22% had attended a modern school at the primary or middle school level (*Jiaoyu zazhi*, XXVI : 12 [1936], 137).

65. See Zhuang Yu, 'Lun xiaoxue jiaoyu', p. 23 [00113].

66. See Liao T'ai-ch'u, 'Rural Education in Transition', pp. 46-47, Tang Lei, 'Xiangcun xiaoxuexiao zhi kunnan ji qi bujiufa', *Jiaoyu yanjiu*, V (1913), p. 4. Though both these articles were written in the Republican period, the points they make appear applicable in the late Qing.

talked to the stupid, mean, ignorant *sishu* teachers of his home district, he knew why country people stayed country people to the end of their lives,⁶⁷ to the comment of an educationalist in 1913 that 'country people don't know much; one can't talk about educational principles with them, and yet they manage to obstruct the progress of education in a variety of ways',⁶⁸ educators conceived of themselves as bringers of light to the benighted. This attitude was not new among Confucian reformers, but had not previously had occasion to impinge on the reciprocal relations of the villager and their schools.

The *sishu* held on in the town as well as in the countryside, assisted by the prejudice that associated the new school with foreign and therefore undesirable ways. In Yangzhou in 1909, for example, parents who feared that their children were picking up foreign habits took them out of the new schools and sent them back to *sishu*. In the ensuing resurgence, fifty new *sishu* are said to have opened.⁶⁹

Although no educationalist saw positive virtue in the *sishu*, a few admitted them a possible role in the present imperfect state of Chinese education as supplements to the new schools. A movement for the reform of *sishu*, beginning in Jiangsu in 1904, spread to other parts of China and was taken up by the central government in 1910.

The founders of the Society for the Improvement of *Sishu*, the initiators of the movement, regarded the native practices of the *sishu* as 'dark and base', but were prepared to cut the new schools from old cloth. They limited their compromises to the organization of *sishu*, which could continue to have small classes and only one teacher. Of its curriculum, they demanded unrealistically high standards. A reformed *sishu* had to include ethics (taught with the classics), Chinese (under which came geography, history, science, and writing), mathematics, and sport, with drawing and music as options. Other desiderata were school textbooks, maps,

67. Liang Qichao, 'Lun xuexiao: youxue', in *Shiwu bao*, XVI (1896), [1033].

68. Tang Lei, 'Xiangcun xiaoxuexiao zhi kunnan ji qi bujiufa', p. 6.

69. *Jiaoyu zazhi*, I : 2 (1909), Jishi, 10 [00132].

blackboard, and chalk, to be furnished by well-wishers, and the pursuit of a graded sequence of study fixed by the Society.⁷⁰ If strictly adhered to, these criteria would have means that very few *sishu* qualified as improved.

Interest in the reform of *sishu* spread from private bodies to public ones. In 1906, Duan Fang, then governor-general of Liang-jiang, ordered the provincial education officials under his jurisdiction to see that branches of the Society were set up.⁷¹ When county-level educational officers were appointed in all provinces in 1906, the encouragement of *sishu* teachers capable of reform was among their duties.⁷² The *sishu*, which had been characterized for centuries by its distance from officialdom, began to feel the weight of bureaucratic dictates. In Peking, the city's educational authorities launched an elaborate programme for the conversion of *sishu* teachers through registration, training, examinations (for the pupils), and prizes: this claimed a success rate of slightly under a quarter of registered *sishu* (102 out of 481) by the end of 1908, but it is possible that many *sishu* teachers avoided detection.⁷³

The national government, harassed by calls to prepare for constitutional government, turned its attention to the *sishu* for the first time in history in 1910. The regulations issued that year were based on the programme for the improvement of *sishu* conducted in Peking and on another carried out in Henan. They demanded slightly lower standards of reformed *sishu* in that physical education was not compulsory, and timetable and length of course could be decided by the teacher. Emphasis was laid on using texts approved by the Ministry of Education, and on understanding rather than rote learning. The preamble to the regulations explained that the *sishu* was the product of the family system (*jiazu zhuyi* 家族主义), the new public schools the product of the system of military citizenship (*junguomin zhuyi* 军国主义). China was about to follow the world's

70. 'Sishu Gailiang Hui zhangcheng', in Shu (ed.), *Shiliao*, Vol. II, pp. 149-56.

71. *Ibid.*, p.150. Duan Fang, progressive Manchu official killed by his own

72. Taga (ed.), *Shiryō*, p. 424.

troops in 1911.

73. *Xuebu guanbao*, LXLII (1909), Jingwai xuexu baogao, 17.

advanced nations into the latter, but for the present limited resources meant that public schools would have to be complemented by the old private ones.⁷⁴

A corollary to the attempt to reform *sishu* was the attempt to close down those which did not reform. Registration, certification, and inspection were thrust upon the *sishu* in an attempt to weed out the bad from the good. In one county in Shandong, as early as 1904, the local magistrate planned to institute an examination of the county's two thousand odd *sishu* teachers to prevent the ignorant ones from teaching.⁷⁵ A similar but even more draconian examination was scheduled in Jiangsu. Young and capable *sishu* teachers were to be sent to teach in government schools after a period of training; the elderly and ignorant would be 'provided for' in unspecified ways. Henceforth no *sishu* teachers were permitted to set up their own schools or accept appointments.⁷⁶ These methods were open to abuse; a memorial of 1909 objected that opportunistic officials increased their own incomes by fining heavily families who appointed *sishu* teachers.⁷⁷ The supposedly impartial procedures involved in bureaucratic regulation were easily corrupted when implemented locally.

By 1912, under the Republican Ministry of Education, Anhui, Hunan, Guizhou, and Peking had all committed themselves to closing down *sishu* which did not conform to their standards for improvement. An article written in 1914 describes the progress and tactics of the campaign in Peking the previous year: attempted investigation (frustrated by the fact that *sishu* were on holiday for New Year), followed by compulsory registration (evaded by *sishu* which said they had closed when they had not), and retraining for *sishu* teachers (who declined to attend). The anti-climatic result of all this activity was the shutting down of several *sishu* whose pupils, to the surprise of the educationalists in charge, were unable to find places in

74. Taga (ed.), *Shiryō*, p. 663.

75. *Dongfang zazhi*, I : 7 (1904), Jiaoyu, 169 [1665].

76. *Ibid.*, I : 2 (1904), Jiaoyu, 43 [462].

77. Taga (ed.), *Shiryō*, p. 663. See also *Xuebu guanbao*, I (1906), Wenchu, 14a, prohibiting illegal taxes on *sishu*.

the new schools as these were already full. New schools, taught by unauthorized, self-appointed teachers - ex-*sishu* teachers? - sprang up to take advantage of the situation.⁷⁸ In rural areas, the prohibition was a dead letter. Liao T'ai-ch'u describes with relish the flourishing of 'underground' *sishu* in rural areas of Shandong.⁷⁹

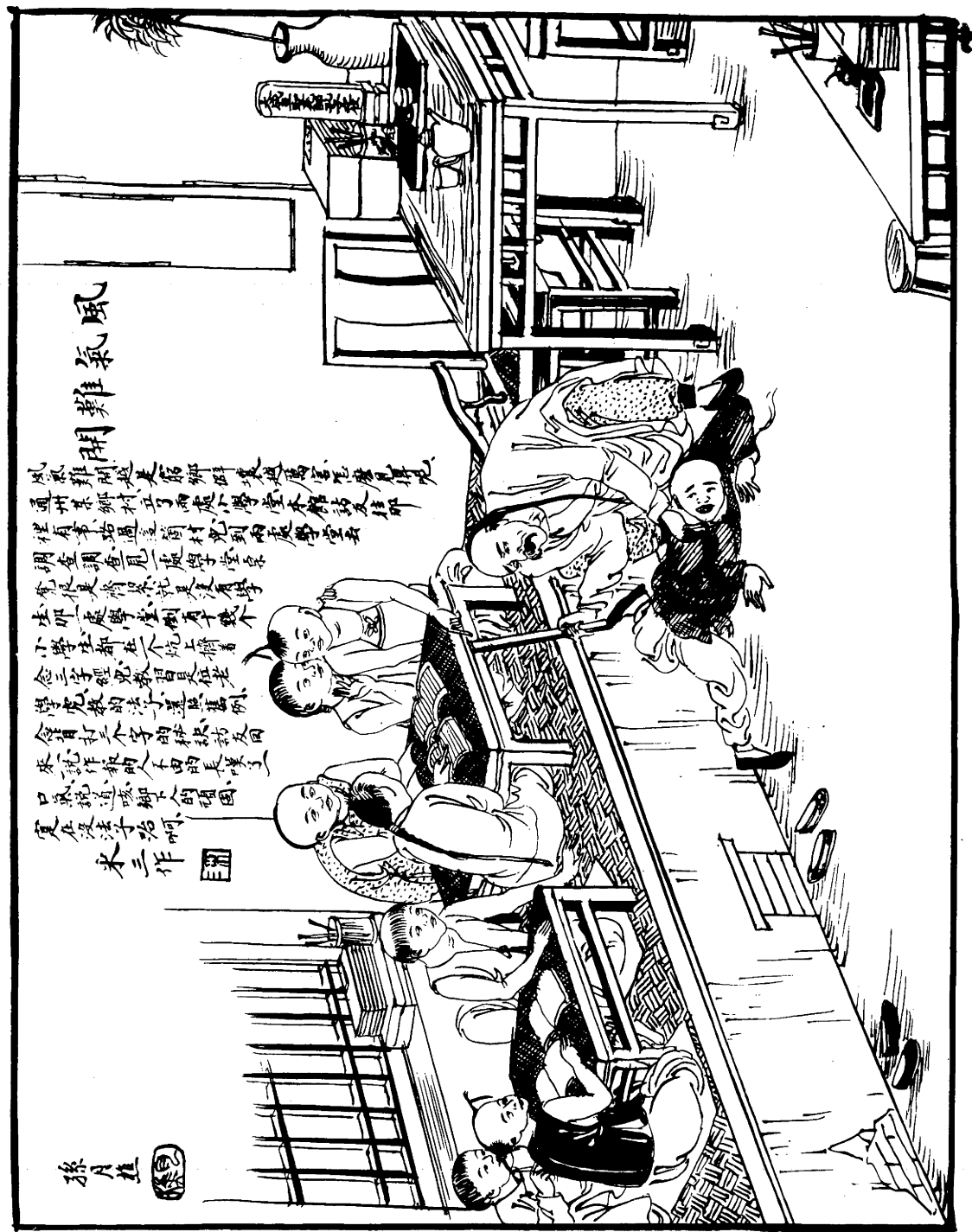
Where *sishu* came above ground and changed their names to conform with the law, the resultant primary school was rarely distinguishable from its *sishu* predecessor. An investigation of government schools in eastern Shandong in 1927 found that in the typical school the teacher was an old man with no modern training, who taught classical texts through rote learning as in *sishu*. The schools did not keep regular hours, nor did they have the material appurtenances of a modern school: lavatories, playgrounds, lighting.⁸⁰

The period of experimentation in Chinese education, when it seemed possible to marry Chinese reforms with Western innovations, was a brief one, cut short by the wholesale adoption of Japanese prescriptions in 1904-1905. The tension between native and foreign, *tu* (土) and *yang* (洋), was thus sidestepped rather than resolved. Shifting identification of and ambiguous attitudes towards the two continue to characterize educational debate in China under the People's Republic. For decades, indigenous practices flourished alongside imported ones: illegally, where banned *sishu* continued underground; illegitimately, where schools nominally new were conducted with *sishu* or academy organization and methods; tacitly accepted, where students ignored technical studies to pursue abstract statecraft, or looked on schooling as the stepping-stone to a government job.

78. 'Quanxue jishi: jingshi zhengli *sishu* shimo', in *Jingshi jiaoyu yanjiu*, I (1914), 1-12.

79. Liao T'ai-ch'u, 'Rural Education in Transition', p. 22.

80. H.F. Smith, *Elementary Education in Shandong*, cited in David D. Buck, 'Educational Modernization in Tsinan, 1899-1937' in Mark Elvin and G. William Skinner (ed.), *The Chinese City Between Two Worlds* (Stanford, 1974), p. 196.



風氣難開

風氣難開是窮鄉僻壤越屬官能廢見傳死
 通州東鄉村立了兩處小學堂本館訪友往叩
 從有書站通達簡村兒到兩處學堂云
 調查調查見一處學堂堂
 會後更齊集就是沒有傳字
 法即處學堂剛有半數不
 小學生都五個炕上擱着
 念三字經兒教習是狂老
 學虎教的法子還甚舊例
 會頭打不字的秘訣訪友向
 來說作報助今日的長嘆之
 口氣就這叫上的開國
 實在沒法子治呵

米三作

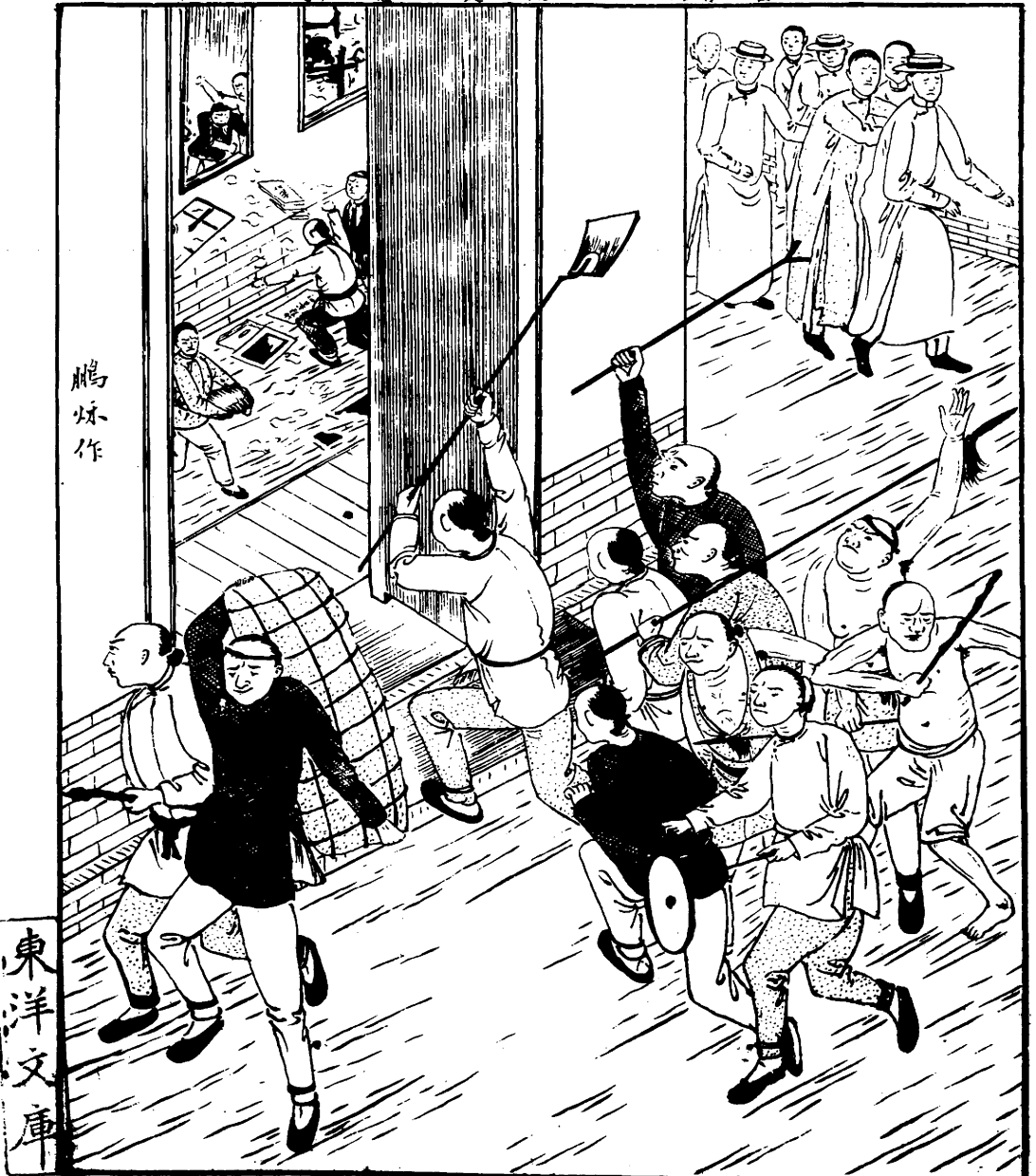
孫月畫



Plate I An artist's view of harsh discipline in a sishu.

鄉民毀學

江蘇通州南鄉。閏川漲地方。七月十六日。本地鄉民。借著青苗會。燒香為名。鳴鑼聚眾。到附近小學校。裏把校內的裝修傢俬。完碎。砸爛。並司事教習。今年的衣箱。全偷走了。帶的書箱。都仍在河裏。又聞某教習家內。折房數間。搶去許多家物。臨去。聲稱連要拆毀別座學堂。通州州尊。與公。聞信。次日親往查驗。派山鎮總兵李守。率帶小隊去彈壓。不知以後如何辦法。嗚呼。中國糊塗人太多。再加上借端生事的。從中起鬧。前途辦學堂。的阻力實在不小呀。



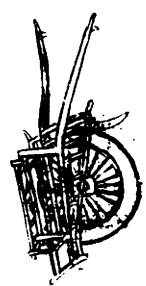
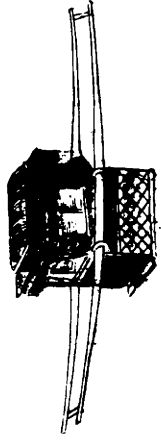


鵬煥作

東洋文庫

光緒二十八年八月

第一號

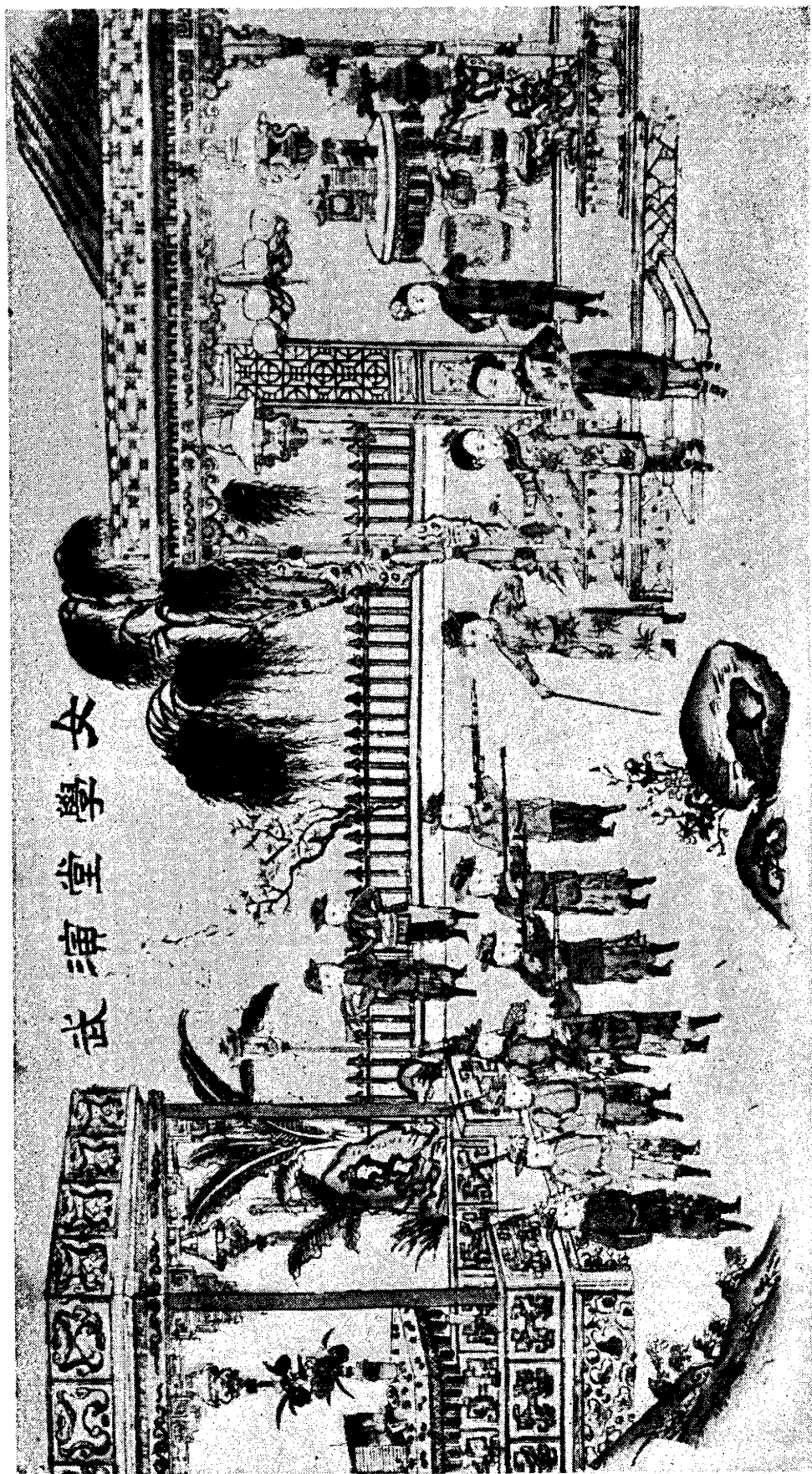
Plate II Peasants ransack a school.

	<h1>車</h1>	<p>馬車、小車、東洋車、三 種了。</p> <p>做車、拉著走、又有用 力做小車、又有用脚打 戰、和做載貨走平地古 時候、載貨走平地的古 車、子、是、載、人、和、貨、</p>	<p>文 話</p> <p>車、乃、載、人、貨、以、行、 路、者、有、輪、載、貨、之、 車、古、謂、大、車、兵、車、 乘、車、古、謂、小、車、又、 有、人、力、挽、行、之、車、 古、謂、之、輿、近、則、以、 馬、駕、人、分、為、車、名、 之、大、小、矣、</p>	<h1>車</h1> <p>Car</p>
	<h1>轎</h1>	<p>轎、子、在、古、時、是、 出、山、過、嶺、用、的、山、路、 便、於、人、乘、坐、用、的、 了、現、在、南、方、各、處、 出、門、多、用、轎、子、 用、四、人、抬、轎、子、 尋、常、兩、人、抬、轎、子、 乘、輿、</p>	<p>文 話</p> <p>轎、乃、過、山、嶺、時、各、 車、馬、乘、人、用、者、今、 則、以、為、南、方、官、府、 輿、從、之、用、矣、謂、之、 肩、輿、</p>	<h1>轎</h1> <p>Van</p>
	<h1>擔</h1>	<p>擔、有、兩、種、前、邊、成、 扁、形、一、人、用、的、後、各、 扁、擔、是、挑、箱、籠、鋪、 蓋、器、件、用、的、有、用、 竹、做、的、有、用、木、做、 的、又、一、種、取、竹、木、 全、身、材、料、兩、人、抬、 着、走、的、叫、做、槓、子、</p>	<p>文 話</p> <p>擔、以、竹、木、為、之、人、 任、以、背、載、物、行、者、 有、二、種、一、人、擔、之、 行、者、曰、扁、擔、二、人、 用、全、材、擔、之、者、曰、 槓、子、</p>	<h1>擔</h1> <p>Cooliepole</p>
	<h1>鈎</h1>	<p>鈎、子、是、掛、東、西、 用、的、有、銅、打、成、 的、也、有、用、鐵、打、 成、的、</p>	<p>文 話</p> <p>鈎、以、銅、或、鐵、為、 之、其、端、上、曲、以、 懸、物、者、</p>	<h1>鈎</h1> <p>Hook</p>

器用類識字法

第十一册

Plate III An early English lesson from a Shanghai children's paper.



女學堂演武

武演堂學女

Plate IV An artist's vision of the union of military education with women's education.

Plate V. A cartoonist's comment on the value of new qualifications.

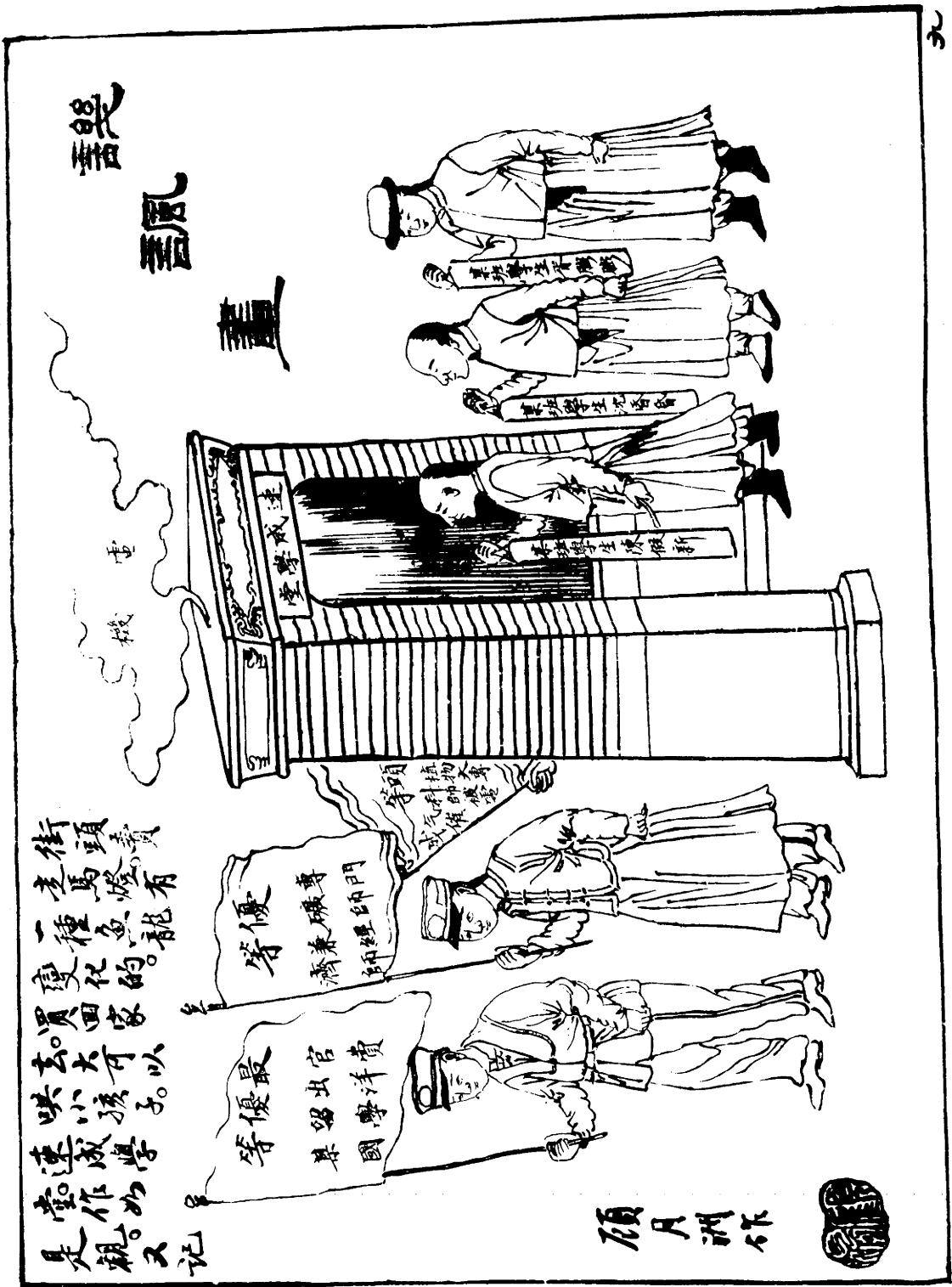
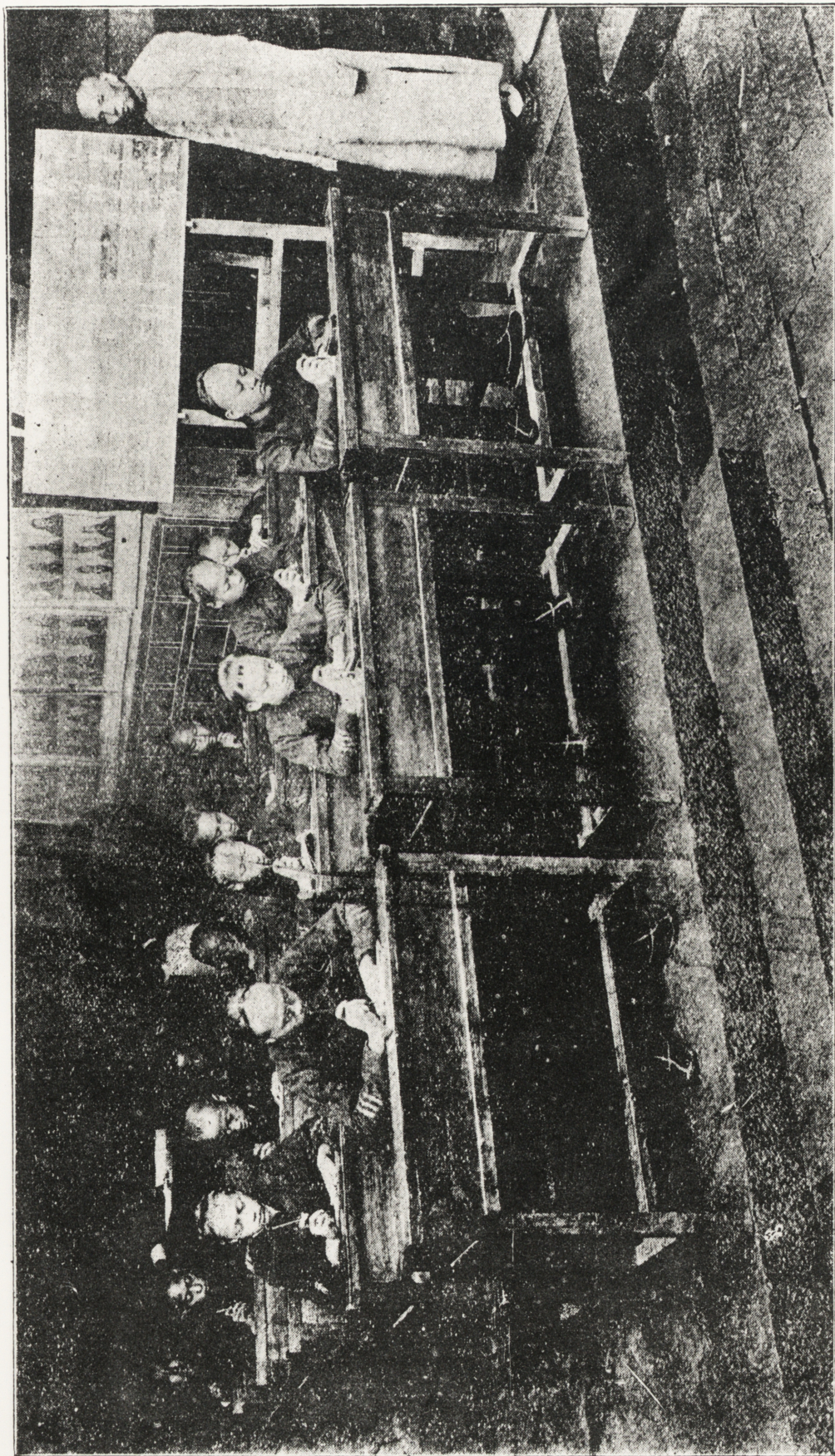


Plate VI A model classroom of the new type.



影 撮 驗 試 業 畢 部 甲 學 小 等 兩 陽 霞 潭 閩

Plate VII A primary school choir at an exhibition organized by the Ministry of Education.

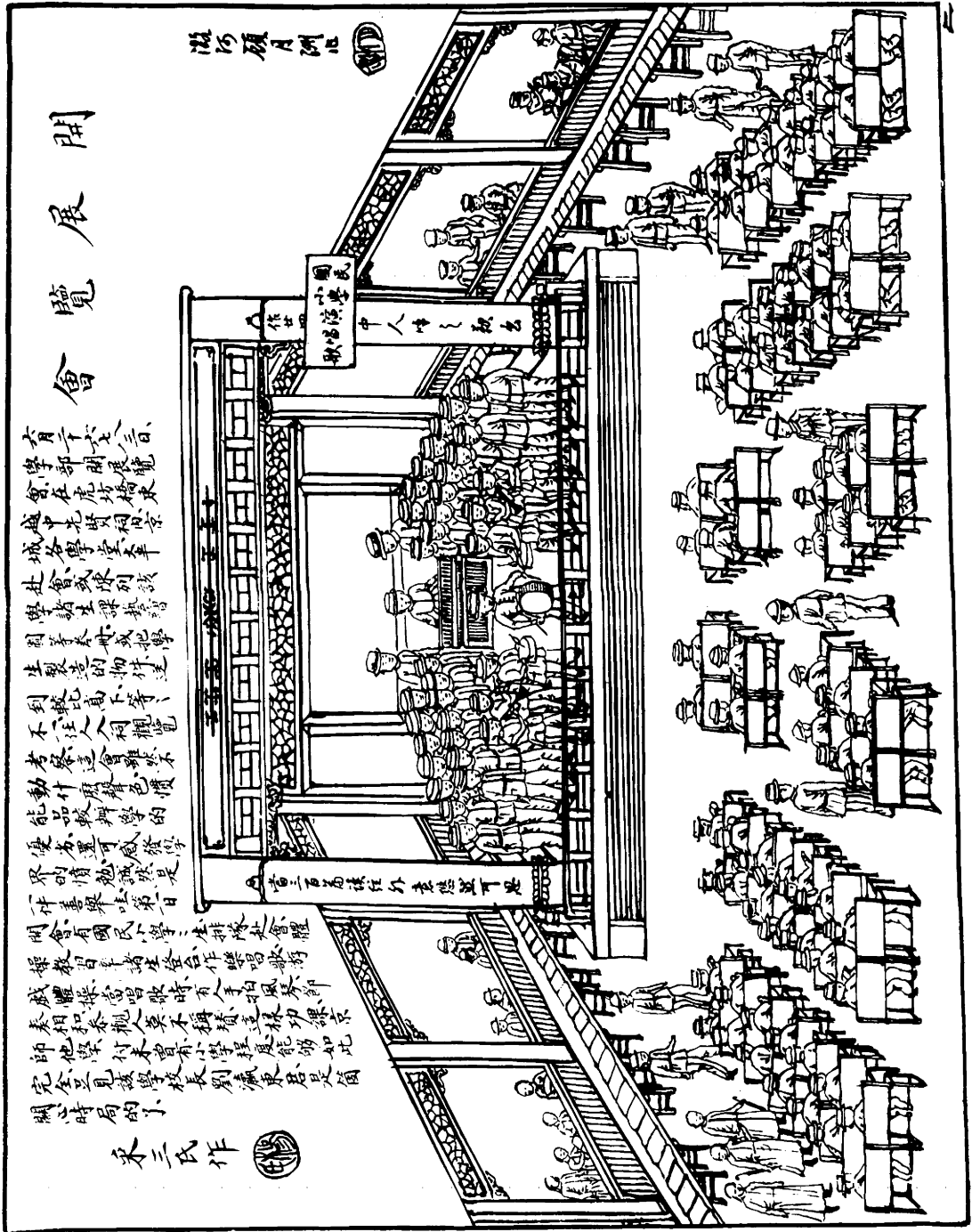


Plate VIII Girl students combine piety with learning at a Peking school.



五月十五日
北京錦繡巷
慧仙女工
學校開學
迎皇太后
恩賜
書匾額
中堂是男女
來賓甚盛
理員接待周
到學校規模
經整齊潔誠
裕如君名演
講女界的平
等自
由
國
有
女
生
道
德
的
人
沒
有
不
起
敬
的
女
子
可
稱
二
難
得
現
在
中
國
女
教
的
發
達
當
從
慧
仙
女
工
學
校
起
點
君
願
諸
君
下
頁
第
三
頁

月州作五

Plate X A victorious football team from Shanghai's Higher Industrial School (formerly Nanyang Gongxue).



影 撮 校 他 勝 競 生 學 部 球 足 堂 學 業 實 等 高 海 上

CHAPTER FIVE

The Role of the State in the New School System

The Japanese model - powers and priorities of the central government - administrative innovations - resources for reform - limitations of central control

The role of the central government in traditional China, as I outlined it in the first chapter, was that of an arbiter - a judge, a setter of standards, holder of the balance between conflicting regional or local interests. The examination system was one expression of this concept of central power, for which ideological control was primary, administrative secondary, and direct fiscal control relatively unimportant. When defeat by foreign powers made this view untenable, Qing statesmen sought in the constitution of the victor a clue to his success. From Germany and Japan, they derived an understanding of the centre as initiator, as activator, with powers of compulsion and regulation hitherto unknown and yet gladly accepted by the ruled as representing their own best interests. Men such as Zhang Zhidong saw in this type of government an unprecedented opportunity for the realization of ideological control. They were slower to grasp the need for a new type of administration to carry it out, and almost oblivious to the need for a new fiscal structure to support the administration; that is, their perception of Western state structure was filtered through their own dominant preoccupations. This was to prove a severe weakness in their attempt to implement foreign institutions in China.

Among the institutions singled out as responsible for the achievements of Germany and Japan was the educational system of the two nations. A parallel situation to China's was seen in that both mentors had been spurred to great efforts in the field of education following defeat or threatened defeat in the field of battle. Prussia's victory over France, her former conqueror, attracted much retrospective attention, and the statement that she owed victory to her primary school system was often quoted. Wang Tao's work on the Franco-Prussian War records the educational reforms that preceded Prussia's regeneration.¹ Japan's rise provided an even more apposite example of a country with an antiquated social system, '[haunted by] the fear of possible encroachment by Western powers who were already protected by the unequal treaty of 1858'² which had been able to

1. Wang Tao, *Pu-Fa zhanji* (Hong Kong, 1886), 1 : 11a-b.

2. Nishihira, 'Western Influences on the Modernization of Japanese Education', p. 9.

transform itself into a powerful industrialized state. Connecting Japan's victories to her educational system, the Chinese deduced that the former had arisen from the latter. Scholars had always believed that their country's greatest wealth lay in educated men. The reformers now went a step further; from being father and mother to the people, the educated were to become begetters of factories and modern armies. In modelling the Chinese education system on that of Japan, China hoped to duplicate her achievements.

The belief that China's best policy was to copy Japan rested on two dubious assumptions. The first was that Japan owed her rise to her education system. On this point, Herbert Passin has reminded us that 'it is... necessary to avoid the *post hoc, ergo propter hoc* fallacy: Because Japan succeeded in establishing universal education quickly, *therefore* she quickly achieved self-sustaining economic growth... Economic growth might very well have been achieved without a successful system of compulsory modern education - through the talents and enterprise of entrepreneurial elements, the general skill level of the population carried over from pre-modern times, and many other factors'.³

The moral is pointed by observation of British experience. The first nation to industrialize had in the nineteenth century an education system similar to that of China at the same period: a 'combination of restriction to a wealthy elite of access to the higher educational process, of a classical, formalistic, literary, moralistic curriculum, and of competitive entry into the bureaucracy by examination in familiarity with this body of literature'.⁴ Chinese reformers, trying to reduce the rigidity of their own classical education, were not attracted to the British model; they were aware that British education lagged behind German. They do not, however, appear to have considered the implications of Britain's commercial

3. Passin, *Society and Education in Japan*, p. 9.

4. Marius B. Jansen and Lawrence Stone, 'Education and Modernization in Japan and England', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, IX (1966-67), 225.

and colonial empire: that education, while not irrelevant to the pursuit of wealth and power, is not the most important and certainly not the only necessary condition.

The second dubious assumption was that what had worked in Japan would work in China. This can be discussed independently of the possible results of successful mimicry.

In 1898, Zhang Zhidong had given four reasons for sending students to Japan to study rather than to Europe: savings in fares, ease of supervision, similarity of script, and the fact that the Japanese had already garnered the best from Western writings. He concluded that in Japan, 'circumstances and customs are close to ours and we can copy her easily'.⁵ Zhang's choice of Japanese model was based in part on her rapid rise to military and industrial strength rivalling that of Western nations, in part on his admiration for the conservatism of late Meiji Japan, the emphasis, especially in elementary education, on patriotism and loyalty, the preservation of the 'five constants' of Confucianism - relations between subject and ruler, parent and child, elder and younger brother, wife and husband, friend and friend - in the 1890 Imperial Rescript on Education. It seems unlikely that he would have chosen the Japanese system as a model had it continued along the liberal, American-influence path of the 1870's, with its devolution of educational responsibility to the local level. The decade of the 'culmination of conservatism in Japanese education'⁶ (1890-1900) saw a high degree of administrative and ideological control by the centre, although most funding continued to be local. Zhang hoped in transferring the Japanese system to China to strengthen the nation both morally, through reaffirmation of Confucian values, and physically, through creating conditions for a modern army and industry. Yet the school system he designed to strengthen the centre at the same time assumed its strength, its ability to promulgate laws which would be heeded. It assumed a non-

5. Zhang Zhidong, 'Quanxue pian', 203 : 7a [3727].

6. Nishihira, 'Western Influences on the Modernization of Japanese Education', p. 423.

existent parallelism with Japanese experience. In reality, the symbolic value of the ruler, the responsiveness of the elite, and the powers of the centre differed fundamentally in the two countries.

The Japanese emperor, symbol of the nation's unity, came to power with his hands clean, heading a government of men who had resisted foreign aggression and overthrown the signatories of the unequal treaty of 1858. In China, the court had for decades yielded one concession after another to foreigners, culminating in an ignominious retreat from the capital before foreign armies in 1901. With the exception of the revolt of Saigo Takamori in 1877, no great division had riven the Japanese elite, whereas many would-be modernizers in China had bitter memories of the execution of the 'six Martyrs' in 1898. (Although comparatively few scholars and officials were involved in Liang Qichao's attempted take-over of power, his *Xinmin congbao*, published in exile, was almost compulsory reading among those interested in the West. Whatever the historical merits of his picture of the rift between the Empress Dowager and the Guangxu Emperor, it obtained wide circulation. Attempts by Chinese officials to identify the interests of the dynasty with those of the nation were vitiated by Manchu distrust of the Chinese and unwillingness to make concessions.

In Japan, the elite could be said to have inhabited a common world of discourse, despite the variety of their politics and beliefs - and, with the centralization of government, they often inhabited common territory in the literal sense of all being resident in Tokyo. This was not the case in China. Her size, - more than twenty times that of Japan - poor communications, and the devolution of power to regional leaders (of whom Zhang Zhidong was one) meant that the elite did not respond as a whole to the national crisis. Through most of the nineteenth century, the threat posed by the West had caused dissension rather than unity, being perceived differently or not at all in different parts of the country, by different levels of society, and by different groups within the government. Even the Japanese victory over China in 1894 was the subject of confused reports: popular ballads had it that China was the victor, and

the enemy fleet almost totally annihilated.⁷ In 1896, the Zongli Yamen had circulated a memorial calling on officials in the coastal provinces and the Yangzi Basin to establish modern schools, while allowing those in the interior provinces to use their discretion; response by the former was considered both more urgent and more likely.⁸ The rise in numbers and circulation of newspapers and journals in the last decade of the Qing provided a common source of information to those who subscribed to them, but they were not equally accessible to all: the *Dongfang Zazhi*, for example, in 1907 had 49 outlets in twenty cities and towns in Jiangsu, but in Henan, Jilin, Shanxi, Shaanxi, Gansu, Yunnan, Guizhou, and Guangxi it was on sale only in the provincial capitals.⁹

The powers possessed by the Meiji government in Japan were in China to a large extent delegated to regional and provincial leaders. Men like Zhang Zhidong derived their authority from the central government, but had almost total discretion in the way they wielded it. The court played a balancing game, playing off against each other court factions and provincial officials, reformers and conservatives. It took the allied armies' entrance into Peking to tip the balance in favour of reform. The new school system, decreed in 1901 and given its first regulations in 1902, grew from provincial consultation and advice. The process of its formation illustrates the interplay of bureaucratic procedure with personal, racial, and local interests.¹⁰

The court's first action on its return to the capital was to circularize high metropolitan and regional officials for their proposals for reform. Memorials on educational reform were sent up by Tao Mo, Governor-General of

7. See P.J. Maclagan, 'Notes on Some Chinese Chap-books', *China Review* XXIII : 3 (1898-99), 164.

8. See Zongli Yamen, reply to Li Duanfen's memorial on extending schools in Shu (ed.), *Shiliao*, Vol. I, p. 6.

9. *Dongfang zazhi*, IV : 3 (1907), inside front cover.

10. My summary of the reforms leading to the 1904 regulations is based on Chen Baoquan, *Zhongguo jindai xuezhi bianqian shi* (Peking, 1927), pp. 13-48, Franke, *The Reform and Abolition of the Traditional Chinese Examination System*, pp. 48-67, and *Qing shi gao* (Taipei, 1961 [1927]), p. 1298.

Guangdong and Guangxi, Yuan Shikai, Governor of Shandong, and jointly from Zhang Zhidong, Governor-General of Hunan and Hubei, and Liu Kunyi, Governor-General of Jiangsu, Anhui, and Jiangxi. In accordance with their suggestions, the court ordered in August 1901 that the eight-legged essay, the bane of reformers, be replaced by dissertations on current affairs, and in September that a three-tiered school system based on the conversion of academies be set up. Both measures were simply a repetition of those enacted but not carried out in the Hundred Days Reform of 1898.

Regulations for the new schools were to be made by the newly established Bureau of Government Affairs in conjunction with the Board of Rites (still at that time in charge of educational affairs) and regional leaders. Yuan was the only one of the latter to respond, with limited proposals which in their first stage amounted only to an expansion of the curriculum of provincial-level academies to include Western subjects and the provision within them of training at different levels. His proposals, though moderate, afforded conservatives a pretext for attack.

Yuan's regulations, essentially no more than a modest supplement to the examination system, were replaced less than a year after their promulgation by those drawn up by the Official in Charge of Education (*Guanxue dachen* 管学大臣), Zhang Boxi. He replaced Sun Jianai, whose duties had been light since the school system planned in 1898 had been countermanded a few months later and its sole fruit, Peking University, had been destroyed by the Boxers in 1900. Zhang was conscious of the limited power of his office. His report on the university opened pessimistically: 'at present, despite the fact that all provinces, prefectures, circuits and counties have been ordered to set up schools everywhere, up to now few places have reported the opening of schools. Thus there are no suitable entrants for university study at present. It will take time for each province to set up schools, and one cannot say when they will all reach a uniform stage, nor when students will finally graduate in sequence.¹¹ Like Yuan, Zhang became the target of conservative attack, being accused of in-

11. Taga (ed.), *Shiryō*, p. 121.

competence and insincerity. The Manchus were alarmed at Zhang's success in building up a band of talented men, and in particular suspected a connection between rebellious Chinese students in Japan and the visit there of Wu Rulun, dean of the university, who had been appointed by Zhang.¹²

A Mongol bannerman, Rong Qing, was placed alongside Zhang Boxi. The two did not get on well together, producing a deadlock broken only by the arrival in Peking of Zhang Zhidong. Political considerations as much as educational resulted in the setting up of a three-man commission, consisting of Zhang Zhidong, Zhang Boxi, and Rong Qing, to draw up a new set of regulations. The result, nominally a joint work, bore the strong imprint of Zhang Zhidong's ideas.

Zhang was more concerned with ideological than with fiscal or administrative centralization. He hoped to ensure that the school system was a channel for the pure stream of Confucian teachings, unsullied alike by outworn pedantry and modern heresies. Schools had a regulatory function; they were to 'set our course straight'. 'Starting from a boy's entrance into lower primary, his teachers should give him constant guidance during his lessons, enlightening him on the meaning of respect for family members and bringing him into conformity with correct ways. All heresies and biased views should be strictly opposed and reproved.'¹³

It may have been because administrative control was secondary to ideological in the priorities of Zhang Zhidong and his colleagues that the administration of the new school system remained a make-shift anomaly until 1906. The 1904 school system replaced the vague and general duties of the *guanxue dachen*, who had responsibility both for the university and for the school system as a whole, with a *zongli xuewu dachen* (director of education). The latter was charged with 'controlling the educational affairs of the whole country', including 'directing schools in the provinces, formulating a school system, examining school rules, certifying... textbooks, appointing teachers, selecting graduates, co-ordinating school expen-

12. See Gong Shi, 'Beijing Daxue zhi chengli yu yange', in Shu (ed.), *Shiliao*, Vol. III, p. 2.

13. Taga (ed.), *Shiryō*, p. 209.

diture, and all matters connected with education'.¹⁴ This plenitude of tasks was to be handled by six departments, each with a head and several assistants. Among their tasks was that of making tours of inspection and reports on the provinces.

The proposed tours (none were actually undertaken during the brief term of the office's existence) were the only evidence of Zhang's concern with the implementation in practice rather than regulation in theory of the new school system. The central educational office had no direct administrative contact with its provincial equivalent; indeed, the very existence of a provincial equivalent was left to the discretion of each region's governor. In the words of Duan Fang, a critic of this laissez-faire method, 'people could do as they wished on all things'.¹⁵ The only educational official sent out from the centre to the provinces was the old *xuezheng* (学政), or literary chancellor, deputed by the Board of Rites to serve a three year provincial term. His duties mainly concerned the supervision of the examinations.

The abolition of the examination system, announced in 1905, appeared an opportune moment for the rationalization of educational administration. A Manchu memorialist proposed the abolition of the Board of Rites and the establishment of a Ministry of Education like Japan's.¹⁶ The latter part of this proposal was taken up, and the *Xue Bu* - the neologism *jiaoyu* was not used in the Ministry's title till 1912 - came into existence in December 1905. It was headed by Rong Qing, the Mongol bannerman who had assisted in the drafting of the new school system, with the experienced educationalist Yan Xiu as second in command.¹⁷ Luo Zhenyu, who joined the Ministry in its

14. *Ibid.*, p. 224-25.

15. Duan Fang & Dai Hongci, report on education, in Shu (ed.), *Shiliao*, Vol. IV, p. 11.

16. Taga, *Shiryō*, p. 418.

17. Yan Xiu's name appears in connection with almost every educational reform - of academies, of the examination system, in the extension of mass education and the improvement (through Nankai) of elite education, but it is difficult to find detailed information on his life and career.

early days, has left a picture of a rather casual mode of functioning: 'When the Ministry of Education was first established, it had no offices, and conducted its business in a rented dwelling. Few of the personnel who had been transferred had as yet arrived,... at that time the Ministry's regulations had not been drawn up, and there was no division into departments and sections. [Rong Qing] had all members of the Ministry attend each afternoon for discussion.'¹⁸

In May, 1906, the staffing and organization of the Ministry were decreed, the anachronistic office of *xuezheng* (which had outlived by some months the examination system) abolished, and an administrative hierarchy which reached to the county level set up. Provincial education was to be headed by *tixueshi* (提学使) or educational commissioners appointed from the centre. There appears to have been some debate between conservatives and professionally oriented educationalists within the Ministry over these appointments, which ranked second to the lieutenant-governor (*fansi* 藩司) and ahead of the judicial commissioner (*niesi* 臬司). According to Luo Zhenyu, 'Vice-Minister Yan at first suggested that they would have to have an understanding of education, meaning that they should be former school-teachers or administrators. He had already transferred a number of Tianjin primary school headmasters and teachers to the Ministry. I raised the point that since the position of commissioner of education was a very distinguished one, at the same level as the lieutenant-governor, someone of commensurate standing should be chosen... the only thing to do is to appoint them as the former *xuezheng* were appointed, from the Hanlin Academy.' Yan disagreed, but Luo pointed out that the *juren* and *shengyuan* who staffed the new schools did not necessarily know much about education and certainly knew nothing of official life. A compromise was reached, by which the academicians appointed were to be sent on a tour of inspection overseas for several months before taking office. When it came to the selection of particular men, Yan Xiu again proposed a 'modern' method, selection by secret ballot, but was overruled by Rong Qing. Some of the Ministry's employees objected

18. Luo Zhenyu, *Luo Xuetang xianghen quanji* (Taipei, 1973), Vol. I, *Xuetang zizhuan*, p. 21.

to one of the four men chosen, on the grounds that he was 'corrupt and reactionary, an impossible choice', but as Luo dismissively observes, the protesters 'were all former primary school teachers, so their words had no effect'.¹⁹

Records of the newly established Ministry's internal politics are, unfortunately, scarce, but it is evident that the ill-feeling which existed between cultural loyalists and those who threw their lot in with modern institutions was repeated within the Ministry. In particular, there was a conflict between men who identified with the scholar-official class and those who saw themselves primarily as professional educationalists. Despite his background as a *xuezheng*, Yan Xiu put the point of view of the latter group. The conservatives appear to have won many of the early battles, although their published statements are usually couched in language intended to disarm rather than antagonise their opponents. For two years, from 1907 to 1909, Zhang Zhidong returned to the capital as *guanxue dachen*. The rift between the two groups is illustrated by the obituary notice published in the *Jiaoyu zazhi* on Zhang's death. It gave due praise to the Zhang Zhidong of ten years earlier, who 'created a change in the temper of the times, and was the hope of the educational world', but deplored the influence of his conservatism and gradualism on education. The writer continued 'Some may ask why Zhang's earlier and later behaviour differed from each other. There is no difference. Zhang Zhidong was a politician, not an educationalist; he was an educationalist of the old days, not what is called an educationalist today... there was not one of his acts but was counter to world trends... he specialized in flouting public opinion'.²⁰

If by 'world trends' is meant 'Japanese experience', the writer is a little unfair to Zhang. Japan's school system over the past thirty years had arisen from conservative reaction to and selective exclusion of the wholesale foreign borrowings and accompanying liberal philosophy of the early Meiji period. One of Zhang's problems was that whereas Japanese

19. *Ibid.*, p. 22.

20. 'Zhang Wenxiang gong yu jiaoyu zhi guanxi', *Jiaoyu zazhi*, I : 10 (1909), Pinglun, 21-22 [00877-78].

Confucianists could yoke together conservatism and patriotism, in China the two seemed to go in opposite directions. By seeing what was Chinese as essentially moral and cultural - the study of classical texts and the practice of classical virtues - Zhang left the field of nationalism to the Japanese-oriented, some of whom were able by opposing the Manchus to reconcile their patriotism with their abandonment of ancestral custom.

Some of the dilemmas of the conservatives can be seen in the Ministry's reports on textbooks submitted for its approval, particularly those on modern history. The sorry record of repeated Chinese defeat by foreign armies could not be suppressed; indeed, shame at defeat could fulfil a positive function in the inculcation of the last three of the five aims of education announced in 1906, the exaltation of the public good, solid learning, and martial spirit (*shang gong, shangshi, shangwu*

).²¹ At the same time, undue emphasis on China's weakness and foreign strength might undo promotion of the first two aims, loyalty to the emperor and veneration of Confucius. The department entrusted with the certification of texts had to guard not only against factual but against political errors. Although there were some professional education-ists on its staff, their presence was negated by old-fashioned scholars who felt free to chop and change texts as they liked. Their seniors were even more conservative.²² The result was a careful casuistry: a geography text came under censure for stating that the Manchus had upheld Confucianism simply to win over the ethnically Chinese.²³ This statement was suspect partly because it cast doubt on the universal validity of Confucianism, but also because it raised obliquely the issues of racial differences between Chinese and Manchus and the basis of the latter's rule. No such delicate questions of historical interpretation plagued the Japanese educationalist. The 1908 rescript, one of two which 'guide us in the

21. See Taga (ed.), *Shiryō*, pp. 634-35.

22. See Jiang Mengmei, 'Qian-Qing Xuebu bian shu zhi zhuangkuang', in Shu (ed.), *Shiliao*, Vol. II, p. 260.

23. *Xuebu guanbao*, LXLI (1909), Shending shumu, 2a.

education of the young' has an almost hearty tone: 'Civilization is advancing day by day and progressing month by month, and the nations of the whole world, East and West, through mutual dependence and help, alike share in its benefits... The precepts of Our Sacred Imperial Ancestors and the facts of our glorious history shine like the sun and the stars'.²⁴

Charges that gradualists such as Zhang had slowed the development of Chinese education arose partly from a lack of historical perspective among educationalists. Looking at the Japan of their own times - which had achieved universal compulsory education - they ignored or were unaware of the fact that in the first decade of the operation of the Japanese school system, the same phenomena had occurred as they saw at home - peasant riots against schools, public lack of appreciation of their benefits, untrained teachers, irregular attendance, unsuitable premises...²⁵ Nor did they compare China's geography and population with Japan's. Many educationalists appeared to expect that the Japanese achievement could be replicated in China in a third the time with a population some ten times the size of Japan's over a land area twenty times as great. Failure to attain this was taken as evidence of China's unfitness for the modern world, and the inevitable results of poor communications, inadequate finance, and inexperience was blamed voluntaristically on the stubbornness of conservatives or short-sightedness of peasants.

In addition to commissioners of education at the provincial level the ministry appointed inspectors of education to tour the provinces and provided for the setting up of educational exhortation offices or *quanxuesuo* (劝学所) in each county. The chief executive officer of the *quanxuesuo* was appointed by the commissioner of education from among local gentry; he

24. Department of Education, Japan, *Education in Japan* (Tokyo, 1914), pp. 5-6.

25. Passin, *Society and Education in Japan*, pp. 75-80. Early public schooling fared little better in England, where the problem of introducing a foreign culture did not exist. See G.A.N. Lowndes, *The Silent Social Revolution: an Account of the Expansion of Public Education in England and Wales, 1895-1935* (London, 1947), pp. 21-44.

chose his own assistants, also from the local gentry. Their duties were to win over local folk with arguments designed to appeal to them - the school as a promoter of health, wealth, and virtue, and as a replacement of the examination system - to calculate a locality's need for schools and the funds available for their establishment, to spread a knowledge of educational principles, and struggle against the influence of bad gentry, foolish commoners, degraded *sishu* teachers, and distracting brothels.

The administrative changes of 1906, following on the abolition of the old examinations, can be seen as putting the finishing touches to what was on paper an extensive, highly centralized administrative hierarchy, well-fitted to carry out the tasks involved in government control of education. Only one point was omitted in the flood of detailed regulations: money. Attempted centralization merely showed up the weaknesses and limitations of the central government, which could be said to be a client of the provinces on which it was financially dependent. As Feuerwerker has pointed out, 'in contrast to Meiji Japan, where the land-tax revision of 1873 brought the major revenue sources of the country under the direct control of the new central government, the late-Ch'ing government was politically incapable of extending its control of the revenue'.²⁶ *De facto* fiscal autonomy remained with the provinces, and was indeed increased rather than lessened by the need to raise money from new sources to finance schools. The central government was in no position to make grants to provincial or local schools; rather, metropolitan educational institutions such as Peking University and the Ministry of Education itself depended for their maintenance on sums remitted from the provinces. Each province had been allotted a certain contribution to the expenses of the centre, but a memorial of 1906 indicates the extent of their delinquency. It states that the 50,000 tael budget of the *Xuewu chu* (predecessor of the Ministry) depended, with the exception of interest on money with the Sino-Russian bank, entirely on provincial contributions, but that these never amounted to more than 10,000 taels. This sum had been inadequate even to support

26. Albert Feuerwerker, *The Chinese Economy, ca. 1870-1911* (Ann Arbor, 1969), p. 67.

the schools and the university under the *Xuewu chu*'s direct control, and would be even more inadequate now that a policy of universal education had been adopted. The disparity between income and necessary expenditure 'was a source of anxiety day and night'. Discussions with two of the provincial leaders most interested in modern education, Yuan Shikai and Duan Fang, had elicited a promise of 50,000 taels from each annually; would the court order other provinces to make similar contributions according to their size?²⁷ The court acceded, and eighteen provinces were assessed at a total contribution of 710,000 taels. According to the following year's record of income, about a third of this amount reached the Ministry.²⁸ In 1910, some provinces asked to be excused their share on the grounds that they could not afford to pay. Other provinces simply retained their payments without the formality of asking for permission.²⁹

It will be seen that the centre had little hope of enforcing its dictates in the provinces through material incentives. What spiritual ones were at its disposal? The examination system, after all, had provided an effective means of 'getting the heroes of the empire into one's net' in the words of a Tang emperor. It remained the preferred channel of advancement until its abolition in 1905. The framers of the 1904 educational system attempted to retain the prestige of the old degrees by keeping their nomenclature for those awarded to graduates of Chinese and foreign schools and by continuing to tie government employment to possession of the higher degrees. Most striking is the provision made for the employment of graduates from higher technical schools, whose expertise was to be dissipated in local administrative tasks for which a knowledge of the classics had previously been sufficient qualification.³⁰ It appears that the stated purpose of such schools, the training of specialists, was overridden by the Confucian belief that education fitted one for government office, even though such graduates' claim to office arose precisely from their abandonment of the

27. Taga (ed.), *Shiryō*, pp. 439-40.

28. *Xuebu guanbao*, LXXVI (1908), Benbu Zhangzou, 1a-3b.

29. *Jiaoyu zazhi*, II : 7 (1910), Jishi, 55 [01887].

30. See Taga (ed.), *Shiryō*, pp. 399-408.

Confucian generalist ideal.

One major consequence of the abolition of the old examination system was the disappearance of quotas based on locality. The quotas had ensured, if not equal opportunity for all - some areas had a low ratio of candidates to places, while in others competition was fierce; and original relationships had been disturbed by the practice during the Taiping Rebellion of increasing the quota of counties which made substantial monetary contributions for the suppression of the rebels - at least a fairly equitable sharing of places as far down as the county level. The new school system made no attempt to maintain a balance between localities, though local particularism was evident in certain schools. The previous system had tied a scholar to his native place, in the sense that he could not sit for the examinations elsewhere. (One candidate was turned away when he tried to take the examinations in the county in which his family had lived for generations rather than in their place of original registration).³¹ Abolition of quotas weakened particularism by making one's place of origin less important where schooling was concerned. At the same time, it removed an obstacle to the victory of particularism, in that the centre no longer stood as an arbiter between differently endowed regions.

Attempts to tie the new degrees to the emperor and his appointed officials by the re-examination of school graduates by provincial and county officials ran into difficulties, for these men frequently had no knowledge of the new learning and marked students at random. Occasions when student protests were heeded and marks closer to their school grades allotted underlined the fact that it was the schools rather than the central government which controlled the new degrees.³² The only residual exertion of the government's authority was its refusal to grant degrees to graduates of mission schools, a refusal which does not seem to have affected the popularity of colleges such as St John's in Shanghai.

31. Cao Juren, *Jiangfan liushi nian*, p. 19.

32. *Jiaoyu zazhi*, I : 6 (1909), *Jishi* 39 (00479), and II : 5 (1910), *Pinglun* 13 [01743].

While the examination system lasted, freedom in schooling was counter-balanced by its strict procedural and ideological requirements. A paper dropped on the floor or failure to elevate a reference to the emperor above the surrounding text would ruin a candidate's chances. Yet few balked at these restraints, for despite the fact that only about a third of *juren* and a tenth that number of *shengyuan* obtained office, the examinations remained the only 'regular route' to prestigious and remunerative imperial appointment. Under the new system, the links between graduation and office were not formally broken until 1910, but it was evident earlier that they had been considerably attenuated. In the last half of the nineteenth century, an average of 1500 scholars became *juren* at each triennial provincial examination.³³ In 1907, more than twenty-one thousand students were enrolled in China for courses whose successful completion would entitle them to the *juren* degree; had only half obtained it, the new schools would have produced six times as many *juren* as the old examinations, not counting those with Japanese degrees. And this was in the infancy of the system; as a contemporary observer pointed out, once China had achieved the same level of education as Japan, she would be producing nearly 77,000 *juren* a year, or fifty times as many as the total number of official positions. Students may not have possessed the arithmetical ability or statistical data to enable such exact calculation, but it was evident to them that their prospects of official employment were uncertain; their adherence to the rules determining eligibility for such employment was correspondingly weakened.³⁴

In short, in abolishing the old examinations the central government had unwittingly done away with a large part of its spiritual authority. The Ministry of Education played with the regalia of power, pre-occupied by the question of eligibility for the new degrees and with the bestowal of other honours at its disposal; ranks, memorial arches, inscribed tablets, tokens of imperial favour for those who had endowed schools. These were

33. Chung-li Chang, *The Chinese Gentry*, p. 125.

34. Chong You, 'Xuetang jiangli zhangcheng yiwu', in *Jiaoyu zazhi*, II : 1 (1910), Pinglun, 1-5 [01329-33].

incentives with a small market, since they required the possession of a large fortune and the willingness to give most of it away. The majority of those involved in setting up and running the new schools received no recognition from the central government and reciprocated by casual treatment of its directives.

The Ministry in Peking was isolated, impotent, and ignorant. Ignorant not of educational theory, since it had many experienced educationalists on its staff, but of the actual practice of schooling in the provinces under its jurisdiction. Peking, even Zhili, was familiar territory, but not the regions beyond the Ministry's headquarters. Provincial tours of inspection by ministerial officials were in the nature of explorations. Reliable information, of the sort needed to monitor the operation of an extensive, centralized system, was rare. Even the statistics on schooling in different provinces which the Ministry made a great effort to collect were untrustworthy. A statistical compilation of several hundred pages was issued in 1907, 1908, and 1909. Figures for the number of schools in each province in 1909, taken from the Ministry's third statistical survey of education, are given below in the order in which they occur in that work.³⁵

<u>Province</u>	Schools	Students	<u>Province</u>	Schools	Students
Zhili	11,201	242,247	Jiangxi	1,262	30,428
Fengtian, Jilin, Heilungjiang	3,240	125,621	Hubei	2,886	99,064
Shandong	4,396	60,765	Hunan	1,437	52,229
Shanxi	2,333	57,291	Sichuan	10,661	345,383
Shaanxi	2,953	59,196	Guangdong	1,794	86,437
Henan	3,773	90,824	Guangxi	1,328	51,097
Jiangsu Jiangning	2,462	80,947	Yunnan	1,944	57,808
Anhui	865	24,674	Guizhou	1,811	27,036
Zhejiang	2,165	76,114	Fujian	678	29,653

35. Xuebu, *Xuantong yuannian, disanci jiaoyu tongji tubiao* (Peking, 1911), Gesheng, pp. 1-2.

If the provinces are ranked by number of students in relation to their estimated population, Zhili comes first, followed by Sichuan, Yunnan, Shaanxi, Shanxi, and Guangxi, with the Yangzi Valley and coastal provinces well down the list. Anhui records the worst ratio, probably justifiably, since floods and famine hindered its recovery from the Taiping Rebellion. It is intriguing to note that, with the exception of Zhili, the provinces claiming the highest rate of attendance are among the most remote from Western contact. Shaanxi, a poor and backward province, recovering from a severe famine, does better than Jiangsu, centre of educational innovation. Japanese educational statistics for 1895 appear to tell the same story. A contemporary observer writes 'Before I went into the question, I was sure that I could have painted those provinces which contain the treaty ports black [indicating 70% attendance of school-age children], and have triumphantly called attention to the presumptive fact that the presence of the foreigner had brought with it the inevitable enlightening result... The figures show us that Yokohama and Kobe are only in second-rate educational districts, whereas Nagasaki is in one of the worst educated provinces... I can only come to the conclusion that, as far as the masses are concerned, education makes more effectual progress in some of the quiet and outlying districts which are practically undisturbed by the foreigner... and where the only modernising influence which is now making itself felt is occasioned by the Government regulations...'³⁶

The cynic may wonder whether a possible explanation for apparently high attendance in remote areas is not that officials charged with reporting the progress of such areas found it easier to invest statistics than to obtain them. I have not checked the Japanese figures, but the Chinese ones show certain inconsistencies. Yunnan and Shanxi, for example, both have tables in the 1909 survey purporting to show percentage attendance of school age children. Both take a base population much lower than the lowest estimate and conjure from it a number of school-children in excess of that given elsewhere in the survey: Yunnan has added a mere 5,000 to its total, but Shanxi boldly claims an attendance of over 200,000, a 400% increase in

36. J. Stafford Ransome, *Japan in Transition* (London, 1899), pp. 87-89.

the space of a few pages.³⁷ The inflation of one set of figures does not directly discredit the others, but does nothing to assuage doubts about their reliability. Yunnan's good showing may be explicable in terms of the persisting influence of its indigenous educational base - the province is said to have had 30,000 *yixue* in the 1730's.³⁸ On the other hand, this figure may simply be an early example of official hyperbole. The statistics Sichuan sent to the Education Ministry in 1907 were too confusing and contradictory to be used;³⁹ does Sichuan's inclusion in the 1909 survey bespeak greater accuracy of reporting or greater care in re-arranging?

A report on 'the true state' of education in Shandong, where a number of counties had claimed a rapid increase in publicly supported schools in 1907, comments that in one area 'scores of schools had only one student... for the others, Huimin County claimed 186 lower primary schools, En County 364, and Linqing Department 321 elementary schools. Some of them had no schools in 1906, or only one or two, but in one year they have climbed suddenly to over a hundred or to several hundred. I am afraid this cannot be the true state of affairs. Even if the figures are genuine, they must refer to the common people's *sishu* which have been twisted into schools for the purposes of the survey'.⁴⁰

Although the Ministry of Education presided over the building of a school system, which, with the new army, was among the most successful attempts at remoulding Chinese institutions to conform with a Western model, the Ministry itself played relatively little part in this transformation. The role of the central government as a whole was that of a facilitator of the new education, in that it removed obstacles such as the old examination system which stood in the way of the new schools' expansion and provided degrees and the hope of office to their graduates. The much trumpeted views

37. See Xuebu, *Xuantong yuannian... tongji tubiao*, Shanxi, pp. 2-9, and Yunnan, pp. 5-10.

38. Ho Ping-ti, *The Ladder of Success in Imperial China*, p. 210.

39. Xuebu, *Xuantong yuannian... tongji tubiao*,

40. *Xuebu guanbao*, XXI (1907), Wendu, 117.

of educationalists and other liberal ideologues on the value of education in China's regeneration do not appear to have swayed most members of the central and provincial governments: the Ministry of Education was starved for finance both in the last years of the Qing and the early decades of the Republic. Lack of monetary inducements was not compensated for by moral authority. Cultural loyalists not reconciled to the abolition of the examinations, patriots were examining alternative forms of government, and both conservative and modernizing gentry found in the new schools, as I hope to show in the next chapter, invigorating testimony to their powers of independent action.

CHAPTER SIX

Local Implementation of the New School System

Official sponsorship - the gentry take-over -
resources mobilized - political consequences

The school system as decreed in 1898 and 1901 and amplified in the regulations of 1902 and 1904 made relatively slight demands of provincial and local officials. Its minimum requirements were modest: one higher level school in each provincial capital, one middle school in each prefecture, one higher primary school in each department or county. A certain amount of latitude was thus permitted each locality. At the same time, it was made clear that the court was 'keen to promote education' and that officials should set up more schools if possible.

Although the new schools were conceived as a foundation for ultimate universal and compulsory education as practised in the West and Japan, the nature and degree of official involvement in their establishment were an inheritance from the indigenous system of academies and official school-temples. It was envisaged that, as before, private persons and community organizations would be responsible for education leading up to that provided by the state. They were urged to set up lower primary schools and allowed to set up higher primary and middle schools, but not higher schools.

The basis of the government schools network was to be the converted academy, whose buildings were to be transferred to the new institutions. Since most academies had their own lands and revenue, the first obstacles to the setting up of prefectural and county schools were ideological rather than financial. Once the new school system cast off its academic chrysalis, its demands for revenue rose sharply. Higher level schools and technical schools were particularly expensive to maintain, since they needed to hire highly paid foreign teachers. Even middle and higher primary schools, if run in accord with regulations, required expensive texts, equipment, and specialist teachers. Nowhere in the extensive instructions to educational authorities was the question of financing the new system discussed in detail. Those in charge of education had to steer a cautious route between the Scylla of apathy and the Charybdis of extortion.

The provincial government acted as a clearing house for instructions from the centre. Depending on the zeal of individual governors and governors-general, these would be pressed on subordinates or pigeon-holed.

Whether a province directed its main efforts to higher education in

the provincial capital or attempted to spread the new schooling to rural areas also depended on the disposition of its leaders. In Hubei, Zhang Zhidong at first concentrated on *rencai jiaoyu* (人才教育) or the training of an elite. By 1902, he had established in Wuchang one civil and one military college, a normal school, a language school, an agricultural school, and industrial school, and two other advanced schools, as well as one civil and one military middle school.¹ Between them, these consumed 657,920 taels over the year. Only 22,131 taels were spent on primary education in the city, and no grants appear to have been made to educational institutions elsewhere in the province.² Funds were thus flowing in one direction only, with no visible benefits to the localities whence they came. This should have been no novelty to the people of Hubei, who had been financing Zhang Zhidong's ambitious industrial schemes for years. There was at that time no provincial budget and thus no possibility of an allocation for education from it. Rather, schools were financed from different sources in an *ad hoc* manner. (Lest it be thought that such disarray is peculiar to backward Asian societies attempting to imitate the West, I would point out that public secondary education in England at the end of the nineteenth century was funded partially by ancient endowments, partially by the 'Whiskey Money', a tax 'intended originally to compensate publicans whose licences had not been renewed'.³ The greater part of the money came from revenue from the salt monopoly, sums being supplied by the consolidated tax bureau, the railway bureau, the lottery bureau, and provincial treasuries of Hubei and Hunan, a tax on suitcases, a contribution from a retired provincial commander, and fees paid by Hunan students attending the Wuchang schools. In some cases, the money was transferred directly from bureau to school, in others mediated through the central administration.⁴

1. Ayers, *Chang Chih-tung and Educational Reform in China*, pp. 219-23.

2. Su, *Zhang Zhidong yu Hubei jiaoyu gaige*, p. 192.

3. Lowndes, *The Silent Social Revolution*, pp. 46-47.

4. Su, *Zhang Zhidong yu Hubei jiaoyu gaige*, p. 191, Ayers, *Chang Chih-tung and Educational Reform in China*, p. 217.

The educational accounts for Jiangxi province in 1907 show the same concentration on urban education and similarly variegated sources of revenue, the main difference being that these have been sufficiently systematised to be drawn up in a table and printed in the Ministry of Education's gazette. Revenue, of 68,160 taels and 100,000 strings of cash, came mainly from the land tax and other traditional sources. An education tax (*xuewu juan* 学务捐) had been instituted but the amount it would bring in was 'still difficult to estimate'. A small extra sum was derived from former academy property and the cessation of ceremonies connected with the old examination system. The land tax receipts were to be split in a two to one ratio between the provincial capital's schools and those in the prefectures and counties. The remainder went towards financing Peking University (no mention is made of any contribution to the expenses of the Ministry of Education), to the education of Jiangxi students abroad and in Peking and Wuchang, and to educational administration and schools in the provincial capital. The figures given bely their formal presentation by internal contradictions and inconsistent totals, but are sufficient to indicate that a large part of government expenditure on schooling was concentrated on the provincial capital's higher schools.⁵

Not all provincial leaders emphasised *rencai jiaoyu*, or the training of a small elite, over the more recently fashionable *guomin jiaoyu*, or education for all citizens. In Zhili, Yuan Shikai and his lieutenants Tenney^{5a} and Yan Xiu laid the groundword for widespread primary education. According to two inspectors, quality was sometimes sacrificed to quantity by local authorities eager to comply with the letter of their instructions but indifferent to their spirit. After a disappointing visit to two *sishu*-like primary schools which had not responded to a personal demonstration of blackboard technique and modern teaching methods, they were of the opinion that such schools were no better than nothing: 'If it is fixed that a large county must have thirty [lower primaries], a medium county twenty, and a small one ten, then departments and counties will fob off the provincial authorities with them, and the villages will fob off the departments

5. *Xuebu guanbao*, XXXIV (1907), Jingwai xuewu baogao, 280-295.

5a. Charles Daniel Tenney (1857-1930) arrived in China as a missionary in 1882. He was president of Beiyang University in Tianjin from 1895-1906 and superintendent of Higher and Middle Schools in Zhili from 1902-06.

and counties. Officials will not know how the people are managing, and the people will not know what officials are after. Some even with to buy exemption, looking on schools as a kind of labour service.⁶

In Hubei, Zhang Zhidong had been converted by 1904 to the importance of primary education. He managed to fund it through an ingenious sleight of hand. Hubei had been allotted payment of 1,200,000 taels of the Boxer indemnity extorted from China. When the order came down Zhang had brought together the provincial governors and subordinates from the prefectures and counties who, in conjunction with gentry leaders, were to settle the proportion of the burden to be borne by different localities and the means of raising money. The bulk of this came from the land tax and the *dingcao* (丁漕) tax, supplemented by taxes on contracts and levies on shopholders. In September 1904, Zhang concluded that the indemnity could be paid from three recently developed sources of income: lottery profits and taxes on opium decoction and on minting. Magnanimously, he excused counties and prefectures not from raising the previously agreed on sum but from forwarding it to the provincial government. Instead, the tax money was to be left in the locality of its origin and used for schools, which would not only enlighten the people but would lead to unprecedented prosperity for agriculture, industry, and commerce.⁷ Zhang thus achieved, albeit temporarily and in one region, what was otherwise an unfulfilled yearning for decades of Chinese educationalists: the allocation of a fixed sum for schooling, freeing it from dependence on the whim of often unresponsive powerholders. (After months of unpaid salaries, staff at Peking government schools led a movement for the independence of educational funds in 1920; writing in 1928, Shu Xincheng comments that since that time funding has fallen even further in arrears, in the provinces as well as in Peking.)⁸ In 1907, Hubei had the highest educational revenue of all the provinces. Zhang was so

6. Report on the primary schools of Laishui County, *Jiaoyu zazhi*, I: 1 (Zhili, 1905), 40b-41a.

7. *Dongfang zazhi*, I: 10 (1904), Jiaoyu, 233 [2395].

8. Shu Xincheng, *Shiliao*, Vol. III, p. 146.

proud of his achievement that he incorporated a reference to it in the song he wrote for Hubei schools:

All provinces were busy raising the indemnity,
The charge came down to the people and the merchants.
Hubei province gave up its levies,
And used this money to build up schools.⁹

The move was met with widespread approbation. The previous imbalance can be seen from the fact that educational revenue for the prefectures and counties has been calculated as less than one tenth that of the provincial capital in 1904. By 1905, when the remission had taken effect, the localities and the capital were nearly equal, but the majority of educational funds continued to be spent on Zhang's higher level schools in Wuchang.¹⁰ Nor should one lose sight of the fact that whether funds were collected by the province or the locality, whether obtained by direct or indirect taxation, they were paid by the same people.

The prosperity of commerce, industry and agriculture, in the short run at least, was probably decreased rather than increased by the foundation of the new schools.

Even in Zhang Zhidong's own terms, the remission of tax revenue was not an unqualified success. Prefectural officials tended to follow the example previously set by Zhang himself, and establish a prestigious middle school in the prefectural capital rather than a network of primary schools with normal schools to train their staff.¹¹

Lacking the financial leverage of the Hubei government, provincial officials elsewhere had to rely even more on exhortation as a means of prodding into action those responsible for local schools. Active provincial education offices sent out forms to prefectures and counties under their jurisdiction asking for truthful progress reports, but got back little

9. Su, *Zhang Zhidong yu Hubei jiaoyu gaige*, p. 194

10. *Ibid.*, p. 195.

11. Ayers, *Chang Chih-tung and Educational Reform in China*, p. 234.

reliable information. The powerlessness and lack of information which characterised the central government's dealings with the provinces were repeated in provincial governments' dealings with the administrative divisions beneath them. The provision in the 1904 regulations that 'Any official who deliberately delays the setting up of a school for which funds and staff have already been obtained or who fobs off responsibility with a makeshift arrangement should be investigated by the provincial educational office and reported to the governor with a request for punishment'¹² was an indication of concern over delinquency rather than a realistic procedure to curb it. The problem was not solved by administrative re-organization. Even the setting up of exhortation bureaux at the county level in 1906 '... only means the localities have acquired another new word... the provincial education office cannot deal directly with officials who treat educational matters lightly, but must ask the governor to give them a black mark and dismiss them. But crafty officials and clerks... will say "I've discharged my responsibility adequately by setting up one or two primary schools. If pressed further, they end the matter with just two words, "inadequate funds". Moreover they use the name of the education tax to fool the common people and enrich themselves'.¹³

If official apathy was difficult to combat, even worse was official corruption. The *dongcao* levy imposed by Jiangsu county level officials was meant for schools, but the more covetous officials held on to the money themselves.¹⁴ As early as 1902, Sishuan educational authorities had complained that the founders of most new schools were either out to feather their own nests or to make a name for themselves to advance their private ends. Teachers got their places by pulling strings, and the ranking of classes and lessons was dictated by extraneous considerations.¹⁵ In

12. Taga (ed.) *Shiryō*, p. 288.

13. 'Jiaoyu ganyan', *Dongfang zazhi*, IV : 11 (1907), Jiaoyu, 237 [10781].

14. Zhuang Yu, 'Lun difang xuewu gongkuan', *Jiaoyu zazhi*, I : 7, Sheshuo, 85 [00553]. *Dongcao* 冬草.

15. *Shuntian shibao*, 17 August 1902.

Guangdong the following year, a magistrate was under investigation for embezzlement of the 120,000 taels he had been permitted to levy for educational purposes.¹⁶

Censure of officials who misused school taxes glosses over the fact that for most of those who paid them their destination was immaterial. In some areas, country folk stayed away from the schools for fear of being levied the tax; in others, where payment was unavoidable, they rioted. A table of peasant riots against the schools, drawn up by Professor Abe Hiroshi, shows that 43 out of a recorded 120 instances were sparked off by new taxes for the schools.¹⁷

During the early years of the new school system, the foundation of schools was largely undertaken by officials. That considerable importance was attached to consultation and cooperation between relatively isolated and dispersed local officials and native gentry families can be seen from Zhang Zhidong's account of the allocation of responsibility for the raising of the Boxer indemnity and from the injunctions in the 1904 regulations on the procedure to be followed in setting up schools. Several press accounts refer to the prefect or magistrate's calling together local gentry to discuss the founding of a new school. At first, gentry cooperation was not always forthcoming. A contemporary writer states that the gentry often stood by with folded arms while officials discussed setting up schools, intervening only to obstruct the conversion of academies.¹⁸

The decision to change an academy into a school could be made unilaterally by an official, but once academy revenue had been used up further funds had to come from increased local taxes and levies. These could be either indirect commodity taxes and *likin* or direct compulsory or voluntary

16. *Ibid.*, 2 August 1903.

17. Abe Hiroshi, 'Shinmatsu no kigaku bōdō', in Taga Akigoro, (ed.), *Kindai Ajia kyōikushi kenkyū* (Tokyo, 1975), p. 78.

18. 'Lun Zhongguo xuetao chengdu huanjin zhi yuanyin', *Dongfang zazhi*, I : 6 (1904), Jiaoyu, 126 [1382].

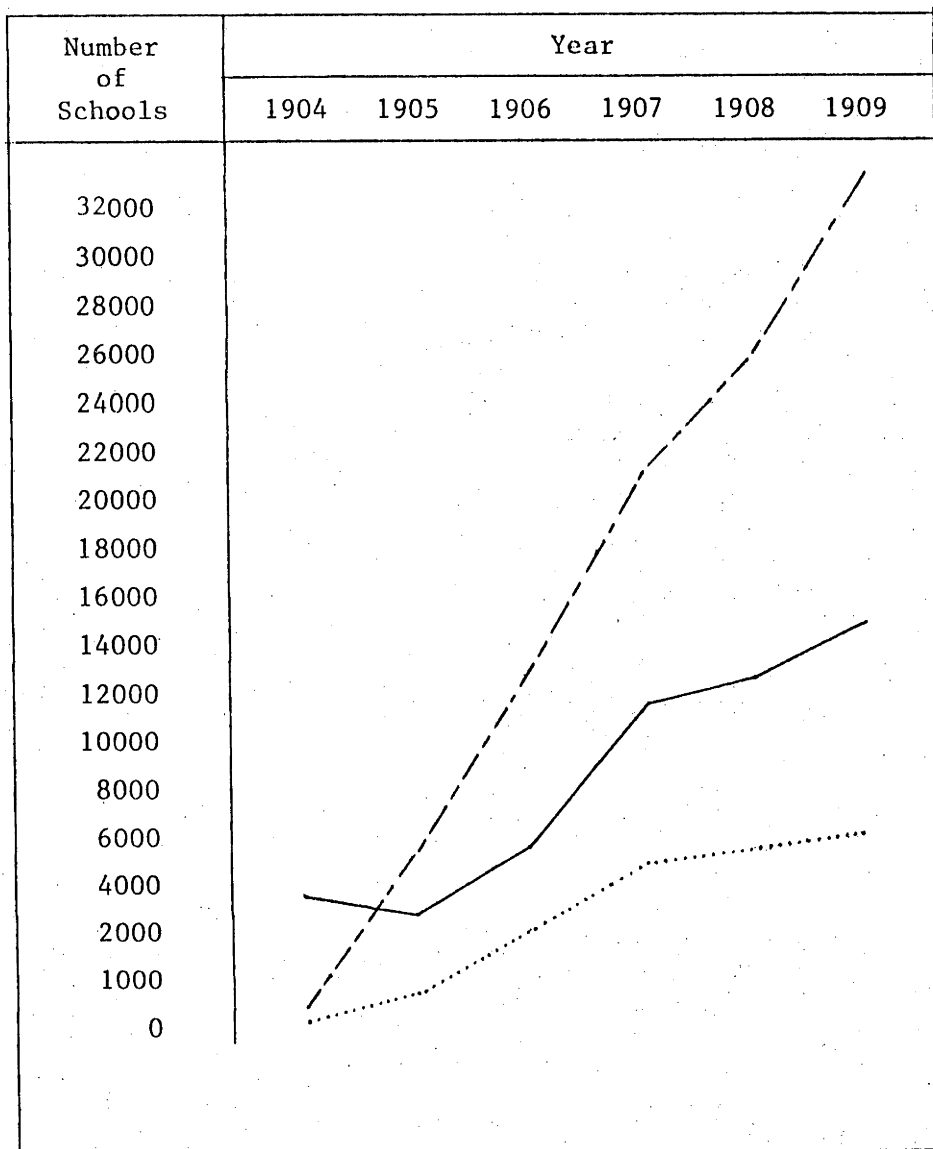
levies. For the former, the agreement of the gentry was needed, for the latter, their active participation. The 1904 regulations provided that 'local officials may select gentry members from their area and charge them with responsibility for the management of educational affairs. But in selecting such members of the gentry, only honorable and enlightened men with a reputation in their home district should be chosen. On no account should one let evil gentry and local bullies mix in among them, to perpetrate ill deeds and pursue private advantage to the detriment of educational progress.¹⁹

Cooperation between officials and gentry in the promotion of education varied from consultation on the disposal of county taxes through deputation of gentry members to collect local levies, to cases where the initiative in fund-raising from local sources was taken by gentry members and rubber-stamped by officials, reaching a nadir in unauthorised exactions by the local bullies mentioned in the regulations. The wheel turned full circle when over-ambitious gentry ventures had to apply for subsidies from the county coffers, or, if their own funds were exhausted, were taken over by the county or prefectural government.

From 1904-1905 on, there was a sharp rise in the number of publicly funded (*gongli* 公立) schools, in almost all cases founded by members of the gentry. The change is illustrated in the diagram below.²⁰

19. Taga, *Shiryō*, p. 288.

20. Xue Bu, *Xuantong yuannian... tongji tubiao*, Gesheng, pp. 9-10.



—— government schools --- public schools private schools

By 1909, the predominance of gentry-founded schools was established in all provinces except Hubei, where government schools had been dowered by Zhang Zhidong, and the remote and backward Xinjiang, Gansu, and Guizhou. Although the exact figures are suspect, the trend towards gentry control of education is unmistakable.

The first year in which the number of public schools exceeds the number of government schools is 1905, the year the examination system was ordered abolished. It appears that the gentry, finding their normal path to advancement blocked, finally reconciled themselves to using the new

schools. Such an explanation may be an oversimplification. A 1904 article claimed that sixty or seventy per cent of scholars gave up taking the examinations when the topical dissertation replaced the eight-legged essay in 1901, and that attendance at prefectural and county examinations had fallen to a third of the former number. The writer held that schools had failed to produce the expected results not because of the positive counter-attraction of the examinations but because of their own defects. The aim of a school career was far from certain, unless it was to learn a little English in order to get a job with a foreign firm.²¹ The concept of the new school was an unfamiliar one to most members of the gentry. The plan of the new system had not been adumbrated till 1902, and examples of its operation were at first few and slow to spread. It may have taken gentry members a couple of years to realise that the wealth and power promised by the new schools were personal as well as national.

Wang Guowei, writing in 1906, comments sarcastically on the gentry's take-over of the educational field. 'If simply being a member of the gentry qualifies one to be in charge of education, I am at a loss to know what the difference between gentry and officials is'.²² An earlier article, published in October 1904 at the outset of gentry aggrandisement, is even more outspoken about 'the "dictatorship" of the gentry', who tax shopkeepers and confiscate temple property in the name of education. 'Seeing monks fed without ploughing and clothed without weaving, rich though not officials ... with gentlemen and women from the four quarters flocking as their benefactors, they think "Why is it that they can live like this and we can't?" and think daily of twisting their arms and snatching it from them. Then they see the shop-owners of all trades raising money in summer and winter for theatrical performances which are nominally to thank the gods but in reality are for their own enjoyment: music and singing pierce the

21. 'Lun Zhongguo xuetang chengdu huanjin zhi yuanyin', *Dongfang zazhi*, I : 6 (1904), Jiaoyu, 126-27 [1382-83].

22. Wang Guowei, 'Jiaoyu xiaoyan shi'er ze', in Shu (ed.), *Ziliao*, p. 1012.

clouds, the odour of wine and food hangs heavy. In the space of several days, they run through thousands and tens of thousands. And the gentry wonder "Why is this not ours but theirs?" and daily think of extracting the wealth from their purses.' Schools give them an excuse for extortion which is approved from all sides, by the press, by officials, by foreigners.²³

From the other side of the fence, the matter looked different. Li Renren has left a spirited account of the battle in a Guangxi county between a dominant gentry family 'representing the feudal forces' and his own group of would-be school-founders 'representing the force of enlightenment and progress' over whether temple accommodation and locally raised funds were to stay with the militia or be taken over for a school. The militia leader, a *juren* named Huang, 'urged on men of the eighteenth militia unit to bring a suit against us for not respecting the temple of the God of Literature [the premises at issue]. We weren't afraid of him, and brought an accusation against him of obstructing the progress of schools. The lawsuit was taken to Guilin. The head of the militia bureau shielded them, but the educational exhortation bureau and the commissioner for education were on our side. We won the lawsuit, and the militia were told to hand over the school site and the money. But Huang kept resisting and wouldn't give it up. We found out that Huang and his son ran gambling places, ... and again took the ill deeds of the pair of them to Guilin in a lawsuit. This way we finally overthrew their power, and solved the question of the site and expenses of the new school. But Huang was still not content. In secret, he tried unceasingly to undermine us, slandering us by saying that our setting up a school was to spread the foreign religion, so that the peasants didn't dare send their boys to school. We dealt with him by making house-to-house visits to exhort people and enrol students...'²⁴

23. 'Lun xuetang zhi fubai', *Dongfang zazhi*, I : 9 (1904), Jiaoyu, 201 [2127].

24. Li Renren, 'Tongmenghui zai Guilin, Pingle de huodong he Guangxi xuanbu duli de huiyi', in *Zhongguo zhengxiehui wenshi ziliao yanjiu weiyuanhui* (ed.), *Xinhai geming huiyilu*, Vol. II, pp. 454-55.

However one assesses the motivation of those members of the gentry who busied themselves with education, it is clear that their chosen sources of revenue did not conflict with their own interests. The expropriation of seventy per cent of temple property to finance the new schools had been suggested by Zhang Zhidong, a staunch Confucianist, as early as 1898. He argued that in any case Buddhism and Taoism were entering a period of decline; Buddhism was already half-way into the last period of the law, and Taoism's spirits had lost their divinity.²⁵ Temples received a temporary respite when the Empress Dowager rescinded the edicts of the reform party in 1898, but were again in jeopardy when the founders of new schools cast about for sources of income.

The location of schools, particularly elementary schools, in temple premises was a common occurrence. It appears that such schools occupied the temple's spare room, while worship proceeded uninterrupted. The Japanese school system had made its start in similar circumstances: an 1875 survey showed that 40% of new schools were housed in Buddhist temples.²⁶ In Britain in the 1870's, School Boards organised 'temporary schools in mission halls, chapels, and even under railway arches'.²⁷ In China, such accommodation seems to have scandalized educationalists but been accepted with equanimity by the faithful. The ire of the latter was aroused only when temple property was wholly taken over for the schools. Gentry educationalists saw themselves as converting private religious property to public uses; the people saw them as taking property out of the public domain - temple worship, fairs, and theatrical performances were open to all comers - and converting it to the private interests of their own segment of society. The people did not believe their gods had 'lost their divinity', and were distressed by their desecration. Guo Moruo recounts with zest his career as an infant iconoclast. His higher primary school had been converted from a temple. At first, he and his friends simply used to play in the hall

25. Zhang Zhidong, 'Quanxue pian', 203 : 9a.

26. Passin, *Society and Education in Japan*, p. 74.

27. Lowndes, *The Silent Social Revolution*, p. 7.

of worship, but growing bolder - and incensed by the discovery of a hollow image formerly used by the monks to trick worshippers out of their money - Guo 'started pushing over those idols, and then pissing on them. Afterwards the temple benefactors protested, and a wall was built outside the wooden railings and we had no way of getting in'.²⁸ Protests could take a stronger form. Between 1904 and 1911, twenty schools were destroyed by a populace indignant at the confiscation of temple property.²⁹ Such incidents continued into the Republic period. One case, in Hunan, had tragic consequences when a school was set on fire and two pupils thrown into the flames.³⁰

Local gentry, who were 'close at hand and better informed' than officials, led the way in the inventory and confiscation of temple property. With the permission of officials to whom they submitted their plans, they would take over property with estimated values of up to two or three hundred thousand taels.³¹ Some monasteries and temples fought back, and affiliated themselves with Japanese counterparts to gain the protection of extra-territoriality. Others anticipated seizure by opening their own schools, either for the public - a praiseworthy move - or, in a more transparent subterfuge, for young monks.³²

Another common method of funding new schools was imposed taxes or *pai juan* (派捐). These had formerly been raised to defray the cost of public works such as roads, bridges, irrigation, and grain storage, the burden being borne chiefly by shopkeepers and tradesmen. They were now imposed on the same people on an *ad hoc* basis to fund one new school after another. 'Without the imposed taxes, schools might have nothing with which to get started; without the name of the schools, one might not be able to

28. Guo Moruo, *Wo de younian*, pp. 114-15.

29. Abe, 'Shinmatsu no kigaku bōdō', p. 78.

30. Lui Dunwei, *Wushi nian huiyilu*, p. 16.

31. *Shuntian shibao*, 30 January 1904.

32. See *Dongfang zazhi*, I : 2 (1904), Jiaoyu, 72 [658]; I : 9 (1904), Jiaoyu, 214 [2140]; 2 : 2 (1905), Jiaoyu, 29 [3345].

collect the taxes. But instead of urging education on people, they urge taxes; indeed, not urge, but impose. Those on whom the taxes are imposed do not know what schools are, but because of the threats of officials and local gentry they contribute money they begrudge to a cause with which they have nothing to do. The people squirm under the accumulated authority of dictatorship. They may not resist, but if they don't hate officials they hate the gentry, or if they don't hate the gentry they hate the schools.' 'Voluntary contributions' or *le juan* (乐捐) were nominally distinct from allocated taxes, but in practice there seems to have been little that was voluntary about them. Like allocated taxes, they were levied freely to support particular schools.³³

Puritanism mingled with covetousness in the desire of Confucian gentry and officials to lay their hands on money wasted, in their eyes, on such festivities as processions for the gods.³⁴ In at least three instances (others may have gone unrecorded), the suppression of these activities caused riots against the new schools towards which the money had been diverted.³⁵

Whether gentry or official or a mixture of both, the financing of the new schools was an anarchic race to reach appropriate sources of income before these were carried off by others. The composite nature of their revenues can be seen in the four examples below, selected from the Hangzhou prefectural gazetteer.

1. 'Public Benefit (Gong Yi) Combined Higher and Lower Primary School. ... Founded by Lu Jiarang and others. Opened Guangxu 32.4 (April/May 1906). Annual income 1500 yuan in voluntary contributions from the clerks of the finance and grain departments, 900 yuan in voluntary

33. Tian Zhi, 'Lun xuetang jingfei yi xian zheng ming', *Jiaoyu zazhi*, II : 2 (1910), Sheshuo, 17-18 [01381-82].

34. The 1904 regulations had stated that public money spent on processions and operas and 'all expenditure that brings no benefit' could be diverted to the foundation of higher primary schools. (Taga [ed.], *Shiryō*, p. 288.)

35. Abe, 'Shinmatsu no gigaku bōdō', p. 78.

- contributions from five silver ships, 252 yuan in voluntary contributions from the clerks of the finance department's general relief store... thirty odd pupils'.
2. 'Qiantang Yuhang Tiaoxi Combined Higher and Lower Primary School. ... [Founded by] Zhong Yizhong and others... The opening expenses were met from voluntary contributions. Opened Guangxu 33.10 (November/December 1907). Annual income approximately 300 yuan from transferred public property, 360 yuan from voluntary contributions, 1100 yuan from allocated taxes, 32 yuan taken from fines, 528 yuan from students' boarding fees... Forty students'.
 3. 'The Tea Trade Combined Higher and Lower Primary School. ... Started by the Tea Trade's Wan Yun Pavilion in the winter of Guangxu 31 (1905). Put a tax on bowls to provide income. Approved by the provincial office of education. Subsequently stopped several times because of disagreements. In the summer of Guangxu 33 (1907) switched to jointly borne indirect taxes (*gongren* 共认). Raised 300,000 cash per month. Re-opened in the eighth month (September/October). Income 245 yuan per month in jointly borne voluntary contributions from the tea trade... 24 pupils'.
 4. 'Qixi Combined Higher and Lower Primary School. ... in the old Qixi lecture hall. Opened in Guangxu 32.6 (July/August 1906). Founded by Yao Shouci and others. Income transferred from the funds previously belonging to the lecture hall - taxes on silk, pawnshops, and rice, charity school fees and temple property. In 33.9 (October/November 1907) added a tax on tea. In 34.10 (October/November 1908) added a contribution from Yang Dingqing. In the first year of Xuantong (1909) added a tax on the town's cooks. Receives a thousand odd yuan annually from rent and taxes ... 62 pupils'.³⁶

With money from so many different sources passing through their hands and no responsibility to account for it publicly, it is not surprising that

36. Wang Fen, *Hangzhou fu zhi*, Taipei, 1974 [1922], pp. 15b-20b.

among the founders of new schools were men who 'built their fortunes through managing schools.'³⁷ In April 1907, less than a year after the educational exhortation bureaux had been set up at the county level to encourage schooling, the Ministry of Education was compelled to plead for more care in the choice of their members: 'Recently we have heard that some gentry members in the bureaux of the different provinces have used their office to detain the common people, some have had local officials pursue them with punishments, some have imposed harsh fines of large amounts. Of course they were motivated by the hope of raising large sums early and daily increasing the numbers of schools, not knowing that this is just what former sages called "More haste, less speed"...'³⁸

As the quotation above indicates, many of those who promoted the new education were impelled by cupidity or the desire for power. Often they had no knowledge of or interest in education except as it served their own ends. One jaundiced observer, possibly putting the point of view of the professional educationalist, writes 'They take the name of education in vain in order to manipulate public monies. They clash over power and compete over influence. Probably 90% of the middle-aged and older scholar gentry who run schools and set up societies belong to this group.'³⁹

As members of the gentry extended their operations into areas previously the preserve of officialdom, they began to demand political power commensurate with their responsibilities. Although much locally raised money went into local schools, there was no clear demarcation between funds to be retained by the locality and those to be remitted to the county or provincial centre.⁴⁰ A somewhat hyperbolic statement of gentry grievances is given in a 1909 article on 'Local Self-government and Education'

37. 'Lun xuetang zhi fubai', *Dongfang zazhi*, I : 9 (1904), Jiaoyu, 201 [2127].

38. Taga (ed.), *Shiryō*, p. 472.

39. 'Lun shifu wuchi wei ji ruo zhi yuanyin', *Dongfang zazhi*, IV : 2 (1907), Sheshuo, 33 [8753].

40. Zhuang Yu, 'Lun difang xuewu gongkuan', *Jiaoyu zazhi*, I : 7 (1909), Sheshuo, 83 [00551].

published in the *Jiaoyu zazhi*. 'In the years since our state, seeking strength, changed its laws and began running schools, each prefecture, department, and county has scraped off the flesh and blood of our kith and kin, and somehow or other, under pressure of orders from above, set up one or two schools... they've sought out the funds of each locality and carried them off to the city', where a good education was enjoyed by 'officials and one or two urban gentry'.⁴¹ The cities benefitted not only from the presence of prestigious colleges and other government schools but from their position as a locus of educational endeavour for private persons and public bodies. 'In Shantung the schools that received the subsidies usually were located in Tsinan. This meant that aspiring educational modernizers from all over the province were drawn into Tsinan in hopes of obtaining official monies to support their new schools'.⁴²

The educational exhortation bureau was originally intended to enlist gentry support for the promotion of education by local officials.⁴³ Its head was chosen from suitable members of the gentry; he then selected other gentry members to undertake educational work in each district. Though not holders of official positions, members of the bureau owed their position to official appointment. The institution thus lagged behind gentry demands for control of local affairs. These demands were finally acceded to in 1908, when the regulations for local self-government at the city, town, and district levels were promulgated, and in 1909, when the regulations for self-government at the prefectural, departmental, and county level followed them. Under these, educational institutions up to middle school level and

41. Meng Sen, 'Difang zizhi yu jiaoyu', *Jiaoyu zazhi*, I : 3 (1909), Sheshuo, 33 [00193].

42. Buck, 'Educational Modernization in Tsinan, 1899-1937', pp. 185-86.

43. The bureau had been developed by Yan Xiu during his period of office in the Zhili educational administration. Its members should be distinguished from the canvasser of the communal *sishu*; they came from a higher social stratum and operated at a higher administrative level, from the county seat rather than the village. For Yan's connection with the bureau, see *Qing shi gao*, p. 1305.

their concomitant fund-raising all came under the jurisdiction of the local assembly. Since the educational exhortation bureaux had not been relieved of their responsibility for educational fund-raising, areas which had set up both local assemblies and the bureaux experienced a period of some confusion until the powers of the latter were re-defined at the beginning of 1911.⁴⁴

Overall, the decade from the edict ordering the establishment of a new school system in 1901 to the fall of the Qing in 1911 saw a shift to predominantly gentry control of the new schools and to greater autonomy for the gentry in local affairs. In the first stages of this transition, the promotion of schooling was primarily the duty of officials; gentry were consulted on proposed measures and entrusted with their implementation. The delegation of official functions to members of the gentry was standardized by the setting up of county-level educational exhortation bureaux in 1906. Meanwhile, a rapidly increasing number of schools were being set up on the initiative of local gentry. Official delegation and gentry assumption of the power to levy the local population and appropriate public property for educational purposes were among the conditions which led to demands for local self-government.

44. See Taga (ed.), *Shiryō*, pp. 638, 674.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Social Implications of the New Schools

Intake of the new schools - vocational training -
charitable schools - simple reading schools -
'mean people' - women - schooling and social
mobility - teaching as a profession

In the two preceding chapters I discussed the political preconditions for the setting up of a school system in Europe and Japan and commented on the subtractions and additions China made to this model at the centre and at the local level. In the following two chapters, I shall discuss the social determinants and results of the new school system.

The school systems evolved in Europe and transferred to Japan were universal and compulsory. Their Chinese propagandists were well aware of these characteristics, and assumed that they would be replicated in China when she adopted the new schools. That they were overly optimistic is evident from statistics issued in 1909, which show somewhat over one and a half million attending the new schools out of a potential school-age population in the vicinity of sixty million; indeed, even today there are areas in China where 100% school attendance has not yet been obtained.

Different opinions exist on whether the new school system broadened or restricted access to education.¹ My own assessment is that the new schools drew their students largely from those who would otherwise have attended *sishu*; that is, for several decades after their introduction they did not enlarge the educated class, but rather segregated a portion of it in new educational institutions. Infinitesimal accretions were made to the numbers of the literate by training programmes for vagrants, apprentices, and the poor, or reformed occupations such as the police and soldiery. These programmes did not extend the traditional range of schooling, since their objects had always been among its potential recipients. A greater breach in traditional customs and concepts was made by the extension of public schooling to followers of 'base occupations' and to women, although here again the numbers involved were tiny.

Attempts to reach the illiterate through simplified and half-day elementary schools misfired, attracting instead numbers of ex-*sishu* pupils.

1. For the former view, see Richard Orb, 'Chihli Academies and Other Schools in the late Ch'ing', p. 238; for the latter, Y.C. Wang, 'Western Impact and Social Mobility in China', *American Sociological Review*, XXV : 6 (1960), 843-55.

They thus catered not for the lowest stratum of society but to its middle ranges. Access to higher education and consequent social mobility was even more limited.

Problems which later became apparent in the extension of the new schooling were underestimated by its first enthusiasts. For Liang Qichao, education could be made universal by fiat; like Zheng Guanying, he did not see poverty as a barrier to fee-paying education.² Educational bureaucrats were little more realistic: the 1902 regulations called for a minimum of one school per *xiang* as a preliminary to compulsory schooling,³ and Luo Zhenyu drew up in 1907 a detailed timetable for its implementation, beginning with large centres of population and working down to the village level.⁴ The concentration in such plans on the geographical spread of education to new localities rather than on its social penetration to new groups reflects the sense of the champions of the new education that they were dealing with a *tabula rasa*, that the class associations of the old, discredited forms of schooling were irrelevant to the new, which was socially neutral rather than the possession of a particular group. A *sishu* education, especially one provided by the despised village teacher, was tantamount to no education at all, therefore each new school was a net cast into fresh seas.

In Britain and Japan, elementary schooling for the masses had served to train an industrial workforce. In addition to literacy and perhaps more importantly, the schools inculcated punctuality, precision, unison, and the acceptance of external standards of judgement - those qualities required by a modern industrial operation in which the employee has to perform a standardized task as a stage in a process external to him. In England mass schooling had followed rather than preceded industrialization, being given a powerful stimulus by the spectre of the 'half-naked, savage, and starving population' drawn into the slums of swollen cities. A London school official

2. See Liang Qichao, 'Jiaoyu zhengce siyi', in Shu (ed.), *Ziliao*, p. 953.

3. Taga (ed.), *Shiryō*, pp. 178-79.

4. Luo Zhenyu, 'Jiaoyu jihua caoan', in *Yuebu guanbao*, XXIII - XXVI (1907), Fulu.

went so far as to say that 'if it were not for her five hundred elementary schools London would be overrun by a horde of young savages'.⁵

What was of major importance to the growth of mass schooling in England was marginal in China, which did not have a large industrial proletariat to tame. Traces of parallel development can be discerned in the large cities, where the well-to-do experienced similar alarm over the existence in their midst of rootless idlers prone to turn to crime.⁶

Both prudence and charity called for a remedy. In Changsha, one was found by Duan Fang, who in 1902 ordered that thirty free schools be set up to teach illiterate and semi-literate young men 'with a view to their coming to a gradual understanding of principles as they learn to read, so that they will be able to make a living and not break the law'. The announcement, written in popular language, emphasized the resulting civil order as a boon to the shopkeepers - who had to stand guarantor for would-be students - and promised unspecified but limited benefits to the students themselves, who were not to 'have other expectations' than the pleasure of study for its own sake; that is, Duan Fang was trying to nip in the bud the rising expectations associated with a higher educational level.⁷

Duan Fang's attempt to establish free schools can be regarded as a continuation of the *yixue* set up for the poor. More definitely modern in character were the Craft and Welfare Bureaux (*Gongyi ju* 工 艺 局 and *Jiaoyang ju* 教 养 局), inspired by Japanese models, set up to deal with idlers and vagrants in the cities.⁸ In Tianjin, the Welfare Bureau tried

5. Lowndes, *The Silent Social Revolution*, pp. 15, 19.

6. See *Shuntian shibao*, 17 October 1903.

7. Duan Fang, 'Esheng puji xueshu zhangcheng bing shi', in Shu (ed.), *Ziliao*, pp. 100-02.

8. For the Welfare Bureau and other attempts 'to deal constructively with Tientsin's lumpenproletariat' see Steve MacKinnon, 'Police Reform in late Ch'ing Chihli', in *Ching-shih Wen-t'i*, III : 4 (1974), 82-99. For reports on Craft Bureaux in Peking, Shandong, and Sichuan see *Shuntian shibao*, 5 January 1902, 13 January 1902, 22 November 1902 and *Dongfang zazhi*, III : 8 (1906), Shiye 173 [7349].

to rehabilitate young beggars off the streets.⁹ Though the discipline and regularity of 'modern' institutions appealed to those who wished to control 'rootless idlers', it appalled the idlers themselves. In Boading, the poor were unwilling to attend and even more unwilling to work;¹⁰ and Wuchang found its Craft Bureau of so little use that it built a normal school on the site.¹¹

The rehabilitation of vagrants and petty criminals overlapped with training for respectable workmen and apprentices. The 1904 regulations included provision for schools for apprentices, but not many appear to have been set up. Statistics issued by the Ministry of Education in 1907 and 1909 do not list apprentice training separately. 'Preparatory industrial courses' enrolled slightly over four thousand pupils in sixty-seven schools in 1909.¹² A report on Henan education in 1907 records only two apprentices' schools, with a total of fifty pupils.¹³ Those set up appear to have been scattered local initiatives rather than part of a national plan.

Competition from Western goods added urgency to programmes for training in manufacture. The Commissioner for Education in Zhejiang linked moralizing over the disreputable poor with national consciousness of Western encroachment when he said that 'the recent rise in prices and the declining ability of ordinary people to make a living are due to the influx of foreign goods ... as most of the poor can't afford schooling, they discard work in favour of amusement; merchants are dishonest and craftsmen shoddy...' His remedy was the attachment of schools for apprentices to existing primary schools.¹⁴

Despite isolated examples to the contrary, lower level technical education was not a priority for either school founders or school attenders

9. *Shuntian shibao*, 25 February 1904.

10. *Ibid.*, 5 March 1904.

11. *Ibid.*, 14 December 1902.

12. Xue Bu, *Xuantong yuannian... tongji tubiao*, Gesheng, p. 6.

13. *Xuebu guanbao*, XXX (1907), Jingwai xuexu baogao, 234b.

14. *Jiaoyu zazhi*, III : 4 (1911), Jishi, 30 [02790].

during the Qing. Many businesses found their old skills adequate for unmodernized trades, and continued to recruit from the semi-literate and train them on the job. Their conservatism was not necessarily the result of China's low level of industrialization; recent work on Japanese technical education indicates that it developed first in small-scale traditional industries, in the nineties.¹⁵ Rather, it was associated with the degree of surrounding modernization. Thus when the Ministry of Commerce tried to put Chinese firms on a better footing to compete with foreigners by ordering special classes to be set up for apprentices, it was Shanghai firms which responded. The Shanghai Cotton Cloth Trade Public Association started remedial classes to which each member firm could send two apprentices. In addition to Chinese, English, and arithmetic, students could attend special lectures on subjects such as law and economics.¹⁶

Some new types of employment necessitated the training of illiterate recruits. In Jiangsu, the example, policemen had to be taught to read the regulations defining their duties.¹⁷ Attempts were also made in the new army to raise the educational level of enlisted men. In the main, however, education was, as Duan Fang had feared, associated with hopes of upward mobility; and this was even truer of the new schools than of *sishu*.

Another approach to the expansion of education was distinctive not in the nature of its educational provision but in its objects. In Tianjin, the indefatigable innovator Yan Xiu set up a half-day school especially for poor boys whose families were dependent on their labour. His example was taken up enthusiastically by local gentry, who by August 1903 had set up more than ten of these schools and were planning thirty more, all 'leaving nothing undone for the welfare of the poor and the enlightenment of the ignorant'.¹⁸ Since, with typical insensitivity to economic constraints,

15. Personal communication, Dr John Caiger of the Australian National University.

16. Li Gufan, *Tan wang lu*, p. 26.

17. *Dongfang zazhi*, II : 2 (1905), Jiaoyu, 27 [3343].

18. *Shuntian shibao*, 2 August 1903 and 13 September 1903.

neither the 1902 nor the 1904 regulations allowed for part-time schools, their organization and curricula were left to their founders. These ranged from the practical - teaching the three Rs, physical education, and morals¹⁹ - to the baroque: one school was proposed which would teach the sons of the poor Chinese, Japanese, logic, morals, foreign and Chinese history and government, geography, mathematics, biology, physics, drawing, sport, and 'method of playing'.²⁰

The founders of half-day schools transmuted the scholar's longstanding commitment to the education of the poor but promising into a concern with the education of the masses regardless of their individual potential. Self-interest and altruism combined in such enterprises; as one advocate of charitable schools stated frankly, the livelihood of the people was the best security for the property of the rich.²¹

Half-day schools were approved by the new Ministry of Education (of which Yan Xiu, founder of the first one, was then Vice-Minister) in 1906, in response to a memorial pointing out that most of those attending the new schools came from rich families, and that the poor, who had a living to make, had difficulty in attending. The memorialist proposed as a solution half-day schools for every two or three hundred families, to 'inculcate an understanding of principles and form decent behaviour'.²² Since half-day schools were cheaper to run than regular ones, his plan was marginally more practical than Luo Zhenyu's timetable for universal education, but it was destined to equal lack of fulfilment; by 1909, fewer than a thousand half-day schools existed in China.²³

19. *Xuebu guanbao*, XIX (1907), *Jingwai xuewu baogao*, 129a.

20. *Dongfang zazhi*, I : 10 (1904), *Jiaoyu*, 236 [2398].

21. 'Cishan jiaoyu shuo', *Dongfang zazhi*, I : 9 (1904), *Jiaoyu*, 197 [2123].

22. Taga (ed.), *Shiryō*, p. 409.

23. Xue Bu, *Xuantong yuannian... tongji tubiao*, Gesheng, p. 9. A quarter of them were claimed by Xinjiang. This may reflect Xinjiang's enthusiasm for part-time education, or simply be another example of the rule that the number of schools claimed increases with distance from the centre and consequent difficulty of verification.

Despite the good intentions of their founders, the half-day schools missed their mark. The working poor for whom the schools were intended were 'as yet insensible to their benefits'.²⁴ Their place appears to have been taken by pupils from relatively humble families alarmed by the profusion of subjects and lengthy hours of the regular schools but sufficiently well off to dispense with the labour of one of their members and to prize literacy. One may surmise that they came from a group which would previously have attended a cheap, open-entry *sishu* rather than from patrons of the family tutor; the half-day school won them away from the *sishu* because it was free.²⁵

A partial reason for the failure of part-time schools to win workers to education may have been the attitude of some of their founders, which resembled that of city educationalists concerned with country folk in being a mixture of horror and contempt. An article expounding the benefits of night classes for adults conveys equally strongly, if unintentionally, their limitations. The writer expressed the concern felt by promoters of citizenship education that an uneducated populace would go down in the international struggle for survival, but most of his remarks dealt with the masses in their domestic context. Remedial education would, he hoped, transform these rumour-spreading, trouble-making malcontents and mobs of country bumpkins into good citizens, and might even transform the inconceivable squalor of their home lives.²⁶ Among apostles of enlightenment hostility towards the sin moved easily into intolerance of the sinner, a confusion which could hardly have endeared them to the objects of their mission.

24. *Xuebu Guanbao*, XXII (1907), *Jingwai xuewu baogao*, 154a.

25. There is some confusion in the sources about whom the half-day schools attracted. One report says that in Tianjin their pupils came mainly from 'well off families' (*Shuntian shibao*, 23 January 1904), another that the poor attended (*Xuebu guanbao*, XXI, *Jingwai xuewu baogao*, 129a). Both agree that the schools did not attract those who worked during the day. Discrepancies can be resolved by the fact that the words 'poor' - not rich - and 'well off' - not destitute - are relative, and may be applied to the same group of people.

26. Zhou Jiachun, 'Shuo yexuexiao', *Jiaoyu zazhi*, I : 11 (1909), *Sheshuo*, 139-41 [00907-09].

The central government came to mass education later than the social reformers of the cities and with different motives. It took no action until plans for a constitutional government were announced in 1909, when the Ministry of Education drew up a preparatory programme including the establishment of simple reading schools (*jianyi shizi xueshu* 简易识字学校) for the illiterate masses. They were established primarily for ideological indoctrination, as distinct from the half-day schools which arose from a mixture of prudential and charitable motives. Special readers were drawn up within the Ministry stressing moral and civic education. They were to be accompanied by the primary school text *Guomin bidu* (国民必读), a work first used in Zhili under Yuan Shikai which emphasized the value of education, military spirit, and loyalty to the state,²⁷ and by that staple of mass education, the Amplified Instructions of the Yongzheng emperor. The government was attempting to ensure that when a constitution was finally set up, voters would understand their duties in the same way as their rulers did.

With the abacus or arithmetic, the texts above constituted the sole subjects of study, the course being completed when they were read. Graduation could take place in from one to three years, after which pupils would be eligible to enter the fourth class of lower primary school. The simple reading schools were thus like the *sishu* in that they required chiefly the knowledge of sanctioned texts and allowed a flexible amount of time for their mastery. The Ministry recommended that where regular schools already existed the reading schools be attached to them as night schools.²⁸ This arrangement appears to have been preferred because it would not siphon off pupils from regular schools, as independent half-day schools tended to do.

1911 figures, if reliable, indicate that the programme was relatively successful. Zhili had the largest number of reading schools - 4,160 with nearly 70,000 pupils - followed by Sichuan and Henan. In addition to newly

27. Peake, *Nationalism and Education in Modern China*, p. 58.

28. Taga (ed.), *Shiryō*, p. 627.

set up reading schools, Sichuan claimed to have nearly 200,000 pupils studying the same curriculum at 'reformed' *sishu*. The approximate total of reading schools for all provinces is given as 16,000, with an estimated attendance of over 280,000.²⁹

The simple reading school appears to have been a successful compromise between the demands of modernists and the inertia of tradition. As the memorial on their establishment stated, they were cheap to set up and demanded little of their teachers. Pupils did not need to buy expensive texts, and had sufficient time to pursue a livelihood outside school hours (the schools were aimed both at adult illiterates and the children of the poor).³⁰ Their moral content, concentration on reading, and flexible organization placed them in the familiar context of *sishu*; at the same time, their establishment was regarded as creditable by bureaucratic superiors, they performed the progressive function of preparing the way for a constitution, and their pupils were credited with the equivalent of three years study at lower primary school. Their dual nature probably accounts for their rapid progress.

Professional educators, however, saw the good as the enemy of the best. In Jiangsu, after the Wuchang uprising, the governor ordered that simple reading schools be disbanded, not because they were inappropriate in a changed political situation but because it was pedagogically undesirable to set up the same classes for children and adults and because administrators were taking the easy way out and setting up simple reading schools in place of regular schools.³¹

The reasons given for disbanding the Jiangsu schools taken with the

29. *Jiaoyu zazhi*, III : 6 (1911), Jishi, 46, [02958].

30. Taga (ed.), *Shiryō*, p. 627.

31. *Jiaoyu zazhi*, III : 10 (1912), Jishi, 71-72 [03319-20]. A warning against letting simple reading schools and reformed *sishu* interfere with the progress of lower primary schools was given by the Jiangsu Provincial Assembly at the end of 1910 (*Jiaoyu zazhi*, II : 11 (1910), Jishi, 52 [02256]).

fate of half-day schools in Tianjin suggests that part-time education competed with lower primary schools for pupils from groups which would previously have attended *sishu*. Neither appears to have created a demand for education where none existed before. The lines between old-style *sishu*, reformed *sishu*, simple reading schools and lower primary schools are blurred, but it appears that no reform or innovation extended the circle of schooling significantly. To this generalization there are two partial exceptions, infinitesimal in terms of numbers but indices of changing attitudes: 'mean people' and women.

'Mean people' included actors, barbers, yamen-runners, brothel-keepers, and other inferior callings, and also the boat people of south China. There had never been any legal bar on school attendance by any group, but neither those who followed base occupations nor their descendants were permitted to obtain degrees. Since the examinations given and degrees awarded in the new schools were regarded as successors of the old system, the proper treatment of these outcasts became a problem. In Guangdong, all restrictions were waived. In 1904 an Education Office was set up among the Tanka, who were told that from now on even Peking University would be open to them. The announcement was reportedly received with great enthusiasm and the offer of their boats as classrooms.³² Two years later, the Ministry of Education took a more cautious view, drawing the dividing line on the basis of current rather than hereditary status. Anyone wilful enough to continue as an actor could not graduate, but his descendants and relatives could.³³ (It is ironic that the prohibition was restated just as the most advanced of the new schools were starting to perform their own plays). The provincial authorities in Guangdong appear to have been somewhat in advance of their superiors in the capital.

In theory, the removal of the hereditary component in the definition of base occupations widened the social basis of schooling. In practice, many schools required that their pupils come of a 'pure family background',

32. *Dongfang zazhi*, I : 10 (1904), Jiaoyu, 240 [2402].

33. *Xuebu guanbao*, I (1906), Wendu, 7a-9a.

The Tanka or boat population of Guangzhou was traditionally forbidden to take part in the imperial examinations and to inter-marry with ordinary people.

and reports to the Ministry on middle school students had to give their ancestry to the fourth generation.³⁴ Even without this limitation, one doubts whether many who came from such humble origins had the money or the motivation for schooling.

No statutes barred women from the examinations; the two simply never came into association, the connection was unthinkable outside the pages of a novel.³⁵ Again, this does not mean that no girl was ever educated. Girls from well-to-do families often attended their brothers' classes at home until they reached the age of puberty; some were even provided with their own tutors. Bao Tianxiao in the 1890's had given lessons to the young daughter of an educated family in her own home in Suzhou.³⁶ Public schooling, however, was another matter. When Liang Qichao drew up plans for a girls' school in 1897, the only public schooling open to girls was run by missionaries and catered mainly for the daughters of converts and for destitute girls.³⁷ The Chinese schools opened for girls in the 1900's continued to cater to extremes on the social scale. In 1902, the Empress Dowager was reported to be considering hiring a teacher for her palace women for Western subjects; in Fuzhou in the same year, a girls' school managed to recruit only prostitutes and the very poor.³⁸

Zhang Zhidong's conservatism in social matters is evident in his attitude to public schooling for women. Women's education was to be confined to the house, as 'in China's present circumstances, the setting up of schools for women would give rise to numerous evils.'³⁹

34. Taga (ed.), *Shiryō*, p. 533.

35. In *Jinghua yuan*, the Tang Empress Wu Zetian is depicted as holding examinations for women at which the most erudite obtained the same titles as their male counterparts. This point was used as propaganda for women's education in the late Qing feminist novel, *Huang Xiuyi*, reprinted in Ah Ying (comp.), *Wan-Qing wenxue congchao, xiaoshuo*, Vol. I, part 2.

36. See Bao, *Chuanyinglou huiyilu*, p.123.

37. For Liang's school see *Shiwu bao*, XLVII (1896), [3186-3191].

38. For the former, see *Shuntian shibao*, 26 December 1902; for the latter, *ibid.*, 6 April 1902.

39. Taga (ed.), *Shiryō*, pp. 309-12 (Mengyangyuan ji jiating jiaoyufa zhangcheng). Zhang was horrified at the thought of girl pupils having to walk through the streets to get to their classes.

On his return from Peking to Hubei, Zhang disbanded a school for young women attached to Hubei's only kindergarten, fearing the infection of dissident ideas and consequent destruction of morality. In its place, he set up a 'revere Chastity School' to train governesses for rich families and another for respectable wet-nurses.⁴⁰ Both were to be staffed by Japanese women, since no Chinese women were qualified to teach there and no male teachers were permitted. Zhang's action ran counter to the wishes of his predecessor in Hubei, Duan Fang who had set up the school.⁴¹ The incident reveals the extent to which the personal support or otherwise of local or provincial leaders influenced the nature of the educational institutions under their jurisdiction. Another example comes from Guangdong, where the educational authorities were in 1904 in favour of schools for women provided they equipped them with the domestic skills necessary for successful motherhood.⁴²

Despite the specific interdiction of girls schools in the 1904 regulations, their numbers and popularity continued to grow. Mission boarding schools for girls in Wuchang were 'well filled' by 1906. Those with less money or more prejudices could hire a lady governess to attend for a few hours a day.⁴³ Some Chinese schools were set up under official patronage, others by women or by the male relatives of educable girls. The greatest suspicion was aroused by would-be educators from outside. A Changzhou magistrate inveighed against unreliable outsiders whose championship of female education ignored the fact that Changzhou had in the past produced many educated women. He went so far as to prohibit girls' schools, together with gambling by women.⁴⁴ In the south, the Liang-guang commissioner for education emphasized the need for the utmost caution in staffing girls' schools. 'Half of those who support this kind of thing' it stated 'are

40. *Dongfang zazhi*, I : 7 (1904), Jiaoyu, 161 [1657].

41. *Ibid.*, I : 2 (1904), Jiaoyu, 42 [462].

42. *Ibid.*, I : 2 (1904), Jiaoyu, 41-42 [461-62].

43. Arnold Foster, 'The Educational Outlook in Wuchang', *The Chinese Recorder*, XXXVII : 4 (1906), 208.

44. *Shuntian shibao*, 11 June 1903.

young men, whose boldness makes enemies even aside from the possibility of actual misconduct'.⁴⁵ Suspected sexual immorality drew moralists irresistibly. As late as the mid-twenties, a lecturer at Chengdu Girls' Normal School had to flee for his life from a lynch mob after developing photographs in a darkroom with a girl student.⁴⁶

As in Victorian England, it was heterosexual relations which disturbed the imagination of the pure. Homosexual friendships were not uncommon in boarding schools, but did not attract their attention.⁴⁷

Schooling for women was not made a part of the national school system until 1907, when regulations were issued for girls' primary and normal schools (not middle schools, although some had already been established by Chinese; Bao Tianxiao was invited to teach in one in Shanghai).⁴⁸ The regulations had little prescriptive effect, but are interesting as a conservative attempt to grapple with the conflicting goals of enlightening and restricting women. The preservation of morality had first priority: no girls' schools were to be set up unless female teachers and a headmistress could be obtained. Respectable gentlemen over fifty might manage the school's affairs, especially those involving contact with the outside world, but their offices had to be separate from the school buildings.⁴⁹ In the absence of trained women teachers, this was a counsel of perfection; most girls' schools had to employ male teachers. In cosmopolitan Shanghai they were taken for granted; according to Bao, they were often at the mercy of the badinage of their high-spirited pupils.⁵⁰ In the interior the proprieties might need to be more strictly observed. The inspector of a girls' school in Wuhu, Anhui, comments approvingly that the head of the school was

45. *Dongfang zazhi*, I : 2 (1904), Jiaoyu, 41 [461].

46. Shu, *Wo he jiaoyu*, pp. 420-437.

47. See Guo, *Wo de younian*, pp. 120-21.

48. See Bao, *Chuanyinglou huiyilu*, p. 338.

49. Taga (ed.), *Shiryō*, p. 468.

50. Bao, *Chuanyinglou huiyilu*, pp. 335-38.

present in the classroom throughout any lessons given, unavoidably, by male teachers.⁵¹

Sexual and political radicalism were twin bogeys for the framers of the 1907 regulations, to be held at bay by a series of exemplary stories of female behaviour from the Zhou dynasty on. Dissolute theories on breaking down the barriers between the sexes and choosing one's own mate were to be firmly repudiated, as were political gatherings and speeches.⁵² In 1908, the Ministry of Education asked the Governor of Jiangsu to investigate a girls' school in Chongming County where young women and their teachers - several men, a widow, and a Japanese women - were accused of stirring up local women with speeches on freedom and equal rights.⁵³ Despite their rarity, such incidents appear to have coloured the public's picture of girl students, giving them a dashing and dangerous image. The word 'free' acquired a double meaning. Just after the 1911 Revolution, children in Changsha used to run alongside women with the modern 'butterfly' hairstyle chanting 'Butterfly head, butterfly head, on about freedom, wants to be free', or 'Let's see, are you free?'⁵⁴ Respectable schools went to some pains to rid these terms of their dubious connotations. Equal rights, said the speaker at a Peking school's opening day, meant 'an educated women, able to manage her own household and tasks, and thus the same as a man', and freedom was the self-regulation which ensured that every act accorded with what was right - to be distinguished from rudeness to one's elders and wild behaviour.⁵⁵ Another popular magazine reiterated that true equality would come through studying, not through shouting slogans.⁵⁶ Carrying on about freedom gave one a certain 'air'; a Jiangsu girls' school was particularly

51. *Xuebu guanbao*, XXXIX (1907), Jingwai xuewu baogao, 390a.

52. Taga (ed.), *Shiryō*, p. 460.

53. *Xuebu guanbao*, XLVII (1908), Wendu, 211a-b.

54. Luo, *Wushi nian huiyilu*, p. 14.

55. *Xingqi huabao*, XXIII (1907).

56. *Liangri huabao*, LVIII (1908).

commended by the inspector because its pupils had none of this 'air' about them.⁵⁷

The consternation aroused by schooling for girls was out of proportion to the numbers involved. With the exception of those missionary schools which continued to provide free education for the daughters of converts and a small number of charitable enterprises founded by Chinese, schooling for women even more than for men was an elite phenomenon requiring both wealth and Westernization. Yang Buwei, whose father and grandfather had both gone abroad on Chinese missions to Europe, took three hundred and ten dollars - enough to support a family in modest comfort for a couple of years - to Shanghai's McTyeire school as pocket-money.⁵⁸ McTyeire was a mission school; foreign-run schools which accepted non-believers for high fees were beginning to acquire an aristocratic image. Since many areas had no schools for girls, the cost of boarding was often added to tuition fees. (As late as 1918-19, 532 county-level units out of 1819 had no girls' schools. Co-education was by then permissible but rare.)⁵⁹ The education of daughters was a luxury, since a girl would leave her family of origin to serve her husband's. As many schools forbade footbinding, schooling might make a daughter less rather than more marriageable for those who believed that 'buying an ox, you buy a pair of horns; marrying a wife, you marry a pair of (bound) feet'.⁶⁰ Statistics vary, but it appears that girl students occupied between one and two per cent of the total student body in the new schools. In 1909, 13,489 girls attended school⁶¹ - roughly seven in a hundred thousand of the female population. Few of these took up the cause of freedom and equal rights. The symbolic significance of girl students was not due to their actual numbers but to the breach they created in the 'norms and constants' (*gangchang* 纲常) - the basic relations within the

57. *Xuebu guanbao*, XXXV (1907), *Jingwai xuewu baogao*, 304b.

58. Buwei Yang Chao, *Autobiography of a Chinese Woman* (Westport, Conn., 1970), p. 73.

59. Shu (ed.), *Ziliao*, p. 382.

60. Cao, *Wo yu wo de shijie*, p. 34.

61. Xue Bu, *Xuantong yuannian... tongji tubiao*, Gesheng, p. 9.

state and the family, synonymous with Confucianism. The possible emancipation through education of women of their own circle created far more tension among the elite than the extension of schooling to groups lower in the social scale. Where women of the gentry were concerned, education in the new schools might be part of an act of rebellion. Yang Buwei's helped her to break off a marriage arranged since birth.⁶² The mother of a noted scholar even ran away from home to attend school.⁶³ However rare such instances were, they broke the elite's control, on paper or in practice, over the rate at which the new schooling should spread and the groups which should participate in it.

Sporadic initiatives and limited response in the fields of women's education and popular or mass education did not increase significantly the number of the educated. At the same time, there was no wholesale migration from the private teacher to the new schools. The new schools thus recruited selectively from the old. Which groups gave them their patronage?

The intake of the new schools changed fundamentally during the 1900's. Two turning points were the decision to charge fees for all schooling above the elementary stage (except for teacher-training and military schools), which drove out poor scholars who had previously relied on their allowances, and the abolition of the examinations in 1905 which attracted rich gentry-folk who had previously thought the new schools beneath them. These changes, though inaugurated by central government decisions, did not take effect at the same time all over the country.

The 1902 school system took a middle way between charging fees and giving allowances; that is, it drew up a schedule of fees ranging from thirty cents for lower elementary to two yuan for higher schools per month, but waived the fees of all but the highest levels for the first five years of

62. Chao, *Autobiography of a Chinese Woman*, pp. 79-81.

63. Personal communication, Dr Wang Ling, Australian National University.

the system's operation.⁶⁴ The suggested fees did not apply to private schools, which were free to set their own, nor did they include the cost of boarding where this was necessary. In practice, the 1902 regulations were largely ignored. At this period, the school system was building on former academies. To the new schools were transferred the former academy's property and its ethos. Most continued to offer bursaries to those who passed their entrance examinations at a level which admitted them to the school's quota of pupils. Additional students had to meet their own expenses. Such generous provision was in part the result of custom, in part a deliberate attempt to attract students to the newly founded schools. A Zhili county level school maintained its small intake - six regular and three reserve students out of thirteen who took the entrance examination - only by giving every student an allowance of two thousand cash per month; even then, there was no guarantee that they would turn up when classes started.⁶⁵ In Shandong, the Qingzhou prefectural middle school 'exhausted every inducement' to attract pupils from the ten counties under Qingzhou, but in 1904 had only sixty. Recruiting students 'was as hard as recruiting soldiers', since the sons of poor families could not afford the time away from their fields and the well-to-do still pinned their hopes on the state examinations. The allowances seem to have attracted students from relatively humble families, as they all took the harvest season off to go home and help in the fields.⁶⁶ The Jiangxi Higher School gave its students varying allowances.⁶⁷ Places at both schools were allocated according to county rather than through an open entrance examination; Baoding took four students from each county under its jurisdiction. Military schools recruited their pupils in a similar fashion. One writer whose elder brother had sat the state military examinations before they were abolished was chosen as one of the quota of two for his county to attend the new Jiangxi Military School. 'At that time people were still backward, and those of good family regarded

64. Taga (ed.), *Shiryō*, p. 167.

65. *Jiaoyu zazhi*, I: 1 (Zhili, 1905), 42.

66. Bao, *Chuanyinglou huiyilu*, pp. 285-86, 294.

67. Huang Yanpei, 'Qingji gesheng xingxue shi', *Renwen yuekan*, I: 9 (1930),
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this as an inferior course. Magistrate Peng ... considered that I was a filial son ... and had me take the examination (for entry). After the subject was given, we were allowed to take it home to write the answer there, handing back the paper the next day'. The writer came from a family of small farmers which had branched out into the transport business. They could not afford the cost of his trips to the provincial capital themselves, so he raised it from a former teacher with one of the old military degrees and other friends who went so far as to sacrifice their family jewellery for this purpose.⁶⁸

Study at schools of the Western type remained suspect in places with relatively little Western influence for some time after they had been accepted in more cosmopolitan centres. In the former, cash inducements were necessary to attract new students; elsewhere, the practice was not uniform. In Hangzhou in 1903 only the Military School covered expenses and gave an allowance. Other government schools - the university (later renamed a higher level school), the middle school, and two county schools of uncertain level - did not charge tuition fees, but collected two yuan forty per month from each student to cover the cost of board. The Sericulture School covered expenses but gave no allowances. All these schools appear to have been new foundations rather than converted academies. Between them, the six government schools above the elementary level sought an enrollment, not yet obtained, of 480 students. To minister to them and to 89 members of staff - over half of whom were administrative - the schools employed some hundred and forty servants.⁶⁹ A middle school in Zhili was even more luxurious, with ten servants for nine pupils.⁷⁰ Shu Xincheng, entering a modern school for the first time in 1908, comments on its *shaoye paitou* (少爷派头) as differentiating it from the academy and the *sisu* he had previously attended. Not only were there gate-keepers, messengers, cooks and kitchenhands, but also a servant to every two bedrooms and studies;

68. Li Liejun, *Li Liejun jiangjun zizhuan* (Chongqing, 1944), p. 3.

69. *Zhejiang chao*, VIII (1903), *Diaochahui gao*, 1-10 [165-74].

70. *Jiaoyu zazhi*, I : 1 (1905), 33b.

students were even waited on at meals.⁷¹ Such schools institutionalized the scholar's separation from manual labour, producing students who scorned even carrying their own luggage.⁷² Even where pupils were not from wealthy families, they acquired their habits.

If government schooling was dear, good private and mission schools were often prohibitive for all but the wealthy. Nankai Middle School in Tianjin charged three yuan per month for tuition, five for food, and one for lodging, a total of nine.⁷³ Min'e in Changsha, which achieved fame rivalling Nankai's through its early revolutionary connections and the longevity of its founder, charged 60,000 cash per annum.⁷⁴ Among mission schools, some of those teaching English had begun to charge fees as early as the 1880's. By the 1900's, the three Christian colleges in the treaty-ports of Shanghai, Suzhou, and Nanjing all charged high tuition, and St. John's in Shanghai began to be known as a 'rich boys' school'.⁷⁵ In Hangzhou in 1903, the highest charge at a mission school was nine yuan a month for board and tuition, the lowest twenty-five yuan a year for board with tuition free.⁷⁶ Even low fees were a struggle for the poor: a pupil at a Peking mission school, son of a widow who lived by letting out rooms to dubious tenants, could remain at school only by doing well in term examinations and thus having the next term's fees remitted. The school charged twenty or thirty cash a month for day pupils and two yuan odd for boarders at the primary level. For middle school, the boarding fees were six yuan for outsiders and four for converts.⁷⁷

The 1904 regulations made primary and normal school education in

71. Shu, *Wo he jiaoyu*, p. 51.

72. Mao Zedong recalled 'I used to feel it undignified to do even a little manual labour ... my fellow students ... never carried anything', *Selected Works*, Vol. III, p. 73.

73. Li Zongtong, 'Cong jiashu dao Nankai Zhongxue', *Zhuanji wenxue* IV : 6 (1964), 44. Nine yuan was a high proportion of the monthly income of a middle-level family.

74. *Shuntian shibao*, 7 July 1903.

75. Lutz, *China and the Christian Colleges, 1850-1950*, pp. 57, 167.

76. *Zhejiang chao*, VIII (1903), Diaochahui gao, 7-9 [171-73].

77. Wang Mingdao, *Wushi nian lai*, p. 210.

government schools free; other government schools were to institute charges at the discretion of local authorities. The justification of school fees given points to a change in attitudes towards the relationship between state and scholars. No longer was it a symbiosis in which the state nurtured the talents placed at its disposal. The authors of the new system - principally Zhang Zhidong - believed that students were taking advantage of free education to be idle and unruly; charging fees was thus a political move aimed at restraining student unrest. They could also point to the shortage of funds for the establishment of new schools to say that the remission of fees impeded rather than increasing the spread of the new education.⁷⁸

At the start of 1907, the Ministry of Education issued further regulations on school fees setting them at a maximum of thirty cents a month for lower primary schools and sixty cents for higher primary, one to two yuan for middle schools and two to three for higher level schools. Normal schools could take extra students for one or two yuan a month in addition to their quota of non-paying students. All normal school students had to put down a deposit of ten yuan when they entered; this was refunded on graduation.⁷⁹ Military schools, which were outside the regular school system, also subsidised their students. The regulations in themselves did not fix fees - as late as 1908 a county higher primary school in Hunan met all the expenses of its students from the academy property it had inherited.⁸⁰ Conversely, schools not thus dowered charged fees in excess of those fixed by the Ministry in 1906: their minimum was said to be fifty cents a month, rising to one or two yuan. *Sishu* attendance was cheaper.⁸¹ Newly founded schools were in no position to offer the incentives which converted academies could provide. At the same time, the number of academies was too small to

78. Taga (ed.), *Shiryō*, p. 222

79. *Ibid.*, p. 458.

80. Shu, *Wo he jiaoyu*, p.

81. 'Lun xiaoxue jiaoyu', *Jiaoyu zazhi*, I : 2 (1909), *Sheshuo*, 21 [001111].

furnish anything but the skeleton of a school system.⁸² The disappearance of allowances was an inevitable concomitant of the new schools' expansion.

The abolition of the state examinations and the structure of the new school system limited the choices of the ambitious but relatively poor. The route to the top had never been an open highway; although it is often assumed that a poor boy could 'study with the village teacher' for the examinations, the average village teacher was a byword for ignorance, and a family which wished its son to progress would often make considerable sacrifices to send him a distance away to a teacher with a good reputation and correspondingly high fees.⁸³ Such education, however, involved no long-term commitment, whereas the modern schools insisted on a fixed and continuous period of study, valueless unless completed. For this reason and because the absolute cost of boarding at a modern school was higher than that of studying under a well-known teacher, since the former's overheads were higher, the new schools (except for normal schools) eventually excluded from advanced study the majority of the inhabitants of rural areas. This pattern persisted through the Republican period: the 1932 gazetteer for Wanyuan county, Sichuan, an area with a population of over 200,000, states that 'the cost of living has gradually risen and no one can afford school fees. Those who study outside the province after middle school are rare. Middle level families can't even afford to stay in middle schools'. Old-style scholars are said to lead a simple life in the countryside, while the younger generation swaggers in the towns.⁸⁴

The more successfully mass education in the new schools was prosecuted,

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82. See Richard A. Orb, 'Chihli Academies and Other Schools in the late Qing: an Institutional Survey'.
83. See Shu, *Wo he jiaoyu*, p. 37, for an example. See also the study by P'an Kuang-tan and Fei Hsiao-tung on the examination system and social mobility in Johanna Menzel (ed.), *The Chinese Civil Service: Career Open to Talent?* (Boston, 1963), especially pp. 15-16.
84. Liu Zijing et al., (comp.), *Wanyuan xian zhi* (Taipei, 1976 [1932], 5: 42b p. 640. In Chihli in 1905, a county claiming 207 lower primary schools had two higher primary schools and a normal school in its county seat but only one higher primary outside it (Orb, 'Chihli Academies', p. 233.)

the less opportunity its products had to rise to the level of schooling which offered them a position in the elite. As David Buck has pointed out, higher primary schools were the selection point for further education.⁸⁵ Attendance at a higher primary replaced taking the examinations as a claim to educated status; entry to middle school, like a *shengyuan* degree - which had originally marked its bearer as student at a government school, the later school-temple - meant that one's feet were set on the ladder of success. In terms of social mobility, attendance at a lower primary school meant little more than attendance at a *sishu*. Zhili, with a population of over thirty million, had 204,668 lower primary places for a school-age population of approximately two and a half million in 1909. There were then 9,467 higher primary places to receive those who wished to go on.⁸⁶

In Anhui, where the development of mass education was stunted, the ratio of higher to lower primary school places was almost one to three in 1909. It must be remembered that this figure does not represent the proportion of lower primary pupils who went on to further study, since at that time entry into higher primary was by examination and was equally open to those with a classical education.

As a whole, therefore, the new school system could not be said to be an organ of elite education, since only a fraction of those attending the new schools later joined the elite. But it can be characterized as the expression of elite aspirations in two senses: it expressed the aspirations of an elite, the popular voice in its formation being negligible, and it was seen as a pathway into the elite, however seldom that path was trodden.

The new schools had their main effect on two of the old 'four classes' of Chinese society - on scholars and merchants rather than on peasants and artisans. This represents in part the variable impact of Western penetration on different groups within China, in part the existing association of these occupations with high literacy. The schools could be said to have institutionalized a rift within these occupations and a regrouping between them.

85. Buck, 'Educational Modernization in Tsinan, 1899-1937', p. 176.

86. Xue Bu, *Xuantong yuannian... tongji tubiao*, Ge sheng, 9.

Some bankers, traders, and manufacturers were able to continue their operations wholly within the indigenous economy, which as Feuerwerker has shown remained tough and widespread. Others moved into the modern sphere. The importance of education to this group is shown by the arrangements made for the education of apprentices. Compared with non-vocational schools, the courses offered by commercial half-day schools were relatively practical and specialized. At a higher level, the best of the mission colleges attracted numerous young men from merchant families; at St. John's in Shanghai in 1901, about half the student body were the sons of merchants.⁸⁷

The gentry owed their position to a combination of landownership and Confucian learning, and office, each reinforcing the other. The abolition of the state examinations in 1905 knocked out one link, leaving them no complete traditional sphere in which to operate. The structure of gentry society was not cellular, as was much indigenous trade and manufacture; it depended ultimately on a national function linked culturally with maintenance of Confucian doctrine and administratively with the opportunity to hold office. A gentleman could still reside on his estate and write poetry to be published by his filial offspring in a limited woodblock edition; the offspring, however, were likely to be 'swaggering in the towns'.

A genteel antiquarianism might be respected as long as it remained within its proper sphere, but was fiercely ridiculed by the moulders of 'public opinion' - the treaty port papers - if it involved the kind of cultural loyalty manifested in hostility to the West. It is hard to gauge the extent to which identification with Western values had spread outside the treaty ports, since their press drew its subject matter mainly from neighbouring areas and slanted all reports. In one county in Shandong, as late as the 1930's local people were said to place more trust in old teacher, 'stubborn and slow to change', who wished for the return of the Qing emperor, than in the young men at modern schools.⁸⁸ An informant

87. Lutz, *China and the Christian Colleges, 1850-1950*, p. 167.

88. Liao, 'Rural Education in Transition', pp. 36-38.

educated in a Guangdong village in the 1900's confirms that 'the Confucius style' of teacher was most respected.⁸⁹

If the new schools were the occasion of a rift between those who could still operate, whether conceptually or commercially, within the old frame of reference and those for whom it had become problematic, they bridged an incipient split by giving the same education to the son of a compradore and the son of a scholar-official. The new learning and its potential national or individual benefits were no longer, as they had been in the nineteenth century, the possession of 'marginal men' or rebels out of office. The gentry had successfully outflanked their competitors in the possession of knowledge, though in the process they had left behind their slower members and formed new alliances. Emerging from the initially distant points of court edict and treaty-port self-betterment, the new schools were by 1905 well on the way to merging the interests of all those active in modernized businesses and bureaucracies, and in addition, by their monopoly of educational advancement, drew into their orbit those whose hopes had been deflected but not crushed by the abolition of the old examination system.⁹⁰ This was not achieved without strain; some gentry members watched with distress the growing assertion of johnny-come-latelies who claimed educated status on the basis of a few words of English, 'with which at best they could get a high position to bring distinction to their wives and children and brag of in the country, or at worst become translators or teachers, either being an improvement on their previous condition'.⁹¹

Teaching and a government position were the main avenues for employment for graduates of the new schools, as they had been of the old. Limited

89. William Liu, interview.

90. The government did not grant degrees to the graduates of mission schools, but this does not mean that it did not employ them. Their superior knowledge of English gave them an advantage not only in relatively lowly positions in the customs or telegraph administration but also in government school teaching. The fortunate could use missionary contacts to study in America.

91. 'Lun shifu wuchi wei jiruo zhi yuanyin', *Dongfang zazhi*, IV : 2 (1907), Sheshuo, 32 [8752].

opportunities elsewhere bred lack of enthusiasm for specialist training. Many who attended specialist schools did so with no idea of making a career in the field in which they were studying; rather, the schools were an alternative means of gaining the same skills and attributes as those inculcated by the generalist stream of the school system.⁹² The old criticism of the examinations, that scholars learnt what they could not apply and applied what they had not learnt, were soon levelled at the new schools.⁹³

Modern medicine attracted few recruits. Missionaries had set up a few medical schools, but not many were founded by Chinese. The Jiangxi Medical School, which taught both Chinese and Western medicine, deserves note as an early example of the principle of walking on two legs: unfortunately, it was lame in the Western one.⁹⁴

Industrially and scientifically, China was underdeveloped. Her civil and military service, however, was modernizing and expanding. A bureaucratic state could create an army and an education system, both variations of the organization of manpower, far more easily than it could ensure that mining operations would be successful or railway lines profitable. In neither area did China have significant foreign competition. Foreigners sought to advise the Chinese army but not to replace it, and missionary activity in education represented financial loss if spiritual gain to the home mission.

Teaching and soldiery had always been among the more respectable occupations for those who had to earn their own living.⁹⁵ What changed

92. Chen Qitian, for example, started his modern school career at an agricultural school but changed to regular higher primary after only one year (*Jiyuan buyi lu*, p. 12).

93. See Shu, *Jindai Zhongguo jiaoyu sixiang shi*, p. 203.

94. See Huang, 'Qingji geshing xingxue shi', *Renwen yuekan*, I : 9 (1930), 25-26.

95. The saying that 'Good iron is not made into nails, nor a good man into a soldier' is frequently quoted to show that the military profession was held in low repute. This may have been true of the attitude of outsiders, especially in relation to the rank and file of the army, but there is no evidence to show that those who prepared for the military examinations or held hereditary military positions felt ashamed of their calling.

in the last decade of the Qing was less the social composition of entrants into these careers (although military careers did attract a larger number of the patriotic and ambitious than they had while the old civil examinations held sway) than the qualifications demanded of them. Reform of education and the army along Japanese lines meant that Japanese standards of professionalism and specialization were made the goal. No longer was it sufficient for gentry members to lead troops or for any literate person to teach school.

I shall deal below with professionalism only as it affected the supply and training of teachers and educational bureaucrats, changes in military training being beyond the scope of this thesis. The first result of the new demands was a sudden inversion of customary status based on age and learning; this was weathered by those whose rank and wealth were sufficient to withstand such buffeting, but forced readjustment or obscurity on their lesser brethren.

The 1904 regulations downgraded the holders of the lower degrees, who were entitled merely to entrance to a lower normal school.⁹⁶ A 1909 survey of the qualifications of teachers in the new schools divides them into two categories, those who had graduated in teaching or other subjects from the new schools in China or in Japan, and those who had not. Holders of the old degrees are lumped in with the latter group.⁹⁷ In theory, all teachers should have been specially trained, or at least have studied at the new schools. In practice, this was often impossible. Since teachers could not be trained overnight, the government was forced to compromise. Training centres and short-term courses were set up to answer immediate needs. Their

96. See Taga (ed.), *Shiryō*, p. 335.

97. Xue Bu, *Xuantong yuannian... tongji tubiao*, Gesheng, pp. 31-36. The figures show that out of more than 89,000 teachers, some 53,000 were graduates of the new schools. This would mean that more than two-thirds of all graduates had gone into teaching, which appears unlikely. 'Graduation' may be a euphemism for 'attendance'; alternatively, the figures may have been fabricated, or at least over-generously estimated, either in Peking or locally.

first students were of a relatively low standard. Of 140 who sat the entrance examination for the Baoding Normal School in 1902, it was said that '60 or 70% were old pedants and village schoolmasters... against their will, fearing that their pupils' numbers would dwindle daily, ... they were learning the new methods of teaching as a stronghold for the future ... among them were white-haired men over fifty trying to pass themselves off as under twenty.⁹⁸ In Suzhou, young returned students who had taken courses in teacher-training in Japan were set to teach grey-haired *sishu* teachers. Considerable embarrassment was caused by this inversion of customary relationships, whether personal - being set to teach an elder relative by marriage or friend of one's father's, or even one's own former teacher - or general: should these elderly men be made to stand up when their young teacher entered the room? Could their names be called for the roll each morning? Were pupils permitted to drink tea and smoke their water-pipes in the classroom?⁹⁹ Minor points of etiquette brought out major shifts in status.

Considerable ill-feeling sometimes existed between the newly arrived and those whom they displaced. One old scholar in Sichuan altered the self-congratulatory couplet left by visiting schoolteachers at a famous beauty spot to refer to stinking ignoramuses; the resulting feud was taken to court.¹⁰⁰

When in 1909 the Ministry of Education issued regulations on primary school teachers, their author confessed that 'the need for teachers is great, but normal schools are few and their graduates even fewer. To provide teaching, we have to compromise on appointments'. Holders of the old degrees 'whose Chinese is clear and straightforward and who are thoroughly familiar with modern teaching subjects (*kexue* 科学)' were permitted to take

98. *Shuntian shibao*, 5 May 1902.

99. Bao, *Chuanyinglou huiyilu*, p. 250.

100. Guo, *Wo de younian*, p. 194.

an examination qualifying them as teachers.¹⁰¹ Like previous regulations, these were more honoured in the breach than in the observance; but throughout all compromises the right of the state, acting on professional advice, to determine who might and who might not teach was asserted.

To say that professionalism was highly regarded by professionals is not to say that they controlled the new schools. They were rarely in a position to do so. The Ministry of Education was itself divided, and in the provinces influence still lay with the *juren* and their junior fellows among the gentry. Of the twenty-four members of Anhui's Board of Education, twenty-two held the old degrees. Only two had added modern qualifications to these. Some had worked their way up within the new educational bureaucracy; others had been on tours of inspection to Japan.¹⁰² For many, their experience of the new education appeared a result of their position rather than their position a result of their experience. On Henan's Board, thirty-eight out of forty-four members held only the old degrees.¹⁰³ In the schools, administrators were predominantly degree-holders without modern training, as were (despite the regulations) teachers of such 'Chinese' subjects as morals, the classics, Chinese history, and sometimes mathematics. Since the last of the old degrees were awarded in 1905, their holders had ultimately to yield to the modern-trained. In the meantime they moulded the system to their own advantage.

Thus a paradoxical situation arose in which the ethos and forms of the new schools were modern, borrowed from centralized industrial states which were exemplars of 'military citizenship'; but their concrete operation was suffused by the values and turned to the purposes of a regionally oriented, 'familial' agrarian society. I shall analyse some of the ensuing contradictions in the following chapter.

101. Taga (ed.), *Shiryō*, p. 681. *Kexue*, now translated as 'science' was originally used for all learning divided into separate units along Western lines. Humane studies were late reassimilated into the Chinese world of knowledge, leaving only the natural sciences as discrete intruders.

102. *Xuebu guanbao*, XXXVIII (1907), *Jingwai xuewu baogao*, 356a-57a.

103. *Ibid.*, XXVIII (1907), *Jingwai xuewu baogao*, 202a-03b.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Change and Continuity in School Life

Attributes of the new school discipline -
organization - equipment - subjects

Social interaction - old ties - new rituals
- restriction and rebellion

Retrospectively, one can see schools of the modern Western type as the advance guard of industrial discipline - that discipline which an industrial society imposes not only on its factories but on all enterprises which operate on the equation of time, money, and production.

The new schooling did not appear in this light to contemporary educationalists, who saw the changes in schools mainly in terms of their altered curriculum. Intoxicated by the wine, they paid little attention to the bottles. Where general features of the Western education system were extrapolated, they were commonly those of compulsory education and 'useful' knowledge. The punctual alternation of subjects at a given time, the specialized equipment and predetermined task, were taken for granted, and the application of indigenous methods and institutions to the acquisition of Western learning gave ground before the wisdom of the Japanese.

Comment was provoked by the absence of order rather than its presence. A Baoding school inspector deplored the deficiencies of a primary school with only ten students, all 'utterly without regulation. Sleeping and eating, leaving and coming in, are all without fixed times, just like an academy.' He exerted himself to bring this anarchy to a close, bemusing the little school's eight managers and three cooks by rising at 6.30 to beat the morning gong and composing a code of rules for each room.¹ One prefectural middle school in Hunan was said to have changed its academy status simply by appointing a new teacher. Students came and went as freely as they had done before.² Such laxity was a transitional but repeated phenomenon, eradicated or muted in one school only to re-appear in another. In 1907, an Anhui inspector was appalled to find that a nominally modernized charity school in Wuhu had no timetable, allowing its pupils to study subjects of their choice at their own pace.³

The model school approximated as closely as possible the discipline of

1. *Jiaoyu zazhi*, I: 1 (Zhili, 1905), 40a.

2. *Shuntian shibao*, 19 August 1902.

3. *Xuebu guanbao*, XXXIX (1907), Jingwai xuewu baogao, 389b.

its Japanese counterpart. Inspectors were charmed by students who lined up and filed in or out of the classroom at a word from their monitor, or who sat at their desks in orderly rows.⁴ Activities were regulated by clocks and bells, in contrast to the self-discipline of the academy. 'From the evening [I entered]', Shu writes of the new school he attended in 1908 'I lived in the midst of bells for getting up, lining up in classes, calling the roll, for going to class and finishing class, for lining up again, calling the roll again, and going to bed'. He did not mind the first and last bells, but resented fiercely the tyranny of the ones which 'made you leave aside any occupation, no matter how fascinating, any work you were putting all your effort into, to go to the classroom; and until it clanged again, you had no chance of leaving'.⁵

Instances of total nonconformity to the norms of the new school are rare in the reports of inspectors, though they may have been more frequent beyond the purlieus of the cities to which their reports were usually confined. More commonly one reads of imperfections, approximations, misunderstandings. The gap between the minimum demands of villagers and the expectations of a school inspector is humorously rendered in a short story on a village school master who makes his *sishu* into a new-style school simply by hanging up a placard, hoping to attract back pupils who have deserted his classes to seek modern education. The more informed villagers are not satisfied with a change of name, and enquire why (for nearly twenty pupils) he has not appointed other teachers for all the new subjects, a request he attempts to meet by reciting the qualifications of his five sons: one has studied half a book of Palmer and so can teach English... His students gradually return, but he is exposed by the arrival of an inspector who demands to see his lecture hall, textbooks, scientific instruments, and art equipment.⁶

4. See *Jiaoyu zazhi*, I : 1 (Zhili, 1905), 45b, and *Xuebu guanbao*, LXXXIII (1909), Jingwai xuewu baogao, 19b-23a.

5. Shu, *Wo he jiaoyu*, p. 55.

6. Tian Lusheng, 'Xuejiu jiaoyu tan', *Yueyue xiaoshuo*, XII (1907), 33-38. 'Palmer' was an English reader put out for Indian schools: the Commercial Press produced a version with notes in Chinese in 1897. See Wang Yunwu, *Shangwu yinshuguan yu xin jiaoyu nianpu* (Taibei, 1973), p. 2, and Bao, *Chuanyinglou huiyilu*, p. 159.

To the popular mind, the first characteristic of the new schools was the possession of at least two members of staff, in contradistinction to the one-man *sishu*. The Ministry of Education's statistics for 1909 show that Zhili schools averaged less than twenty pupils. The number of teachers (11,921) was only slightly greater than the number of schools (11,201), but staff numbers were swollen by the inclusion of 13,508 school officials (*zhiyuan* 職員) (these may have included school trustees). Nationally, schools averaged 27 pupils and three members of staff in 1909.⁷ Newspaper reports of the foundation of new schools often refer to the hiring of one teacher for Chinese subjects and one for Western. One private school in Peking boasted eight teachers and three non-teaching staff members for a student body of twenty.⁸

A second readily grasped attribute of the new schools was their division into classes - again unlike *sishu*, in which no formal differentiation was made. Uniform progression from one level to another was one of the features of Western schools which proponents of educational reform found most attractive. Its acceptance may have been made easier by an emphasis on sequential study found in some neo-Confucian educators. The Qianlong emperor had recommended that academies adopt a graded reading course.⁹ The principle appears to have been conceived in terms of advantage for individual cultivation rather than as a means of mass organization. In practice, some confusion existed as to the criteria on which classes should be divided; it was generally by year of entry, but intake might be subdivided according to standard, or individual students placed in an intermediate class on the basis of their performance in an entry examination. In some schools classes were divided on subject lines. It was rare for a school to have sufficiently standardized its courses and intake to offer the Ministry's approved progression through five years of lower primary, four of upper or five of middle school. Many schools disregarded the

7. Xue Bu, *Xuantong yuannian... tongji tubiao*, Zhili, pp. 1-2, Gesheng, pp. 1-2.

8. *Xuebu guanbao*, VIII (1905), 45a.

9. *Shili*, 395 : 3a.

regulations and set the length of their courses independently.¹⁰

The third organizational feature of the new schools which differed from that of *sishu* was the adoption of the foreign calendar. The Chinese customarily divided the thirty day lunar month into three periods of ten days each; markets would be held or lectures given on, for example, the fifth, fifteenth, and twentyfifth of the month. This division of times continued in popular life, but within the school walls the week, or *xingqi*, was used, with every seventh day a rest day in the Western manner. The school year started in autumn, as in Japan, rather than after the lunar New Year.¹¹

For the majority of the new schools, none of the criteria mentioned above was pedagogically necessary or even useful; rather, they were liabilities. The hiring of subject teachers and division of pupils into several grades made sense in large middle schools but not in elementary schools with fifteen or twenty pupils. School inspectors, the arbiters of educational correctness, rebuked excessive staff - suggesting, for example, that Jiangxi's Teacher Training School did not really need four sports teachers,¹² and too early specialization, but since inspectors reached only a small fraction of the new schools they were powerless to rationalize requirements which they had in essence sanctioned. Overall, the education system probably suffered less from departures from the standards they set - from unregenerate *shuyuan* and *sishu* - than from compliance with them. In

10. Chen Guofu, for example, graduated from higher primary school three times. A year of study at Hunan's famous Mingde at middle school level was insufficient preparation for entry to the first year of middle school in Huzhou and Nanjing. (See Wu Xiangxiang, *Chen Guofu de yisheng*, pp. 42-46). More fortunate students were able to leap a grade: see Li Shuhua, 'Cong sishu dao xuetang', pp. 62-63, Zhou Fohai, *Kuxue ji* (Hong Kong, 1967), p. 93.

11. The week had been introduced in Japan through a fief school set up in Numazu in 1868. All primary schools later adopted the seven-day system. See Nishihira, 'Western influences on the Modernization of Japanese Education', p. 52.

12. *Xuebu guanbao*, XXXIV (1907), 284a.

the short story mentioned above, it is admittedly ludicrous for the old schoolmaster to imagine that his bumpkin sons can teach modern subjects; but the assumption that the reality to which he lays claim is desirable, that his village can and should support a school with six teachers of English, history, science, geography, sport and singing as well as the classics, is equally ill-supported. At best, compliance with the demands of educationalists would have replicated in China the Japanese school system, at the cost of scarce resources and of the alienation of the Western-schooled from the remainder of society. At it was, the interaction of the Japanese model and its idealist supporters with local ignorance and self-interest produced a web of approximations, misunderstanding, and waste.

To basic organizational requirements, educationalists added others less easy to attain: demands for maps and charts, scientific instruments, art equipment, blackboards. These were often hard to obtain outside the treaty ports. Ambitious founders of new schools would sometimes send to Shanghai and Tianjin for the more esoteric items, but most went without. Light, airy school buildings, another requisite, should have been obtainable locally, but most schools were set up in makeshift quarters in converted temples, academies, or private homes for reasons of economy. Only the most prestigious had their own buildings. A heavy investment in school buildings was usually made only for higher level schools in provincial capitals and treaty ports. In such cases, the architecture was usually Western. Mission school campuses, also Western in style, are not necessarily to blame for the ornate ugliness of Shanghai's Higher Industrial School (the former Nanyang Public School) or the ponderous architecture of Zhili's, since these derived from prevailing treaty port fashion.¹³

Another troublesome requisite of the modern school was the textbook.

13. New buildings could cause alarm on other than aesthetic grounds if erected without regard for geomancy. A Chinese school in Zhejiang was destroyed by local people in 1907 because it went against geomantic principles. (Abe, 'Shinmatsu no kigaku bōdō', p. 73). Similar superstitious objections to the conversion of a graveyard into school property are chronicled in Ye Shengtao's novel, *Ni Huanzhi* (Hong Kong, [1930]), pp. 81-86.

Previously, all that was necessary were the cheap and plentiful 'Three Hundred Thousand' (the *Three Character Classic*, *Hundred Family Names*, and *Thousand Character Classic*), sold in thousands by provincial bookstores, and the Four Books. Paper, pens, and books were brought to the school door by travelling pedlars.¹⁴

The adoption of the principle that schools should teach through specially written texts gave rise to problems of composition, production, distribution, and reception. The government aimed unsuccessfully at exercising the central control over school texts possessed by Japan's Ministry of Education. In 1902, with the promulgation of the first regulations for the new schools, Peking University (then head of the school system) drew up a plan for the compilation of school texts in the classics, history, geography, ethics, and literature.¹⁵ Little had been done by 1909, when the revised primary school regulations appeared with lists of prescribed texts for each grade compiled by the Ministry of Education's textbook section. Owing to the latter's waste and inefficiency, many of the series named were not yet in existence, and those which did exist were of uneven standard and allocated to the wrong levels.¹⁶

The gap was filled by the Commercial Press and other publishing houses.¹⁷ The Press brought out its own series of elementary readers, which, published in 1905, had by 1906 sold a third of a million copies.¹⁸ The

14. Smith, *Village Life in China*, p. 107-09.

15. Shu (ed.), *Shiliao*, Vol. II, 254-57.

16. Jiang Mengmei, 'Qian-Qing Xue Bu bian shu zhi zhuangkuang', in Shu (ed.), *Shiliao*, Vol. II, p. 260.

17. For the history of the Commercial Press, see Wang Yunwu, *Shangwu yinshuguan yu xin jiaoyu nianpu*. For the contribution made by missionary publishers, see Wang Shuhuai, 'Jidujiao Jiaoyuhui ji qi chubanshiye / The Educational Association of China and its Publications, (1890-1912)', in *Jindaishi yanjiusuo jikan*, II (1971), 365-96. Further details on textbook publishing in the late Qing may be found in 'Jiaokeshu zhi fakan gaikuang', in Zhang, *Jindai Zhongguo chubanshiliao*, chubian, 225-44.

18. Peake, *Nationalism and Education in Modern China*, p. 180.

Zhili Education Office was also active in this field: its patriotic primer, *What a Citizen Must Read (Guomin Bidu)* was printed in a first edition of a hundred thousand copies.¹⁹

At the advanced level, most texts were translations. A survey of the publications advertised by the Commercial Press in 1904 shows that out of 153 works, forty were translated from Japanese and twenty-seven from Western languages. Of the remainder only twenty-seven were original Chinese works rather than second-hand compilations.²⁰

Heavy reliance on imported texts was natural when the teaching subjects were themselves importations, but brought problems of unfamiliar concepts and language. These were carried over into books written by Chinese, who used the vocabulary current in Japan to translate terms of Western origin and who assumed their own level of general knowledge in the reader. Even a deliberately popular work such as *Guomin bidu*, written in the vernacular for use in mass education, chose illustrations of its themes from European and American history.²¹ The choice of texts for the public lectures which were to replace the *xiangyue* reflects the well-stocked bookshelf of a Western-oriented intellectual rather than the tastes of the illiterate villagers or townfolk at whom they were aimed. Works to be read aloud included *Robinson Crusoe*, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, biographies of Clive and Nelson, and a narrative of a journey through Australia.²²

The new texts were relatively dear (although the cost of each volume was low at the elementary level, whole sets had to be purchased for each of the eight primary school subjects). Since most were produced in Shanghai, their distribution elsewhere was a problem. Nor was the matter ended when appropriate texts were finally in the hands of the students.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 58.

20. Wang Shuhuai, 'Jidujiao Jiaoyuhui ji qi chuban shiye', p. 388. Not all these works were textbooks.

21. See Peake, *Nationalism and Education in Modern China*, p. 58.

22. *X uebu guanbao*, IV (1906), Shending shumu, 5b-7b. These and other texts were supposed to inculcate bravery, love of country, and self-reliance.

The women of a Cantonese village insisted on the abandonment of an apparently innocuous primer containing the names of household implements because two of these were used in funeral ceremonies, and the book was thus inauspicious.²³

Difficulties of communication, in both senses, continued to plague the Republican school system. In 1924, Shu Xincheng made a tour of four provinces. He reported that in his home county, Xupu, people felt

no interest at all in reading about events in Shanghai. Consequently, in all Hsu-pu [Xupu], an area of 300 square miles with a population of 300,000, there are only nine copies of a Shanghai newspaper and some six copies of the *Educational Review* [*Jiaoyu zazhi*]. In the Bureau of Education, Shanghai newspapers [are] always a month late because of slow communication... Teachers in Hsu-pu are ignorant of national events. They have heard of the 'New Educational System' promulgated by the government two years ago, but they are ignorant of its substance, no detailed syllabus of it having been promulgated in the rural areas. Words like 'economical' and 'historical background', adopted from Western languages and long in use in the city, are not comprehensible to teachers in rural China.

The situation in Chengtu, the provincial capital of Szechwan, is even worse... In Po-tsu-chen, a rural town on the Chungking-Chengtu route, ... textbooks in use are five years out of date and are those that the Ministry of Education in Peking has declared 'obsolete' and suppressed.²⁴

The subjects taught in the new schools - foreign languages, mathematics, science, history, geography, sport - were received with varying degrees of enthusiasm in different parts of the country, depending on their perceived utility. The people's view of utility was often the opposite of that of bureaucrats and educationalists: they flocked to subjects with an immediate economic value, and were wary of those whose value lay in the

23. William Liu, interview. A similar fatality was associated with the colour white; one pupil used to change out of the white hat and shoes of his summer uniform at school rather than alarm his grandmother by wearing them home. (Yang Yinpu, 'Sishiba zishu', in Zhuo Li and Wu Fan (ed.), *Dangdai zuojia zizhuan ji* (Chongqing, 1945), p. 34.)

24. Quoted in Y.C. Wang, *Chinese Intellectuals and the West*, p. 182.

promotion of long-term national goals. The careful balance of the claims of old and new subjects in the curricula promulgated in 1904 were disregarded in practice, as some subjects outran and others lagged behind the intentions of their inaugurators. The divergence is especially marked in the fate of English courses on the one hand, and scientific and technical courses and physical education on the other.²⁵

The study of English had long been popular in the treaty port regions as the avenue to a secure, well-paying position in a foreign firm or in the customs or telegraph administration. By the late nineties, it was losing its associations with unwilling government students and foreigners' clerks and becoming fashionable among enlightened gentry. Shanghai's *Mengxue bao* attempted to teach English through illustrated word-lists, largely mistranslated.²⁶ In Hangzhou at the turn of the century one could learn English in two newly founded schools; in Suzhou, where none had yet been opened, enthusiasts hired private tutors.²⁷

By the time the 1904 regulations were issued, Zhang Zhidong and his colleagues wished less to encourage English learning than to check its dominance. Foreign languages were noted as an important item of the curriculum for middle schools, but their teaching was discouraged in primary schools.²⁸ Such was the demand, however, that numerous privately or publicly

25. A similar discrepancy between the expectations of rulers and ruled appears to have existed in Ghana, where 'the close relationship existing between differential rewards of the occupational structure and the educational systems of colonial areas' meant that an 'academic' education in English was vocational training for clerical work, while apparently practical technical education was little use in the absence of job openings for those with modern technical training. (See Philip Foster, *Education and Social Change in Ghana*, (London, 1965), p. 65 and *passim*.)

26. See *Mengxue bao*, IX, X, XI (1896).

27. See Ma, *Wo zai liushi sui yiqian*, pp. 10-11; Bao, *Chuanyinglou huiyilu*, pp. 158-59. Neither Bao nor Ma took their study of 'the devils' language' seriously: it had not yet become the stepping stone to study abroad and consequent high rank which it was during the Republican period.

28. Taga (ed.), *Shiryō*, pp. 214-15.

founded higher primary schools offered English as a subject, often taught by teachers of dubious accomplishments. Competent English teachers could attract high salaries; specialists from the naval and language schools set up in the nineteenth century came into their own.²⁹ Japanese was slightly less popular. Within the school system, it was taught chiefly in tertiary institutions and technical schools, where instructors were often Japanese.³⁰

One would be mistaken to deduce from the widespread enthusiasm for the study of English that a new world was opening up before Chinese who could not wait to read John Stuart Mill in the original. A few were certainly impelled by intellectual curiosity, but the majority had more practical motives.³¹ A Zhili inspector wrote of Tianjin's prefectural middle school 'there is not too much wrong with its curriculum, except that English is a bit excessive. Students often don't go to Chinese classes, or if they do they read their English books in the classroom... only the supplementary students do this... they are mainly from Guangdong, Jiangsu, and Zhejiang. Their sole purpose in coming to school is to learn English with a view to making a living later on'.³² Nankai, which had a native speaker of English on its staff, taught not only English but in English: it was the language of instruction for mathematics, chemistry, and the history and geography of foreign countries.³³ The quality of their English

29. Yan Fu, their most famous graduate, headed the Anhui Higher School for a year in 1906/1907. Under him were eight English teachers and three English-teaching administrative officials (out of a total staff of twenty-three). Their combined salaries cost the school over fifteen hundred taels a year. (*Xuebu guanbao*, XXXVIII [1907], Jingwai xuewu baogao, 363b-64a).

30. On Japanese teachers in China, see Sanetō, *Chūgukujin Nihon ryūgaku shi*, pp. 94-97.

31. Among the former must be classed Wang Guowei, whose interest in Kant and Schopenhauer was fired by his Japanese teachers of European languages in 1899. (Zhao Wanli, *Wang Jingan xiansheng nianpu* (Taipei, 1971), p. 4.)

32. *Jiaoyu zazhi* I : 1 (Zhili, 1905), 39a.

33. *Xuebu guanbao*, XX (1907), 134a.

instruction was one of the main attractions of the 'aristocratic' Protestant mission schools; Chinese studies often suffered in such an environment.³⁴

The opportunities associated with a command of English attracted not only well-to-do urbanites but also village people. Of one coastal village near Shanghai, a former schoolteacher there writes: 'every parent or boy or girl with the slightest ambition always hoped to do something in Shanghai. For that, whether in industry or commerce, you needed to understand a few words of English to get your start'. The pull of the treaty-ports distorted local status structure: the chief ambition of the son of the town's main shopkeeper was to learn enough English to be a waiter in a Shanghai restaurant - a servile career he would not have considered in his own environment.³⁵

Scientific and technical subjects had less of a market than foreign languages. They required expensive equipment, often available only from the treaty-port cities, and teachers familiar with scientific method and terminology. Even English - written English, at least - could be learnt from a textbook more easily than science. Some of Guo Moruo's teachers made ludicrous mistakes. At his middle school in Sichuan, the botany teacher (a graduate of Chengdu Normal School), misread the grass form of characters for 'natural conditions' (*tianran jingxiang* 天然景象) as 'heavenly dragon conditions' (*tianlong jingxiang* 天龙景象) and proceeded to lecture the class on the difference between the flying heavenly dragons of the skies and the manifest dragons of the fields.³⁶

The most glaring discrepancy between popular expectation and educationists' vision occurred with regard to physical education. This was regarded

34. See comments in Bao, *Chuanyinglou huiyilu*, p. 336. At Qinghua, too, all other subjects were subordinated to the study of English (Li Ji, *Ganjiu lu* [Taipei, 1967], p. 13.)

35. Yu Ziyi, 'Ershi nianqian xiangcun xuexiao shenghuoli de wo', *Jiaoyu zazhi*, XIX : 12 (1927), 3.

36. Guo, *Wo de younian*, pp. 187-88.

by parents as an unnecessary frippery at best; at worst, it added substance to the suspicion that schools were a disguised form of military conscription. Old-fashioned scholars thought such activity undignified; hence the apocryphal story of the Chinese gentleman puzzled to see his foreign friend's sons play tennis themselves instead of 'letting the servants do it'. For the new educationalists, however, sport was a *sine qua non* of modern schooling, an inseparable part of the Spencerian trinity of moral, mental, and physical education. The clash between the two views is illustrated in student complaints about the prefectural school in Jiaying, where 'despite the fact that everybody knows that physical education is the most urgent task', the backward head refused to allow an instructor in military drill to be appointed on the grounds that drill injured the health.³⁷ Science and physical education were the two most frequently named omissions in lower primary schools in Henan in 1907; less than half of the schools offered the full curriculum as set in 1904.³⁸

The liveliest part of the curriculum appears to have been that with direct relevance to China's current plight. A geography lesson in a Guangdong village came to life when it consisted of colouring in the provinces of China according to their future masters: England, in red, would take Guangdong and Guangxi, Tibet and Sichuan, and Shanghai, and so on through the spectrum: France would have Yunnan and Guizhou, Japan Fujian, Germany Shandong, and Russia the northeast, until eventually only China's barren heartland, Shaanxi province, remained.³⁹ The dangers of 'partition' were

37. *Su bao* (Taipei, 1968 [1903]), no. 2454.

38. *Xuebu guanbao*, XXX (1907), Jingwai xuewu baogao, 227a-31b.

39. William Liu, interview. Geography lessons continued to be a useful stimulus to patriotism under the Republic. Martin Yang, at primary school from 1914 to 1918, vividly remembers that 'It was taught that the map of China ought to be the shape of a crab-apple leaf. This leaf has recently been damaged by many kinds of diseases and insects...' It was up to the younger generation to repair the damage. (Yang, *Chinese Social Structure* [Taipei, 1969], p. 361.)

impressed even on the minds of children.⁴⁰ History and ethics could also yield patriotic lessons on the avenging of past shame.⁴¹

The government was not enthusiastic about patriotism which put love of country before loyalty to the dynasty. Although texts included some material on China's recent history, many of the more fiery interpretations given were not part of the syllabus but were infiltrated into the classroom by patriotic teachers dissatisfied with the present conduct of affairs.

For the most part, little excitement was to be found in the Qing classroom. The Chinese predilection for rote learning joined forces with the European: students at one modern school had to write out a geography lesson from memory.⁴² Shu Xincheng found his lessons in higher primary school a boring imposition: 'what the teachers talked about was commonplace, nothing near as interesting as what I found in books'. The problem was exacerbated in Shu's case and many others by the fact that higher primary discipline and courses were aimed at ten-year olds but taken by young men; Shu at fifteen was the youngest in his class, and had already lived in the adult atmosphere of an academy.⁴³ In one primary school in Zhili, seven out of the fifteen pupils were over twenty-nine years old.⁴⁴ Students of all ages and standards had to fit the Procrustean demands of the school system.

Although the essence of the new schooling appeared to its advocates to be the subjects taught, it is arguable that the social relationships it presupposed were of equal significance. In the schools, new types of social relationship defined by new rituals clashed and commingled with existing loyalties and expectations.

40. Cao, *Wo yu wo de shijie*, p. 34.

41. See Sa Mengwu, *Xuesheng shidai* (Taipei, 1959), p. 51, Fu Zhongtao, 'Shenghuo de huiyi', in Tao Kangde (ed.), *Zizhuan zhi yizhang* (Guangzhou, 1938), p. 133.

42. Fu, 'Shenghuo de huiyi', p. 133.

43. Shu, *Wo he jiaoyu*, p. 56.

44. *Jiaoyu zazhi*, I : 1 (Zhili, 1905), 35b.

The impersonality typical of the modern school's arrangements was tempered in China by the continuing strength of systems of personal relationship. Shu Xincheng, it is true, was struck as he crossed from 'the *sishu* and academy produced by agricultural society' to the 'school produced by modern industrial society' by the indifference subsisting between teachers and pupils in the latter,⁴⁵ and one critic of the new schools' operation charged that teachers and pupils looked on them as temporary lodging rather than as their life's work.⁴⁶ This may have been true of some city schools. I pointed out in an earlier chapter that even *sishu* education had the potential in urban surroundings of becoming primarily a cash transaction with minimal personal overtones; this tendency must have been increased by the practice of having a single teacher give classes at several different schools.⁴⁷ Staff appointments, however, were often made through a network of personal acquaintance and recommendation: thus the prefectural magistrate of Qingzhou, scion of an old Suzhou family, had a Suzhou relative recruit teachers for Qingzhou's new middle school from his circle of clients and acquaintances. The man appointed head of the school, Bao Tianxiao, had received no formal modern education.⁴⁸ In one Zhejiang village, the primary school was a family affair in that the headmaster pressed into unpaid service as teachers his children and several nephews.⁴⁹

Pupils from educated families (as Shu Xincheng was not) would be likely to find kinsfolk among staff or pupils even if they attended a city school away from home. Among Guo Moruo's teachers at the prefectural higher primary school, for example, was a relative of his mother's who was also a friend of his elder brother's.⁵⁰ In private schools, the initial intake of students often depended on the circles in which the school's founder

45. Shu, *Wo he jiaoyu*, pp. 49, 51.

46. 'Lun jinri zhi jiaoyu', *Dongfang zazhi*, III : 12 (1907), *Jiaoyu*, 344 [8172].

47. See *Jiaoyu zazhi*, I : 10 (1909), *Sheshuo*, 124 [00826], for economic background.

48. *Ibid.*, pp. 276-79. For informal appointment of friends in Shanghai, see pp. 331-39.

49. Cao, *Jiangfan liushi nian*, p. 29.

50. Guo, *Wo de younian*, p. 153.

moved. An example of a school which drew its pupils from the upper levels of society is Peking's Jifu Primary School, set up by a departmental director of the Board of Punishments. It attracted the grandson of a first-place *jinshi* and the son of one of the pupils of the famous scholar Wu Rulun, as well as the sons of old friends and family connections and the founder's own son.⁵¹ The latter went on to Nankai Middle School in Tianjin partly because his father had been one of the examiners when Yan Xiu, its founder, sat the palace examination.⁵² With the private school as with the *sishu*, reciprocal obligation might be implied. As *sishu* teachers were often appointed from another locality for this reason, so parents sometimes preferred a modern private school *not* run by an acquaintance to avoid the embarrassment of future claims. In Guangdong in the early 1900's, 'educated families were all unwilling to send boys to private schools, fearing that the school's founder might seize on this as a favour done to the family, even to the extent of saying that those pupils who got anywhere should be mindful of giving a due return for the care spent on their education.'⁵³ Unwilling pupils at one rural school attended only because their fathers wanted to store up social credit with the school's manager.⁵⁴

Whether honoured in the breach or the observance, informal and particular ties cut across the supposedly universal relationships of the modern school. They were evident not only in the persistent influence of personal links but in the continuation of local particularism. This was frequently institutionalized: schools set up from local or provincial funds often limited their intake to natives of the areas under their jurisdiction, or waived fees for them but charged outsiders.⁵⁵ At the prefectural or pro-

51. Li Zongtong, 'Wu da chen chuyang yu Beijing diyike zhadan', *Zhuanji wenxue* IV : 4 (1964), 36.

52. Li Zongtong, 'Cong jiashu dao Nankai Zhongxue', *Zhuanji wenxue*, IV : 6 (1964), 44.

53. Yu Jiaju, *Huiyilu*, p. 21.

54. Wen Tian, 'Shu neidi banxue qingxing', *Jiaoyu zazhi*, I : 7 (1909), zazuan, 43-44 [00619-20].

55. See *Shuntian shibao*, 5 April 1902.

vincial level, entry was often by county quota. When the first middle school in Jiading Prefecture, Sichuan, opened, it recruited not only students but teachers on the basis of their county. The attempt failed lamentably, partly because the cultural standards of the counties were uneven.⁵⁶ Students were divided into classes by county, and sought their friends on the same basis. Each county's products were supposed to have their own characteristics: 'Loshan people and those from Jianwei were rather urban, even frivolous, in their ways; people from Weiyuan and Rongxian were very rough; those from Emei and Hongya and Jiajiang were simply country bumpkins'.⁵⁷ Feeling along provincial lines was also strong. An isolated non-Hunanese in the Hunan military primary school was teased and rebuffed constantly.⁵⁸ Sometimes both teachers and students would pick on outsiders. One Peking school gained the nickname of 'fellow-countryman school' because of blatant displays of partiality.⁵⁹

Administratively or emotionally based discrimination against outsiders combined with dialect differences and pride of place made it common for extraprovincials to band together and found their own schools in cities where they formed a large community. In Jiangning, for example, where the staff accompanying officials was usually Hunanese, 'some of the boys study at the various official schools, but because they don't understand the teachers' accents, there has been a general discussion about raising money to open a school for them with Hunanese teachers'.⁶⁰ The *huiquan* (会馆) was often used as a site. In Baoding, a school was set up for students from the Liangjiang region. It appears to have been created primarily with the aim of restraining juvenile delinquency among the sons of officials and their staff, who were wont to 'band together to seek enjoyment, causing a great problem'. They were the genteel equivalent of the rehabilitation

56. Guo, *Wo de younian*, p. 167.

57. *Ibid.*, p. 178.

58. Liu Zhi, *Wo de huiyi* (Taipei, 1966), p. 2.

59. *Shuntian shibao*, 1 January 1904.

60. *Dongfang zazhi*, II : 2 (1905), [3343].

and training centres for the lower orders, needed because the families of these young men 'are unwilling to have them follow a trade. The best follow their fathers as officials and secretaries. The remainder sink into the depths and are heard of no more.' The document from which these extracts come, an appeal for official support, draws together the social justifications for mass education with those of education for the upper ranks of society. The appeal was couched with an eloquence reminiscent of the *Xinmin congbao*: 'every unemployed person in the country means one less of use to the country. Every uneducated person means one less who is intelligent. Unemployment breeds poverty and ignorance weakness. To be weak and poor without seeking complete change and the restoration of one's country's affairs is to invite irreparable destruction'.⁶¹ Its author thus wove into the theme of national salvation the motifs of provincial solidarity and respectable self-protection. Baoding also had a school for Shandong students. Another was planned by Hubei officials and merchants which, cutting across class boundaries, was to be open to the sons of 'officials, their secretaries, craftsmen and merchants'.⁶²

To unity based on place and acquaintance was added that fostered by the borrowed ritual of the school itself. Group activities gave staff and students a consciousness of the school as a distinct organism. Some of them bore a semi-official character: on Confucius' birthday, fixed as a national holiday for schools in the 1904 regulations, bands of schoolchildren would attend the temple of Confucius to pay their respects.⁶³ This ceremony was also observed by *sishu*. Schoolchildren were organized to observe the funeral of the Emperor and Empress Dowager in 1908.⁶⁴ A display of students was thought to gladden the heart of visiting dignitaries. Bao Tianxiao, head of the Qingzhou Middle School in 1904, organized a show of

61. *Shuntian shibao*, 15 May 1904.

62. *Dongfang zazhi*, I : 7 (1904), Jiaoyu, 168 [1664].

63. See Taga (ed.), *Shiryō*, p. 382.

64. See Shu, *Wo he jiaoyu*, pp. 57-58.

students at the railway station through which the Governor of Shandong's train would pass; he was much chagrined to find that the governor had slept through the whole thing.⁶⁵

As well as acting as extras at official public events, schools staged their own. The first schools exhibition was arranged by Yan Xiu in Tientsin after a tour of inspection in Japan. In 1909 a Jiangsu provincial exhibition was held in Shanghai, which had become a centre for educational innovation.⁶⁶ A more genial affair was the exhibition hosted by a Peking girls' training centre, which, opening to the public on the centre's anniversary, offered films and children's games as well as a display of handicrafts produced by girls' schools.⁶⁷ At an exhibition organized the same year by the Ministry of Education, one of the main attractions was a primary school students' band; clad in semi-military attire, the students sang, drummed, and played the piano and trumpet to an appreciative audience.⁶⁸ Such secular celebrations of learning could perhaps be regarded as the modern equivalent of ceremonies at Confucius' temple. They reassured education-
alists of the value of what they were doing, at the same time serving as public relations exercises. These could however go amiss: indignant protests reached the Ministry when the girl students of Peking sold their own handicrafts and put on a performance of songs and dances to raise money for women's education. A circus, advertised as an additional attraction, became an additional offence. The Ministry characteristically tried to placate both sides: classical precedents could be found for the sales, but couldn't the girls send the articles through others? Singing and dancing were not only against Chinese custom and morality, but would take students' minds off their work. Circuses were even worse. In any case, at this early stage those connected with women's education should be especially

65. Bao, *Chuanyinglou huiyilu*, pp. 296-97.

66. *Jiaoyu zazhi*, I : 7 (1909), Pinglun, 9-11 [00603-05].

67. *Xingqi huabao*, XLV (1907).

68. *Ibid.*, XXXIX (1907). See Plate VII.

careful to give no one any excuse for obstruction.⁶⁹

Schools used their ceremonies both to increase cohesion among staff and students and add dignity to their pursuits, and to forge links with hoped-for supporters from outside. The opening of a private higher school in Peking in 1903 was attended by over a hundred distinguished guests, among them the *Guansxue dachen* Zhang Boxi, a Japanese professor, and three grandchildren of a Manchu noble. The school had all the latest equipment and ideology, being dedicated to developing primary education with a view to training citizens first and talent second; in short, 'it was in no particular inferior to the schools of civilized countries.'⁷⁰ The contradiction between the school's prohibitive cost and restricted clientele and its aim of spreading mass education does not appear to have troubled its founder. What illusions veiled the discrepancy between belief and reality? The new educationalists believed in the coming of the Kingdom - a 'civilized' China. Ahead of the disorder and poverty around them, they saw shapes of order, rationality, and courtliness, a society which would recognize them at their true worth. The schools were the first earnest of this larger vision. A faith as devout and as contrary to all visible evidence as that of the early Christians assured them of its eventual full realization. In the meantime the schools, as elements of that society transferred into the present, bore ineradicably its characteristics of equality and enlightenment. Any shortfalls were not the result of the institutions but of the malice or ignorance of those not committed to the new order. To these the new school, despite its many excellencies, duly fell a victim. Few students enrolled and it ran into financial difficulties from which it was temporarily rescued by its founder's fellow Hunanese. It was probably founded too early; the forces of civilization gained a number of recruits when the examination system was abolished.

Girls' schools tended to be run on more conservative lines than men's. The students, for example, almost always wore Chinese dress; any other was

69. Taga (ed.), *Shiryō*, p. 472.

70. See *Shuntian shibao*, 21 September 1903, 22 November 1903, and 10 January 1904.

forbidden by the 1907 regulations on girls' schools.⁷¹ It seems that the novelty of affording women an education had to be countered by the strictest observance of decorum. The opening ceremony of a girls' school founded by a legacy from a Manchu lady, pictured in the popular press, combined piety towards the past with commitment to the future: twenty-two girls are shown kneeling in front of an altar under the words 'Rear talent and promote education'.⁷² Within the more modern of the new schools, joint activities, often of Western origin, formed bonds between staff and students. At several schools, students acted in 'civilized plays' or those which used spoken dialogue instead of the singing of Chinese opera.⁷³ 'Civilized' was a term of commendation used of all that came from the West or Japan, in contrast to what was barbarous or indigenous - striking evidence of the extent to which some Chinese were cleaving to a new way of life.

An idea of informal activities can be gained by looking at the photographs printed in the *Jiaoyu zazhi* for the late Qing. Here one must observe that photography, another Western import, itself constituted a group activity, usually necessitating the hiring of a professional photographer. The resultant photograph, however artlessly posed, constituted a permanent reminder of the unity and uniqueness of the school group. On the subject of photography as an instrument of group definition, it is interesting to note that the first action of the students who marched out of Nanyang Gongxue was to have a joint photograph taken.⁷⁴

Favourite photographic topics, in addition to the standard class group, were excursions and sports meetings. School classes, often in military uniform, would be seen in noted beauty spots, often under a flag bearing the name of their school. Flags were also an important adjunct of sports meetings. An illustration published under the heading 'Progress among our

71. Taga, (ed.), *Shiryō*, pp. 459-468.

72. *Xingqi huabao*, XXIII (1907). See Plate XIII.

73. See Bao, *Chuanyinglou huiyilu*, p. 343.

74. *Xinhai geming huiyilu*, Vol. V, p. 72.

citizens' showed the dragon flag of China waving over a mixed assortment of national flags, among them the Union Jack and the Korean flag, on the occasion of a sports meeting held by three Peking schools on the Empress's birthday. In addition to those connected with the schools, a number of schoolmasters from reformed *sishu* brought their pupils along to gaze at the runners.⁷⁵ The first non-mission school sports day was held in Wuchang in 1903 at one of Zhang Zhidong's new schools. Duan Fang, Zhang's successor as governor-general of Hunan and Hubei, was also a patron of sport: at a mission school's commencement ceremonies, he not only watched a game of football but kicked the ball himself.⁷⁶

Sport was seen as being closely connected with martial ardour. Physical exercise was compulsory at every school at all levels. It often consisted of military drill under the eyes of an officer or a graduate from military school, though callisthenics were coming into use in some schools and were recommended for young children.⁷⁷ The stylized Chinese martial arts had no place in the curriculum. They had been solitary arts, or at best a paired performance: the new drills and races were meant to toughen up the citizens of a nation. The Chinese still felt some hesitation about body-contact sports, but really Westernized schools practised these as well. A photograph of the Nanyang Public Institution's football team is startling in its resemblance to that of a British public school of the 1900's.⁷⁸

Sports meetings did not always inspire outsiders with the desired martial spirit. Liu Bannong, writing in 1917, when the new custom was already a commonplace in the main cities, gives a comic picture of the milling throng, where the scent of perfume mingles with the stink of sweat and the sound of clapping and cheering forms a general hubbub with the Japanese *anata, anata*, and the Englishman's 'Yes, really', the young man-

75. *Xingqi huabao*, LIII (1907). See Plate IX.

76. *The Chinese Recorder*, XXXVII : 9 (1906), 509.

77. See Shu, *Wo he jiaoyu*, p. 116.

78. *Jiaoyu zazhi*, I : 13 (1910), [01065]. See Plate X.

about-town's Shanghai slang and the complaint of bound-footed ladies that 'My feet are killing me'. Liu calls this sports meeting, which appears in one of his popular short stories, 'Envy-the-West'. What educators thought of as patriotism could appear mere imitation to outsiders.⁷⁹

Liu's choice of a name emphasizes the fact that almost all of the observances of the new schools were of foreign origin, both in spirit and equipment. A group of Chinese were eager to import into China the discipline, patriotism, and warlike spirit which they believed to be signified in the running of races and the raising of flags. Unfortunately, the gaze of many of their countrymen remained obstinately fixed on the outlandish accoutrements of these activities rather than penetrating to the values they were meant to embody.

One species of corporate activity with which I have not yet dealt is the school strike. Strikes, petitions, meetings and walk-outs could be called the new schools' rituals of disunity, as opposed to the rituals of unity discussed above. Many historians have written on the participation of students and teachers in revolutionary activities prior to the 1911 revolution, and the memoirs of contemporaries are apt to emphasize even the most tenuous connection with revolution. Here I wish to place political activities in the context of the rebellion against both the restrictions of tradition and the restrictions of modernity - on the one hand, against continued enforcement of intellectual submission to the ruling orthodoxy, on the other against contraction of accustomed freedom of personal action.

Later writers have stressed the government's repression of student activity in the sphere of national politics. At the time, students appear to have found even more irksome the petty restrictions of school life. The new system, in boarding schools in particular (that is, most higher primary and middle schools), had an unprecedented plethora of regulations and supervisory personnel. From the first gong in the morning to the last at night, a student's every waking moment was theoretically under scrutiny. In a well-run school, staff kept a record not only of students' academic work

79. Liu Bannong, 'Xiepu. luchen ji' in *Xiaoshu huabao*, I (1917), 5.

but of their conduct. A certain number of black marks could lead to expulsion.⁸⁰

All this was the opposite of most students' previous educational experience. The few academies which had had resident students had allowed them to leave and enter at will and study as they pleased. Resentment of the new rules often took the form of defiance. One rural school

gave the appearance of an old deserted temple, its three teachers like old monks who had entered Nirvana. No matter what day it was, there was never one when the students were all gathered there together. Although the two sons of the house where I was staying were enrolled in the school, one never went there and the other came and went early or late as he pleased. I used to tell the teachers... that they should make an example of specially bad cases, giving them black marks and punishments as a warning to the others. The teachers said that if they did, they would have a student movement on their hands,... the students, they said, complained all the time that they were restricted by the school and had lost their free amusements.⁸¹

In a plea for the tightening up of school discipline made in 1911, the Zhejiang Commissioner for Education pointed a gloomy picture of the current situation, in which

teachers don't come to school on time, but take holidays on some pretext; or after the bell's been rung, students trickle in at different times; or teachers are too lenient, and students insult them; or students talk and laugh as they please while the teacher is talking; or groups of students amuse themselves roaming the streets, acting improperly, with absolutely no checks made by those in charge; or students don't study in their study rooms, but amuse themselves as they will, and again those in charge ignore it.⁸²

80. Taga (ed.), *Shiryō*, pp. 384-85.

81. Wen Tian, 'Shu neidi banxue qingxing', *Jiaoyu zazhi*, I : 7 (1909), Zazuan, 43-44 [00619-20].

82. *Jiaoyu zazhi*, III : 6 (1911), Jishi, 46-47 [02957-58].

Simmering discontent among students was increased by the poor quality of their living conditions. They were often crowded into makeshift dormitories and given poor or insufficient food. Several cooks left Qingzhou Middle School in 1903 after being beaten up by dissatisfied students.⁸³ The authorities at Wucheng Gongxue, set up in Peking in 1898 on the crest of the wave of reform, had a great deal of trouble with refractory students. An examination question set at the school gives an indirect picture of their grievances in listing the sufferings of foreign students, possibly in the hope of eliciting a patriotic response:

Foreign countries are extremely hard on their students and give them only rank, cold, unpalatable beef for lunch. At night they have to sleep on long benches, as uncomfortable as caged prisoners. Naval and military students are penned up in a most cruel way. But the method of examination is extremely fair; in the Paris Law School, for example, students are examined by drawing lots for questions in their subjects, after which they write answers on the blackboard. Those who pass get three ticks and are clapped by the rest of the class. This is a most august ceremony. But although they are normally treated with such cruelty no one has ever been heard of as leaving the school. Why do they stay?⁸⁴

In themselves, living conditions and regulations are insufficient to account for the constant eruption of student strikes and walk-outs. For this one must look to relations between staff and students. It was not simply the presence of regulations that provoked the students, but the question of authority to administer them; not simply poor food, but mishandling of protests about its quality. The schools placed staff and students in a novel situation. It would be an oversimplification to say that they represented a transition from a personal to an impersonal mode of teaching; with most post-elementary pupils studying in schools with less than sixty students, and a low staff/student ratio, there was plenty of room for friendships to grow or grudges to fester. Rather, teachers and students were passing from an area in which personal relationships were, within

83. Bao, *Chuanyinglou huiyilu*, p. 290.

84. *Shuntian shibao*, 2 May 1903.

certain limits, knowable in advance to one in which they were not. This was only in part a question of pre-existing personal acquaintance. Certainly under the new system teachers were less likely to be relatives or family friends, or even to come from the same region, than they had been previously. Even so, as I pointed out in a previous chapter, the network of social relationships based on personal acquaintance, kinship, and local place continued to operate within the new schools.

The problem was not so much the lack of personal ties as an uncertainty as to their sphere. The new roles of pupils and teachers were not clearly defined, the values on which they were predicated were in flux. Guo Moruo's schoolteacher-relative acted as a mediator between the school and his father after he was expelled for being rude to the head.⁸⁵ This was the customary method of settling minor disputes; but its validity was uncertain in the changed surroundings of the new school.

No agreement had been reached over the principles and limits within which school life should be regulated. What for one side was a rising against 'oppression' and 'enslavement' was for the other simply indiscipline and lack of self-control. The pages of the *Su bao* are filled with the accusations and justifications of anonymous student correspondents, selecting from the new doctrines on the rights of man and the duties of the citizen such arguments as suit their case.⁸⁶ The authority of teachers over students was brought into question partly because many of the new teachers had themselves cast off the authority of the older generation. It was they who stigmatized as reactionary all defenders of the eight-legged essay, who denigrated the examination system, who attempted to reform or proscribe *sishu*.

Clashes were predictable when student adherents of the new ways were placed under their opponents. In Changsha, they took to the governor an

85. Guo Moruo, *Wo de younian*, pp. 153-54.

86. See especially the debate on the student walk-out from Zhejiang University (the former Qiushi Xuetang) in *Su bao*, Xuejie fengchao, 11 May 1903, 13 May 1903, 18 May 1903, 19 May 1903.

appeal against a known reactionary said to have been made head of the normal school simply to buy off his opposition.⁸⁷ In Guangzhou, student protests against the quality of their teaching were made through a satirical wall-poster.⁸⁸ Thirty-two Yangzhou students left their school after quarrelling with a notorious diehard.⁸⁹ Where the coastal provinces and the Yangzi basin were concerned, such protests often ended with the dismissal or resignation of the unsatisfactory teacher. The situation appears to have been otherwise in the interior: a student was said to have been expelled from a Shaanxi school simply for having included foreign names in his paper, these having been taken as evidence that he was a supporter of Kang Yuwei and reader of the *Xinmin congbao*.⁹⁰

If old-fashioned staff were sometimes to blame for clashes, there was also the problem of old-fashioned students, who were not going to let a nominal change from independent to subservient status interfere with their customary entertainments. There was no way of enforcing the prohibition of opium-smoking in schools. Students would leap over the school wall or make an arrangement with the doorkeeper so that they could spend their nights in gambling dens or brothels.⁹¹ It appears that the establishment of a government school was as welcome to law-abiding townsfolk as the quartering of a detachment of troops or the triennial influx of examination candidates (when, according to Chen Duxiu, shopkeepers were at the mercy of riotous students).⁹²

Those in authority did not distinguish clearly between dissipation and the new fashion for indulging in riotous defiance of authority. At one centre of student revolutionary activity, Wuhu Middle School, the student

87. *Shuntian shibao*, 20 September 1903.

88. *Ibid.*, 15 November 1903.

89. *Ibid.*, 10 May 1903.

90. *Ibid.*, 10 July 1903.

91. See Bao, *Chuanyinglen huiyilu*, p. 302, Guo, *Wo de younian*, p. 168, *Shuntian shibao*, 17 July 1903, 26 July 1904.

92. Chen Duxiu, *Shi'an zizhuan* (Taipei, 1967), p. 39.

body was said to be so accustomed to doing as it pleased that the head of the provincial education society determined to graduate it *en masse* and enroll new students.⁹³ The school inspector's fear that even this move would not offset the corrupting influence of the school's location, the treaty port of Wuhu, was proved correct when new students, 'habituated to wildness', drove out the head of the school and beat up a servant after being served a poor dinner.⁹⁴

More daunting to those with hopes of the unifying power of a modern educational system was the continued frequency of disturbances in schools at which both staff and students might have been expected to show a commitment to or at least acceptance of the new system. Commenting on an incident in 1910 in which a head tried to expel his whole school, a writer for the *Jiaoyu zazhi* noted that 'when education was first getting under way, the teachers did not understand education and the students did not follow the rules, so the frequency of clashes was understandable. But now almost all scholars are produced by the schools alone, and education has been promoted for years. When the present situation is still like this what hope can one have for the future?'⁹⁵

Many clashes were not over points of ideology but over trivia. An inkbottle on a teacher's chair, denial of a holiday, chili taken from a teacher's table - all these could set in motion a complex sequence of apologies demanded and denied, depositions and reprisals, intercessions and expulsions. A contemporary writer observed that 'all so-called teachers do for their students today is give them a few high-sounding clichés: "You gentlemen are the talents who will arrest our decline, you are China's future leaders" ... all vague and groundless... and increasing their rowdy ways. There is certainly no feeling between teacher and disciple. They

93. *Xuebu guanbao*, XXXVIII (1907), *Jingwai xuewu baogao*, 384a-b, Mary Backus Rankin, *Early Chinese Revolutionaries: Radical Intellectuals in Shanghai and Zhejiang, 1902-1911* (Cambridge, Mass., 1971), p. 180.

94. *Jiaoyu zazhi*, II : 5 (1910), *Jishi*, 39 [01727].

95. *Jiaoyu zazhi*, II : 4 (1910), *Jishi*, 32 [01610].

are never together for more than a few months without clashes arising, in which teachers regard their schools as temporary lodgings and students look on their teachers the same way as the owner ordering his servants around'.⁹⁶

Certainly the ideology of the new school system - the vision of its part in a new China - increased both the confidence and the frustration of students. They were the heralds of a new age, but it was disappointingly slow to follow their summons. In the meantime, they battled real and imaginary relics of the past and slights to the present.

Old-fashioned license joined with a new-found sense of superiority in students at the new schools. Teachers who knew less than they did aroused their scorn. Where moral rather than factual correctness was concerned, they were arbiters of 'civilized behaviour' - that supposed to be current in the industrialized West and Japan. The attribution of civilization to foreigners and barbarism to Chinese divides two generations. Foot-binding was 'barbarous' - to the young; the older generation might be roused to fury by such a description.⁹⁷ The word was used as a stick to beat teachers and superiors. Guo Moruo's recreation of student unrest at his old school may owe a little to imagination as well as memory, but renders superbly the attitude of students to their elders. At an interview with the headmaster over a dining-hall quarrel, the exasperated man struck a young student who burst into tears. 'I could not hold myself back,' writes Guo. "'Mr Yi, really that was barbarous". "Yes, barbarous, barbarous!" the students outside the window all started calling out. "Barbarous headmaster! Barbarous headmaster! - How could anyone still strike a student in these civilized times! - It's too inhumane, it's despising us!"'⁹⁸

Resentment and revolt in the schools did not arise in a vacuum, but was a by-product of the Western invasion which had provided both the impulse

96. 'Lun jinri zhi jiaoyu', *Dongfang zazhi*, III : 12 (1907), Jiaoyu, 344 [8172].

97. See Guo Moruo, *Wo de younian*, p. 76.

98. *Ibid.*, p. 140.

and the model for reform. When, despite the new school system and the reform of the army, foreigners were still not set to rout, thwarted nationalism turned easily to anti-Manchuism. Here again, the model was a foreign one: China's young intellectuals took up the slogans of 'freedom' and 'equality' used in the French revolution. ('Equality' did not refer to the equality of different social classes but to the equality of generation, race, and sex within the elite). They were a justification of rebellion not only against the Manchus but against all dictatorial control by the older generation. In the vacuum left by the abolition of the examinations, the government struggled ineffectually to regain its once automatic control over the educated, while students sought to preserve their former freedoms from the encroachment of new rules by an assumed superiority to the makers of the rules. The new schools supplanted the examination system as a means of defining the elite; at the same time, they offered young men a vehicle for rebellion against the elite in the persons of those set over them, and provided ideal surroundings for conspiracy.

In Tokyo and the treaty ports and provincial capitals - wherever a concentration of higher level schools gathered young men together - schools became centres of revolutionary sentiment. A reading of the memoirs of former students collected in *Xinhai geming huiyilu* shows that almost every province had its cadre of Tongmeng Hui members, scattered through middle and higher level schools.⁹⁹ Even if a school's staff and students did not actively espouse revolution, they had access to newspapers, books, and journals with the latest theories from Shanghai and Tokyo - and the latest stories of student revolt, for the press found in the new schools not only a market but a source of news.¹⁰⁰

99. For summaries of student revolutionary activity in recent secondary sources, see Rankin, *Early Chinese Revolutionaries*, Joseph W. Esherick, *Reform and Revolution in China: the 1911 Revolution in Hunan and Hubei* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1976), and Edward Rhoads, *China's Republican Revolution: the Case of Kwangtung, 1895-1913* (Cambridge, Mass., 1975).

100. For examples of the circulation of forbidden periodicals, see Bao Tianxiao, 'Cha gongke', *Yueyue xiaoshuo*, I : 8 (1907), 170-71, Li Jianhou, 'Wuchang shouyi qianhou yishi baze', *Xinhai geming huiyilu*, Vol. II, p. 81.

Currents of dissatisfaction circulated and recirculated in limited channels: for the majority of the population, the very meaning of the word *geming* (revolution) was unknown. Modern theories, like the modern discipline of the schools in which they were preached, passed them by. 'The transformation of the people' which reformers hoped to achieve through the schools had to await the more all-embracing solicitude of the Communist Party.

C O N C L U S I O N

In the school system developed in Europe and Japan during the nineteenth century, the government and the new middle class found a convenient tool for their common interest in the maintenance of stability and good order. The Chinese government and gentry were at first wary of the foreign example, reformers among them preferring to improve Chinese institutions, but by the end of the century repeated defeat and able propaganda from those in direct or indirect contact with the West persuaded the government that a school system was a necessity for survival. Its advocates hoped by transplanting Japan's school system to China to achieve her results: a strong, united state with an enlightened and law-abiding populace. How far was the transplant successful, and what effects did it have?

The first part of this question can be answered with relative ease. The central government did not have the administrative reach or the fiscal resources for a centralized, universal school system, and gentry response to the call for new schools was sporadic and limited. By the end of the dynasty, most of the school-age population (including nearly all women) were not at school at all; most of those at school were in *sishu*; and most of those in so-called new schools found them little different from *sishu*. Genuinely modern schools were largely an urban phenomenon.

The second question is a much more complex one. An educational sociologist has reminded us that once set up, a school system acts 'as a relatively independent variable... promoting or impeding change and producing unintended as well as intended and dysfunctional as well as functional consequences'.¹ In China, the government hoped that the new education would be a perfected version of the old, leading to that transformation of the people sought in vain through the *xiangyue*, but found the new schools seedbeds of dissidence. It assumed that control of schooling would lie with the centre, as control of the examinations had done, but found that the local, non-official funding of the new schools led not only to staff

1. J.E. Floud and A.H. Halsey, 'The Sociology of Education', *Current Sociology*, VII : 3 (1958), quoted in Foster, *Education and Social Change in Ghana*, p. 6.

and student independence but also to gentry demands for an increased say in local, provincial, and national government. Thus rather than subordinating the gentry more effectively to the central government, the new schools weakened the ties between them.

Those of the elite who advocated the new schools as a means of remaking the rest of the populace in their own enlightened image were disappointed by the lack of response from the more backward of their fellows and from the masses. Obstinate gentry and ignorant rustics persisted in regarding the new schools as 'foreign', the *sishu* as Chinese. The uniforms, drill, textbooks and subjects intended as the outward sign of impending civilization became barriers marking off the beneficiaries of the new education from their fellow countrymen in dress, speech, and habits. Shopkeepers and peasants were taxed to support a system whose schools they did not attend and whose purpose they did not understand. The division between the school-educated elite and the masses cannot be blamed wholly on the schools themselves, since it developed along previous fault-lines, but the school system codified and rigidified it.

More modest aims were entertained by the members of the gentry who switched to the new schools to ensure their sons a future on the abolition of the old examinations in 1905. The schools became a vehicle of social mobility not only for them but for the sons of business families, for whom academic study and a business career no longer led in opposite directions since English was equally important for both. The new schooling thus gave a common culture to the younger generation of urban gentry and merchant families, but restricted opportunities for its acquisition by rural dwellers of both groups for whom the cost of boarding was prohibitive.

Students at the new schools resented the restrictions imposed on their customary freedom. Old patterns of authority derived from an age-based network of relationships were invalid because the new learning belonged primarily to the young, but the impersonal dominion of modern management had not taken their place. Politically, a similar displacement of authority occurred as the government gave up the role of arbiter in academic achievement but was unable to carry out successfully that of law-giver of a modern centralized state. Teachers and students with personal

and patriotic grievances joined dissatisfied members of the urban elite in experimenting with formulae of union and dissent borrowed from the West which seemed to offer hopes of regaining threatened self-determination without sacrificing national well-being. The new schools were used by the gentry to consolidate their local and extend their national interests; the losers in this process of gentry aggrandizement were the central government, laggard members of the gentry, and the heavily taxed common people. In the short term, the school system can be seen as giving concentrated expression to the contradictions between the dying, ruling, and emerging sectors of the elite and between the elite and the masses. How does one tot up a balance sheet for its gains and losses viewed from historical perspective?

The innovations of the new system proved durable. The division of schooling vertically into primary, secondary and tertiary study and horizontally into academic, normal and technical training; the Ministry of Education; the triad of mental, physical, and moral development; and some of modern China's most famous educational institutions, including Peking University and Tianjin's Nankai, all date from the last years of the Qing. Many of its problems have been almost as persistent: schooling under the Republic was similarly characterized by financial shortages, popular indifference, and student unrest.

Looking at society as a whole rather than the school system in isolation, one sees in today's China continuing attempts to reconcile the training of talent and the transformation of the whole people. Through a variety of means of which schooling is one, modern values and the discipline of modern society - group action, uniform standards, punctuality and efficiency - are gradually eroding the pre-industrial modes of behaviour with which Qing educationalists contended unsuccessfully. It is likely that the transformation will not be complete for several decades.

Glossary (characters)

- daxue 大学
 Duan Fang 端方
 Fengguifen 冯桂芬
 Guanxue Dachen 管学大臣
 Guo Songtao 郭嵩焘
 Huang Zunxian 黄遵宪
 jiaohua 教化
 jiaoyu 教育
 jinshi 进士
 juren 举人
 Kang Youwei 康有为
 keju 科举
 kexue 科学
 Li Duanfen 李端芬
 Liang Qichao 梁启超
 Mingde 明德
 Nankai 南开
 Qing 清
 Rong Qing 荣庆
 shengyuan 生员
 shexue 社会学
 shishi qiushi 实事求是
 shixue 实学
 shuyuan 书院
 sishu 私塾
 tixueshi 提学使
 Wang Tao 王韬
 Wang Yangming 王阳明
 Wu Xun 武训
 xiangyue 乡约
 xiaoxue 小学
 Xue Bu 学部
 xuetang 学堂
 xuexiao 学校
 Yan Xiu 严修
 yixue (1) 义学
 yixue (2) 议学
 yucai 育才
 Zhang Boling 张伯苓
 Zhang Boxi 张百熙
 Zheng Guanying 郑观应
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