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Influences of Western Philosophy and Educational Thought in China and their Effects on the New Culture Movement

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State University of New York
College at Buffalo
Department of History and Social Studies Education

Influences of Western Philosophy and Educational Thought in China and their Effects on the
New Culture Movement

A Thesis in
History

By

Anthony C. Sturniolo

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements
for the Degree of

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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

Influences of Western Philosophy and Educational Thought In China and their Effects on the New Culture Movement

This thesis will explore the progressive development of Chinese higher education from the time of the Opium Wars in the mid-nineteenth century through the Republican Era (1928-1949). This study will argue that the development of China's modern higher education system can trace its roots back to China's humiliating defeat during the Opium Wars and the country's subsequent efforts to reform itself in the final years of the Qing dynasty and the early decades of the twentieth century.

This thesis explores how the May Fourth Movement of the early twentieth century was not a single movement but rather a phenomenon that gave rise to many different ideologies and methods on how to reform Chinese society and its system of education. Many Chinese intellectuals committed themselves to the principles of "Mr. Science and Mr. Democracy" as the twin pillars that would guide the nation to prosperity and modernity in the twentieth century. This thesis will explain how the May Fourth Movement embodied a dynamic shift from old Confucian ideals and ethics, which were replaced by new Western ideas reflected in the modern educational philosophies of Western universities and other institutions of higher learning. Once the Chinese saw the potential benefits of modern educational institutions, they were more inclined to cultivate Western learning and move toward a modernized Western educational model. Western-inspired Chinese reformers promoted academic freedom and independent research by ending the Confucian examination system and thereby changing the landscape of the Chinese higher education system.

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis will show how the Chinese adjusted their educational practices beginning in the 1850s by sending pioneering Chinese scholars to the West to study their ideas and customs. These scholars served as the catalyst for gradual educational reform in China and embodied the potential for Western learning. This study will argue that China's first steps toward experimenting with Western reform and modernization of their education system began with the era of 'self-strengthening'. Once the Chinese saw the possibilities that Western institutions could provide, they were more inclined to cultivate Western learning and move toward a modernized Western educational model.

This study will argue that the development of China's modern higher education system can trace its roots back to China's humiliating defeat during the Opium Wars. The first chapter of this study will explore China's main inspiration moving forward after being dominated by the Western powers and how the political authority of the Qing Dynasty lost legitimacy in the wake of the "unequal treaties" imposed upon China. The failures of the Opium War in the 1840s pressured China to reassess their learning practices and pursue gradual educational reform to keep pace with Western nations. Chapter One will also demonstrate how China was pressured to

meet the demands in an age of internationalization with the expansion of foreign industries and technology.

Jonathan Spence's *The Search for Modern China* (1991) provided this study with a rich source of background information along with primary source to support the transition of Chinese institutions to help gradually transition to Western learning. This thesis also utilizes Ruth Hayhoe's *China's Universities 1895-1995: A Century of Cultural Conflict* (1996) to justify China's new Western institutions during the period of 'Self-Strengthening' and the cultural diffusion that transferred ideas between Japan and China. Institutions of Western learning, such as the *Tongwenguan*, *Guangfangyanguan*, and the *Eluosi Wenguan*, were revolutionary in that these were hybrid institutions that introduced foreign language and international academic disciplines into China that had never been seen before.

Chapter Two of this thesis will then focus on China's concentration on the successes of Meiji Japan following the defeat after the Sino-Japanese War. Feudal Chinese traditions such as the Confucian examination system nevertheless began to lose their legitimacy and worth in the minds of many Chinese scholars and intellectuals. This chapter will show how reforms led to the mentality that openness to Western educational methodologies was crucial to promote Western learning needed to provide for the general enlightenment of the population.

Suzanne Pepper's *Radicalism and Education Reform in 20th Century China: The Search for an Ideal Developmental Model* (1996) helps document China's unconventional path to a modernized Western educational model. Miyazaki Ichisada's *China's Examination Hell: The Civil Service Examinations of Imperial China* (1981) helps illustrate the obsolescence of the Confucian Examination system and illustrate the curriculum of the Chinese Education system at the time as useless knowledge that contained very little use in modern affairs. Donald Dore's *The*

Diploma Disease: Education, Qualification and Development (1976) will conclude Chapter Two and explain the disconnect between the potential job market in China and the quest to better one's self based on one's own general enlightenment as opposed to obtaining elevated social position. Dore explains how the end result of learning in China was more important than how an individual thought or reasoned in the educational process and the Confucian Examination system deprived talented individuals of showcasing their unique abilities.

Chapter Three will examine the importance of the missionary movement in China and how the development in schools and educational institutions began to expose Chinese students to social activism to advocate for equality in women's education. Chow Tse-Tung's *The May Fourth Movement: Intellectual Revolution in Modern China* (1960) was analyzed in this chapter to show how the establishment of these missionary schools from the mid-nineteenth century into the twentieth century was far removed from the Chinese tradition. As teaching shifted from the Chinese language to English, many teachers at these missionary institutions were adamant about imposing westernization into Chinese culture.

This thesis used Timothy Weston's *The Power of Position: Beijing University, Intellectuals, and Chinese Political Culture* (2004) to document the reforms and educational philosophies of Western practitioners in China's most prominent institution. This thesis examines the earliest Western reforms of Beijing University to pave the way for pure research and academic freedom and integrity in both studies and Western curriculum. Men like Cai Yuanpei believed that education should be an independent enterprise tailored to each individual and should be more rewarding than the mere memorization of facts and the learning of useless and outdated knowledge. Other reforms, such as those espoused by Chen Duxiu, used the concept of media and published essays to spread Western ideas across the whole populace of the

Chinese nation. This thesis argues that contributions from men such as Hu Shih were instrumental in inspiring the Literary Revolution in China. These reformers inspired self-study and independent research and changed the landscape of the Chinese higher education system since the end of the Confucian examination system. This chapter argues how the May 4th movement was not a single movement in scope, but rather a phenomenon that held many different ideologies and methods on how to “reconstruct China”. China would embrace Science and Democracy, as the pillars they believed would lead them to prosperity in the twentieth century.

Chapter Four will explore the published works and educational philosophies of educators like John Dewey and Bertrand Russell who had visited China in the 1920s. Barry Keenan’s *The Dewey Experiment in China: Educational Reform and Political Power in the Early Republic* (1977) was used to evaluate Dewey’s educational practices and how they were unfit to coincide successfully with the present political situation in China.

CHAPTER ONE

NINETENTH CENTURY EMBARRASMENTS: FROM THE OPIUM WARS TO THE BOXER REBELLION

1.1 China is forcefully opened: The Opium Wars and the unequal treaties

Chinese attempts to put a stop to the illegal importation of opium into the country by the British East India Company triggered the start of the Opium Wars. China's humiliating defeat by the British and the country's subsequent attempt to reform and modernize marks the earliest development of the modern higher education system in China. The Opium Wars (1839-1842, 1856-1860) exposed China's weakness and its inferior technology in comparison to the Western powers. China's surrender of numerous treaty ports, and the subsequent "unequal treaties" after the Opium Wars signaled another defeat of China, where foreign agitators claimed land privileges and trading rights. The Treaty of Nanjing (1842) that ended the First Opium War granted the British special trading advantages. Shortly afterwards, the United States, Great Britain, France, and Russia imposed a succession of treaties to open Chinese markets to Western nations for optimal trading and commercial privileges. These nations were anxious to open relations with China far beyond those that were allowed under the 'Canton system'. With the abolition of the 'Canton system', China conceded authority over trading with the West that was concentrated only on the southern port city in Canton. Once the 'Canton system' was lifted, Western influence was no longer confined only to the city of Canton.

These Western nations were not, however, mandated to make any concessions in return to the Chinese. Jonathan Spence explains that “the British were given Hong Kong, and free access to trade ports in Canton, Fuzhou, Xiamen, Ningbo, and Shanghai for the purpose of carrying on their mercantile pursuits, without molestation or restraint.”¹ Britain was also granted most favored nation status. Hong Kong was established as a crown colony to provide British traders a safe harbor in which to import and export their goods.

The damaging demands of the Treaty of Nanjing stimulated the wave of “unequal treaties” imposed upon China. The Qing Dynasty was greatly weakened by the reality that their inferior technological and military capabilities were no match against a superior Western power. This further complicated the balance of world power and pressured China to succumb to the demands of the innovative West. As a result, China’s quest to reclaim its sovereignty from the Western powers began to greatly influence their domestic policies. China began to adopt Western technology, practices, and methodologies to mold their institutions of learning in hopes of rivaling their Western counterparts. Su Zhixin explains the Chinese pursuit of Western educational practice by arguing, “the Opium Wars revealed the decay and decline of the feudal dynasty and heightened social crisis. It demonstrated that many intellectuals recognized the need to learn Western science and technology to reform the old system of education.”² China’s backwardness had become so self-evident that in comparison to the Western powers that by the 1840s, China needed a reassessment of their learning practices and a gradual pursuit of educational reform. Glen Peterson agrees that the beginning of the nineteenth century and on into

¹ Jonathan D. Spence, *The Search for Modern China* (New York: Norton, 1991), 159.

² Zhixin Su, “A Critical Evaluation of John Dewey’s Influence on Chinese Education,” *American Journal of Education* 103, no. 3 (1995): 304.

the twentieth century in China had “begun an age of internationalization in China, having to reinvent itself to keep pace with foreign economies, industry, and technologies.”³

China’s embarrassment by Western powers under the unequal treaties sparked China’s initial interest in sending students abroad to study Western ideas and customs. Yung Wing (Rong Hong) was the first of these pioneering Chinese students to graduate with a bachelor’s degree from Yale and become a naturalized American citizen in 1852. Samuel Robbins Brown, who was an American missionary in China and Japan, sponsored Yung Wing. In order to finance his studies abroad, Brown recommended that Yung Wing should apply for emergency funds. The pre-condition of this agreement was that he had to participate in ministry studies and offer evangelical services in China as a missionary after his graduation. Yung Wing eventually refused however, and explained that “I wanted the utmost freedom of action to avail myself of every opportunity to do the greatest good in China...there can be hardly any limit put upon one’s ambition to do good.”⁴ Yung Wing served as an early exemplar for the Chinese of the potential that Western learning could hold for the cultural growth of their citizenry and the role it would play to help deter imperialistic powers from taking advantage of their intellectual insecurities.

Although China made incremental progress toward Western development and learning in the late 1840s, the Second Opium War (1856-1860) saw the unresolved residual effects of the First Opium War resurface once again. European imperialism that plagued China in the First Opium War continued to restrict China’s autonomy. Even though China would never be under the control of any one Western nation, like most other countries on the Asian and African continents, it was being carved into various spheres of influences for its coveted trading ports.

³ Glen Peterson, Ruth Hayhoe, and Yongling Lu, *Education, Culture, and Identity in Twentieth-century China* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University, 2001), 5.

⁴ Yung Wing, *My Life in China and America* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1909), 34.

The Western powers benefited greatly from China's appeasement and passivity to confronting foreign aggressors.

The Chinese seizure of *The Arrow* vessel in Canton was the root cause of the conflict between China and Britain. Richard Cobden explained the assault of British forces on Canton when he issued a speech to the House of Commons (February, 26, 1857), "the suburbs of Canton were pulled, burnt, or battered down, that the ships might fire upon the walls of the town ... these operations continued until the 13th of November."⁵ After learning of the provisions of the Treaty of Wangxia (1844) between the Americans and the Chinese, the British wanted the Chinese to revise their previously signed treaties. One of the most important provisions in the Treaty of Wangxia listed that the U.S. received most favored nation status and U.S. and receiving the right to modify the treaty after 12 years.

After Chinese initial willingness to accept the demands of the British, the British launched attacks on the port cities of Guangzhou and Tianjin, even though they were preoccupied with the 1857 Sepoy Mutiny in India. The British and French armies under Jean-Baptiste Louis Gros and the English army under Lord Elgin led the expedition in The Second Opium War. The joint military operation was successful in capturing the Dagu Forts near Tianjin in May 1858, which led to Chinese concessions. The Treaties of Tianjin signed by France, the United States, Great Britain, and Prussia provided for the religious toleration of Europeans in China and accepted the unrestricted preaching of Christianity in China. These unequal treaties also allowed more Chinese ports to be opened to the foreigners, permitted diplomacy in the Beijing, and allowed Christian missionary activity. Spence observed the restriction in foreign movement in China before the Treaty of Tianjin by observing that "travel anywhere inside China was

⁵ Richard Cobden, John Bright, and James E. Rogers, *Speeches on Questions of Public Policy* (London: Macmillan, 1870), 128.

permitted to only those with valid passports, and within thirty miles of treaty ports without passports.”⁶

Furthermore, Western powers were granted the privilege of setting up diplomatic relations and stationing an ambassador in Beijing. “The treaty forced the Qing to accept the establishment of a British ambassador in Peking and the opening of ten new treaty ports both on the coast and inland.”⁷ This was the beginning of foreigners exploring beyond merely the ports of China and traveling into areas that had previously been restricted. In order to enforce Chinese acceptance of British demands in the new treaty terms, the British once more planned an assault on the Dagu forts. After the Qing refused to accept a British embassy in Beijing, Lord Elgin (Britain’s Chief Treaty negotiator) ordered his troops to march on the city of Peking. The Elgin Expedition in October 1860 destroyed the Yuan Ming Yuan (Summer Palace) and captured the city of Beijing for the British.

After the burning of the Yuan Ming Yuan, dynamics of Chinese foreign relations swung from a cooperative system to a European dominated system that relied upon unchecked advantages in trade. Previously, foreign powers that wished to trade with China were mandated to conform to the “diplomatic buffer” or tributary system and pay tribute to the emperor. This recognition of the Chinese Emperor was seen as a gesture of respect and desire to ease diplomatic relations. China began to question their customs once European’s showcased their advanced technologies and superior militaries.

Along with the ongoing internal crisis of the Taiping Rebellion in the late 1850s, Chinese contention with European powers had reached a new level after the Treaties of Tianjin in 1858. These events created friction within the Qing Dynasty and contributed to the nation’s social and

⁶ Spence, *The Search for Modern China*, 180.

⁷ *Ibid.* 806.

political demise. Despite the losses brought on by the Opium Wars, these conflicts ignited the reform efforts from the “spur of national humiliation, weakness, and reaction to pave the way for new education reform.”⁸ Though the Opium Wars wreaked havoc upon Chinese society, the early initiatives such as the educational voyage of Yung Wing provided China with a sense of optimism to pursue further Western learning in spite of resentment toward Western imperialism.

1.2 The ‘self-strengthening movement: The innovation of hybrid Western schools

The disastrous aftermath of the Opium Wars was ingrained in the national consciousness of Chinese reformers, intellectuals, and traditionalists. The result was the beginning of an era in which China would experience a cultural awakening and begin moving toward Western reform and modernization. The Chinese knew that in order for ‘self- strengthening’ to be successful, they would have to build up their infrastructure by adopting Western military technologies and constructing shipyards and arsenals. They were also cognizant that for this transition to flow smoothly, the Chinese needed the tutelage of foreign consultants to mentor the Chinese in Western disciplines and academic enterprises. It was with this idea of foreign consultation in mind that the Qing bureaucracy established a new agency in 1861: The Office for the Management of the Business of All Foreign Countries (known as the *Zongli Yamen*) headed by Prince Gong in Beijing.⁹

The institution was created following the Convention of Peking, which was the treaty agreed upon to end the Second Opium War. The *Zongli Yamen* was originally only intended to be a temporary institution responsible for preparing China for participation in international affairs. The *Zongli Yamen* would be instrumental in broadening China’s view of the

⁸ Suzanne Pepper, *Radicalism and Education Reform in 20th Century China: The Search for an Ideal Developmental Model* (London: Cambridge University, 1996), 76.

⁹ Spence, *The Search for Modern China*, 199.

international community and for establishing a venue for diplomacy. The Zongli Yamen's 'Document on the Unequal Treaties' (1878) demonstrate how foreigners were among the prominent concerns of the Chinese,

Foreigners have maintained that to say goods are exempted en route from a port to the place mentioned in the transit certificate is not enough: they have held that foreign goods which have once paid transit dues cannot subsequently be called upon to pay any local charge whatever. To this interpretation we cannot agree.¹⁰

Under Prince Gong, the Zongli Yamen had the exhausting task of balancing both the concerns of the conservative faction under the ruling Empress Cixi and keeping the Western powers happy. Though the Zongli Yamen was little respected in the Qing Court in the wake of China's confusion over their national identity crisis, the institution was considerably important because it relieved apprehension toward Western learning and initiated the establishment of Western institutions. The Chinese were inclined to cultivate Western learning now that they saw the possibilities that Western institutions could provide on the road to recovery of the nation.

The first true institution of Western learning was the *Tongwenguan*. The establishment of the Tongwenguan marked the emergence of official academic teaching of foreign knowledge or modern sciences and also foreign languages and was "modeled upon the earliest foreign school known as the Eluosi Wenguan that was a Russian College established by the Chinese in 1708."¹¹ The Tongwenguan, or the Beijing School of Combined Learning, (College of Foreign Languages/School of Combined Learning) was a hybrid institution that fused together foreign language and international academic disciplines into China that had never been seen before. The school's objective was to train linguists in China for the purpose of serving diplomatic affairs.

¹⁰ Cited in Jonathan D. Spence, *The Search for Modern China: A Documentary Collection* (New York: W.W. Norton Company Inc., 1999), 155.

¹¹ Michael Lackner and Natasha Vittinghoff, *Mapping Meanings: The Field of New Learning in Late Qing China* (Leiden, Brill, 2004), 88.

China wanted to avoid hiring foreign linguists so that they could limit the disadvantages of not understanding the language when negotiating treaties. China attempted to level the balance of power and prevent the unfair treaties era from occurring again by becoming more self-reliant. Lin Pan cites the demonstrative role of the Tongwenguan in shifting the paradigm of Chinese humiliation and educational backwardness. Lin Pan says “the Tongwenguan was an effort by self-strengtheners to modernize education and was also in response to the Treaty of Tianjin which specified English text as the authentic version of the treaty.”¹² Since the promotion of Western learning was in its earliest stages in the Chinese Higher Education system, it was difficult to see where a student would end up who had the non-traditional Western credentials so the English language understandably had a bad connotation.

The newly synthesized curriculum of the Tongwenguan saw the adoption of foreign curriculum that centered on the study of mathematics, chemistry, geology, mechanics, and international law, with foreigners as the instructors. With the education of these basic disciplines, students were given the tools for better participation in both international and domestic affairs. The Tongwenguan worked cooperatively with the Zongli Yamen as a parallel institution to assist with language translations. Bob Adamson cites the important function of the school to “pass on to the Zongli Yamen intelligence that was garnered from foreign newspapers produced in the treaty ports.”¹³ The Chinese were compelled to accept this new curriculum under the promise that knowledge of Western ideas and learning would avoid future humiliation. The Tongwenguan laid the foundation for a modern Chinese University system based on the notion of adopting Western disciplines.

¹² Lin Pan, *English as a Global Language in China: Deconstructing the Ideological Discourses of English in Language Education Vol 2.* (New York, Norton, 2014), 63.

¹³ Bob Adamson, *China's English: A History of English in Chinese Education* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong UP, 2004), 26.

Although China's experimental endeavors following the establishment of the Tongwenguan were promising, there were still potential roadblocks as well from Confucian scholars. Conservative Grand Secretary Woren believed that the pursuit of Western learning would uproot the Confucian foundations of social values and ethics. Conservatives believed that the Chinese had no need for "barbarians as teachers to instruct them in trifling arts because it was not only threatening to the Confucian system but also unnecessary."¹⁴

China's inexperience in the realm of international relations was due to bureaucratic officials who were, for the most part, ignorant of foreign affairs. Prince Gong's written memorials highlight the difficulties that reformers faced. Gong's 1861 memorial documents the difficult situation China faced and the challenges of the long road ahead to westernization and modernization. Prince Gong's October 1861 memorial cites that "China possesses no man with a ripe knowledge of foreign languages and letters a state of things quite incompatible with the thorough knowledge of those countries."¹⁵ Gong's 1865 memorial reflects a considerably more optimistic approach to the ambitious pursuit of Western Learning that the Tongwenguan had made in the three years since its opening. Prince Gong seem pleased with the performance of Chinese students in the classroom and the effect that it will have on the quick yet efficient modernization of China. Prince Gong's 1865 memorial suggests, "students have made fair progress in the languages and letters of the West. The machinery of the West, its steamers, its firearms, its military tactics, all have their source in mathematical science."¹⁶ Chinese intellectuals knew that the transition to Western learning was a gradual process and that growth would occur in small but steady steps. Gong's 1866 memorial reinforces the principle of

¹⁴ Spence, *The Search for Modern China*, 202.

¹⁵ Spence, *The Search for Modern China: A Documentary Collection*, 139.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 139.

mandatory Chinese reform. Prince Gong suggested that China needed to acclimate itself to the ideas of progress to prevent the injustices that occurred after the conclusion of the Opium Wars. Gong's 1866 memorial claims that, the Western nations are prosper because they learn new things from each other. When a small nation like Japan knows how to implement a program of reforms, what could be a greater disgrace than for China to adhere to her old traditions and never think of waking up? Gong foresees that Chinese reluctance to break with tradition will ultimately lead to the collapse of the Qing Dynasty.

The success of the Tongwenguan ignited a desire for the opening of new Western sponsored language schools in the cities of Canton, Shanghai, Fuzhou, and near other treaty ports starting in 1863 (after a new translation bureau was added to the Beijing School of Combined Learning). These schools were financially supported by the shipping taxes and customs collected from maritime trade. The Qing criticized the Tongwenguan and these other Western sponsored schools for deviating from traditional practices. They were fearful that Confucian ideals could be replaced with Western practices. They feared that students who studied abroad might question their loyalties to China and were going abroad for their own political incentives. Hayhoe suggests "the fear of Chinese students becoming Americanized influenced the government to suddenly terminate the educational experience of young Chinese in the United States in 1881."¹⁷ The Tongwenguan was, however, selective in its admittance process of prospective students. The Beijing Tongwenguan initially only recruited students from Manchuria, and the Shanghai Tongwenguan mainly enrolled in their classes the sons of the wealthy merchants and businessmen.

¹⁷Ruth Hayhoe, *China's Universities 1895-1995: A Century of Cultural Conflict* (New York: Garland Pub, 1996), 8.

The successes of the Tongwenguan can be largely credited to the American Presbyterian Missionary W.A.P. Martin. Martin emphasized a curriculum of math, science, and foreign languages. He worked as an interpreter during his earliest years at the Tongwenguan before becoming president of the Combined Learning College in 1868. His presidency focused heavily on the study and adoption of European systems of education. Martin published the first of these studies in 1873, under the title *An American Overview of German Schools*. The study concluded that Prussia's recent military triumphs of reunification in Germany were due to their commitment to the compulsory educational model. Compulsory education preceded compulsory military service and proved effective in terms of structuring Germany for long-term stability in an area of international competition. Martin continued to study various foreign educational models in hopes of introducing Western successes and stability to China. Martin suggested that the scope of education reform had to extend beyond mere curriculum reshuffling. Martin declared that "rather than studying merely the content of foreign education, now the importance was studying its methods, organization, and its patterns became more evident."¹⁸

China's interest in Western models only grew from the time that the earliest modern schools were established in the 1860s. China's inspiration for successful transition to the Western practices was clearly modeled after the cultural awakening of Meiji Japan in the 1860s, which transformed the country from an isolated feudal society only decades before, to a modern world power at the turn of the twentieth century. The Meiji Restoration convinced the government and Japanese thinkers to examine the West as a means of identifying and adopting the best elements of each model into its system. China's inspiration from Japan fueled self-strengthening efforts to improve the stability of the nation by establishing more schools, building

¹⁸ Ruth Hayhoe and Marianne Bastid, *China's Education and the Industrialized World: Studies in Cultural Transfer* (New York, M.E. Sharpe, 1987), 10.

shipyards and arsenals, and a hiring foreign educators to nurture the growth of Chinese intellectuals. Spence concludes that it was with this mentality that “self-strengthening had not proved an empty slogan, but an apparently viable road to a more secure future so long as China stayed the course.”¹⁹ Peterson explains that China needed to emulate the Japanese model to in order to gain respectability. Peterson says “to achieve world recognition, China would have to undergo radical reforms like those that transformed Meiji Japan into a Western style power.”²⁰

Feng Guifan was one such contributor to the radical efforts of self-strengthening in China from 1861-1895. Despite Feng’s allegiance to Confucian principles, he argued that for industrialization to be successful in China, they first needed to borrow the superior military technology of the West and strengthen itself with an advanced science and math curricula. In Feng’s essay “On the Manufacture of Foreign Weapons” he argues in order to start building China’s strength, what we have to learn from the barbarians is only one thing, solid ships and effective guns. The words of Feng Guifan captivated Chinese statesmen and military leaders during the self-strengthening era and prompted their immediate action.

The collaborative efforts of military leaders and strategists Zeng Guofan, Li Hongzhang, and Zuo Zongtang also promoted an envisioned plan for defense industries to become a reality and restore China’s national prestige. Zeng Guofan founded the Kiangnan Arsenal (built with help from Li Hongzheng) in Shanghai, Zuo Zuotang founded the Fuzhou Arsenal, and Li Hongzhang constructed the Nanjing and Tianjin Arsenals. The arsenals were academic and manufacturing centers that stressed the study of mechanical skills and navigation. Essentially, these were the first military academies in China that trained young officers in Western tactics with the use of scientific tools and textbooks. Benjamin Elman explains how the Jiangnan

¹⁹Spence, *The Search for Modern China*, 202.

²⁰Peterson, Hayhoe, and Lu, *Education, Culture, and Identity in Twentieth-century China*, 24.

“adapted its machinery to produce the most advanced foreign guns and small arms for military use. The arsenal had produced a total of 110 cannons and a variety of guns modeled after products from the Armstrong factory in Britain.”²¹

The Shanghai Arsenal (1865) was revolutionary in its manufacturing production. Once combined with the *Guangfangyanguan*, the Jiangnan Arsenal linked together the translation of Western engineering subjects and texts to practical application of science. Benjamin Elman points out the military importance of these defense industries by noting, “Via armaments manufacture, the Qing state would master contemporary useful knowledge and break the Western monopoly of warships and cannons.”²² The arsenal experimented with new methods in the complexity of their building projects. Elman describes “the arsenal experimented with different designs, from single to double screw engines, wooden and iron hulls, and simple ships to turreted vessels.”²³

While the Shanghai Arsenal experienced successes in the eastern part of China, the creation of the modern navy yard in Fuzhou in the south focused more closely on naval operations. Under the guidance of Zuo Zongtang, the Fuzhou Navy Yard School was constructed in 1866 with the principle purpose of building Western style warships. The Fuzhou Navy Yard School became a central rendezvous point for foreign employees to gather and also encouraged students to study abroad. These study abroad students went for advanced training and looked to broaden their knowledge of military science and technology. It was noted that advanced students studied” fortifications, defenses, and gunpowder explosives in France; two studied navigation

²¹ Benjamin A. Elman, *On Their Own Terms Science in China 1550-1900* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2005), 371.

²² *Ibid.*, 360.

²³ *Ibid.*, 370.

and naval command in England; and one went to Germany for training in naval mines and torpedoes.”²⁴

With Chinese efforts towards military modernization in full force, the support of Li Hongzheng for educational missions in the United States materialized under the support of Zeng Guofan and Yung Wing (the first Chinese study abroad student in the United States). The first group of students sent were Chinese boys aged twelve to fourteen. Many of these pioneer students were children of employees at the Fuzhou, Tianjin, and Shanghai Arsenals. Li Hongzheng’s study abroad program encouraged Chinese students to live with American families. The program flourished from 1872 to 1875 and over 120 students were immersed into a “busy round of English language training, general education, and Chinese Studies.”²⁵ However, Chinese students’ attachment to the West made the Qing skeptical of the program. As Spence observes “boys began to dress in western style, abandoning their robes, and several of them cut off their queues under local pressure or mockery. Many were attracted to Christianity.”²⁶

To further add to the suspicion of the Qing Court, Li Hongzheng was displeased that Chinese students were being excluded from admission into the naval academy in Annapolis, Maryland. He blamed this on American discrimination against qualified, educated Chinese students, so in 1881 he acquiesced in the decision made by conservative Qing officials to close the educational mission and bring the students home. Li Hongzheng did not want to jeopardize Chinese students’ safety in America so he blocked their admission into advanced study programs. To complicate matters even further, anti-Chinese sentiment was influential in restricting Asian immigration before the Chinese Exclusion Act passed in 1882. In the

²⁴ Ibid., 375.

²⁵ Spence, *The Search for Modern China*, 219.

²⁶ Ibid., 219.

Workingmen's Labor Address of 1878, labor leader Dennis Kearney described the Chinese as a race of cheap working slaves who undercut American living standards and thus should be banned from American shores. Kearney depicted the Chinese as contamination of slave labor that dressed and ate cheaply.

The discrimination against Chinese students during the labor movement caused both fear and anxiety for Li Hongzheng. Once this study abroad program was pulled from the United States, it was transferred to Western European countries like France, Germany, and Great Britain. Chinese students rushed to these European military and naval academies where they felt welcomed and were exposed to Western philosophies and political theories. Yan Fu was one such student who had been educated in Fuzhou Shipyard and studied abroad in England. Yan Fu was introduced to Western Enlightenment thinkers and began Chinese translations of highly popular works of Western philosophy in the 1880s. His translations included Thomas Huxley's *Evolution and Ethics*, Montesquieu's *Defense of the Spirit of the Laws*, and Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*. His introduction of Western philosophy coupled with the growth of Western learning institutions in China intrigued young students that were stuck in the grueling and outdated Confucian Exam System and saw an opportunity to abolish the system.

1.3 The Middle Kingdom's stubborn conservatism

The threat of newly modernized Japan concerned China in the wake of the First Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895). Japan recognized the economic potential and strategic importance of Korea and resented its attachment to China as a vassal state. With Korea's close hundred-mile proximity to Japan, Japan's victory in the war stripped China of its control in Korea, and Taiwan was granted to Japan as a colony. Japan's victory was a cause of great concern for China. Suzanne Pepper describes the catastrophe of defeat by the Japanese as an embarrassment by

commenting that “China’s defeat not by a Western power, but by a neighbor traditionally regarded as inferior was widely interpreted as an indication of China’s failure of ‘self-strengthening efforts.’”²⁷

The terms of the Treaty of Shimonoseki (1895) were disastrous for China and revealed that China’s once acclaimed revolutionary efforts of self-strengthening were a failure. Spence agrees that the defeat in the Sino-Japanese war clearly a turning point for the Chinese. He says, “China had to recognize the full and complete independence and autonomy of Korea, which, under the circumstances effectively made Korea a Japanese protectorate.”²⁸ He concludes that the Qing court seemed paralyzed. It was a dark conclusion to the brightest hopes of self-strengthening. Furthermore, Japan continued to strengthen its military and make robust efforts to take over the Asian sphere of influence. The Russo-Japanese War prompted concern from Western nations around the world to respect Japan for displacing the one mighty Chinese empire. Japan’s victory over Russia made itself not only the most fearful colonial power in Asia, but also a world power that was respected by the Western world.

The defeat in the Sino-Japanese War finally prompted both conservatives and liberals to consider reforms in both political and social domains as well reforms in the educational system. China was in a precarious political situation where elements of both Confucianism and Western ideas were coexisting side by side. Between June 11 and September 21 1898, The Guangxu Emperor launched a series of forty edicts that earned the period the name “The Hundred Days’ Reforms.” The Guangxu Emperor was highly influenced by the ideas of the Neo-Confucian writer Kang Youwei. Though Kang Youwei’s first efforts to meet with the Emperor failed, he finally was allowed permission to speak with the Emperor in May 1898. In Kang Youwei’s May

²⁷ Suzanne Pepper, *Radicalism and Education Reform in 20th Century China*, 57.

²⁸ Spence, *The Search for Modern China*, 223.

1898 Memorial to the Emperor he expressed his concern for the Qing Court and proposed a radical realignment in government that advocated radical constitutional reform and a transformation of the traditional education system into a modern one. Kang Youwei's "Comprehensive Consideration of The Whole Situation" memorial to the Emperor described how the fate of China would meet a disastrous end if they did not consider immediate change:

Our present trouble lies in our clinging to old institutions without knowing how to change... Nowadays the court has been undertaking some reforms, but the ministers obstruct the action of the emperor, and old-fashioned bureaucrats attack the recommendations of the able scholars. If the charge is not "using barbarian ways to change China" then it is "upsetting the ancestral institutions." Rumors and scandals are rampant, and people fight each other like fire and water. To reform in this way is as ineffective as attempting a forward march by walking backward. It will inevitably result in failure. Your Majesty knows that under the present circumstances reforms are imperative and old institutions must be abolished. After the fundamental policy is determined, the methods of implementation must vary according to what is primary and what is secondary, what is important and what is insignificant, what is strong, what is weak, what is urgent and what can wait. If anything goes wrong, no success can be achieved. ²⁹

The Guangxu Emperor implemented a new program of reforms based on the recommendations of Kang Youwei about a month later, in June 1898. In regards to educational reform, Guangxu Emperor wanted to eliminate the "Eight Legged Essay" from the Confucian examination system that had been a fixed part of the examination for centuries. His reforms also called for an end to the emphasis of classical literature and poetry for candidates to acquire their degrees and instead focus on more practical subjects. His most ambitious initiative for educational reform was his mandate that updated Peking College (formerly the *Tongwenguan*) that included a medical campus and the conversion of old academies to modern schools. Spence explains how this reform effort "would convert modern schools to offer both Chinese and Western learning, and the opening of vocational institutes for the study of mining, industry, and

²⁹ Cited in Theodore de Bary and Richard Lufrano, *Sources of Chinese Tradition: From 1600 Through the Twentieth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 269.

railways.”³⁰ Unfortunately, the Guangxu Emperor’s Hundred Days Reform in 1898 was short lived. The ruthless Empress Dowager Cixi expelled the Guangxu Emperor and his supporters in a coups d’état. Empress Cixi’s politically conservative faction deemed the Hundred Day Reforms too radical in nature. Guangxu Emperor’s forceful abdication of the throne to the Empress Dowager once again prevented the implementation of modern educational and political reforms in China.

Peterson remarks “China was knocked off its high pedestal after the failed Hundred Days Reform and the Boxer Uprising, and reduced to a subordinate position.”³¹ Foreigners, if seen at all, were regarded as exotic or menacing. The repercussions of the failed Hundred Days Reform were evident in a dramatic effort to revive the Qing Dynasty and expel foreigner’s presence and ideas from China. After the Guangxu Emperor’s abdication of the throne to the Empress Dowager, her grasp on the imperial bureaucracy was greatly strengthened. With the support of the Empress, the Boxer’s (Righteous and Harmonious Fists) commenced their attacks on Chinese Christians, missionaries, foreigners, diplomats and ambassadors, and all other privileged Westerners in China who continued to resist the conservative agenda of the Qing Court. After Western forces were able to reclaim the foreign district of Beijing, where the Boxers held foreign hostages for a two-month span between June and August 1900, China was forced to pay more than \$330 million dollars in reparations and required to pay indemnity funds to the eight nations (Italy, United States, Austria-Hungary, France, Japan, Britain, Russia, and Germany) that participated in the international military expedition.

The Boxer Rebellion of 1900 concluded a nineteenth century of attempted Chinese modernization that had largely failed. Traditional institutions remained oblivious to the dramatic

³⁰Spence, *The Search for Modern China*, 230.

³¹ Peterson, *Education, Culture, and Identity in Twentieth-century China*, 25.

changes going on internally and internationally with China and they failed to adjust.

Accordingly, the Confucian examination system and Chinese academies remained in place; but these institutions would lose their legitimacy and worthiness in China. China's look to the twentieth century was a hope for recovery and educational reform. The Middle Kingdom endured a century of warfare, both foreign and domestic. Though it was militarily weak and politically susceptible, China had endured the Opium Wars, Taiping Rebellion, Sino-Japanese War, the era of self-strengthening, and the Boxer Rebellion. Overwhelmed by disappointment and defeat at the hands of Western powers, China's journey into the twentieth century was concentrated on a rebuilding a strong Chinese nation through Western educational reforms.

CHAPTER TWO

EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY EDUCATION REFORM: THE END OF THE CONFUCIAN EXAMINATION SYSTEM

2.1 The Middle Kingdom borrows from Imperial Japan

China's defeat in The Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895) did not end their enthusiasm for westernization and reform. China had wisely learned from their humiliating experiences during the Opium Wars to build up their defense industries by providing more resources for the purposes of shipbuilding, weapons manufacturing, and the construction of railways. These new revolutionary efforts marked the beginning of the sort of westernization that threatened to overthrow the traditions of Confucianism.

Ironically, China looked to Japan to help them smoothly transition after their defeat in the Sino-Japanese War. Ruth Hayhoe explains how "Japan seemed to offer a pattern of political reform towards a constitutional monarchy with the preservation of Confucian values."³² Chinese students were now sent to Japan because of its geographical proximity, ease on students' financial budgets, similarities in cultural habits, and the Japanese use of many written characters from the Chinese language.³³ China recognized the benefits of the Japanese model and assumed that if they borrowed ideas from Japan this would guarantee them the same economic success and political stability. Conservatives within the Qing court were "attracted to how Japan had

³²Ruth Hayhoe, *China's Universities and the Open Door* (New York, M.E. Sharpe, 1989), 61.

³³Ruth Hayhoe and Marianne Bastid, *China's Education and the Industrialized World: Studies in Cultural Transfer* (New York, M.E. Sharpe, 1987), 10.

moderately introduced Western institutions while still maintaining the imperial authority and the cultural supremacy of the Confucian tradition.”³⁴ The Qing dynasty wanted to do everything to guarantee that its power was not threatened while China adopted Western technology to build a strong nation. Suzanne Pepper says the struggle between intellectuals was “ that they could not agree upon new patterns of ideas and institutions that would effectively combine the varying commitments they had acquired along the way. Uncertain over how to proceed, they tried to emulate the successful examples to ensure that Western learning would guarantee national power and personal wealth.”³⁵ Chinese intellectuals knew that the nation needed reform but they could not agree upon a uniform set of principles for making this modernization effort possible.

Chinese legislation passed in 1902-1903 by the Minister Of Education, Zhang Baixi, ensured that the Japanese were the primary model from which China would borrow. Hayhoe explains that emulating Japan was a wholehearted endeavor in which “China copied Japanese education in all aspects and systems. In its purpose and its methodology. Education was the basic driving force behind Japan’s swift national enrichment and strengthening.”³⁶ There was an assumption that the Japanese approach to Western learning would bring China wealth and prosperity to reverse their misfortunes in the nineteenth century as it did with Japan. China hoped that a strongly supported study abroad program and mutual foreign relationship with Japan would be useful to help cut their ties from the Confucian examination system. Japan had been successful in adopting Western educational practices as a part of its reform movement when Western ideas gained cultural acceptance during the Meiji Restoration of 1868. Japan’s

³⁴ Ruth Hayhoe, *China’s Universities and the Open Door*, 18.

³⁵ Suzanne Pepper, *Radicalism and Education Reform in 20th Century China: The Search for an Ideal Developmental Model* (London: Cambridge University, 1996), 407.

³⁶ Ruth Hayhoe, *China’s Education and the Industrialized World: Studies in Cultural Transfer*, 57.

dedication to compulsory military education ensured their victory in the Russo-Japanese War in 1905, while drawing the envy of Qing officials and reinforcing Chinese interest in the Japanese model of modern development. Japanese educational practices would be seen as the basis for their modernization movement, while Western learning provided the technical skills. Philip Altbach explains that Japan was successful in their westernization attempts because the Meiji government “fused technical elements together from American, British, and French models within a predominantly German prototype thereby creating uniquely Japanese institutions.”³⁷ Altbach concluded that the Japanese government decided to draw from elements of the German universities beginning in the mid-nineteenth century. At this time, Germany was close to Japan in terms of its goals for social and economic development and Prussian military culture.

At the same time, Japan was building up its military and strengthening its westernization efforts, while the theory of Social Darwinism was becoming an overwhelming concern of many Chinese in the early twentieth century. China understood that in order to smoothly transition into a modern state, they needed to grasp the notion that they were a nation among nations, and that no nation could survive without the involvement of their citizens, both male and female. Chinese study abroad students had come back and raved about their worthwhile educational experiences. Many Chinese teachers had studied abroad in Japan and there was, as Hayhoe describes, “a strong belief that the Japanese model would enable China to absorb Western science and technology for national strengthening.”³⁸ The pursuit of Chinese educational reform was strongly influenced by the positive remarks of Chinese students who had returned from the study abroad program in Japan. A Chinese writer in *Westminster Review* said that people were:

³⁷ Philip Altbach, *Independence and Choice: Western Impacts on Japanese Higher Education* (London: University University, 1989), 104.

³⁸ Ruth Hayhoe, *China's Education and the Industrialized World: Studies in Cultural Transfer*, 93.

Returning from their studies abroad fairly educated, and having had proper training, the students return from Japan to establish private schools everywhere at their own expense. The work is disinterestedly carried on. Many teachers sacrifice their own fortunes in the enterprise. But they are gaining ground by degrees, especially in normal schools and kindergartens. The anti-opium and anti-foot binding movements would not have been so general, but for the energetic preaching both by tongue and by pen of the students returned from Japan. The doctrine in favor of the emancipation of women is spreading daily, and before long the education of the other sex will receive equal attention.³⁹

Discriminatory practices under the Confucian examination system stirred more resentment towards the traditional order and its inability to respond to modern issues of equal gender opportunity. Ruth Hayhoe describes in her study how “women were excluded from the examination system. There were stories of women who disguised themselves as men in order to take the exams, but the notion of a woman becoming a scholar-official was unthinkable within the Confucian Order.”⁴⁰ China’s experience with Japan reached its zenith with the mass movement of teachers studying in Japan from 1900 to 1911. A vast majority of these students were eligible teaching candidates who wanted to work in modern-Japanese institutions. Japanese administrators and advisors were sent to China as academic liaisons, ambassadors, and educational advocates to foster educational administrative development. Daniel Bays describes the study abroad program as “one of the most important phenomenon of early twentieth century. Before 1911, it is likely that a total of 18,000 students had received some sort of educational training in Japan.”⁴¹ Furthermore, exposure to Japan intensified Chinese nationalism and rallied anti-Qing sentiment for the overthrow of the dynasty. Bays described the situation as a deep concern for the Qing since they feared that their study abroad program would spell doom for the

³⁹ Henry Barnard, "Report of the Commissioner of Education" (presented at Carnegie Library at Pennsylvania State College, Lamont, PA, 1909).

⁴⁰Ruth Hayhoe, *China's Universities, 1895-1995: A Century of Cultural Conflict* (London: Routledge, 1996), 34.

⁴¹ Daniel H. Bays, *China Enters the Twentieth Century: Chang Chih-tung and the Issues of a New Age, 1895-1909* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1978), 132.

longevity of the imperial government and the survival of the dynasty. Bays wrote how “many members of China’s modern education student class, in particular those exposed to the intellectual currents in Tokyo, became alienated from their government and called for its overthrow.”⁴²

In some respects, however, the Japanese higher education system was so similar to what Chinese scholars were accustomed to that it provided very little effective reform in terms of educational development, but it did offer political intrigue. As it turned out, the Japanese model of the modern university was largely an empty shell in China. It appealed to the advocates of a constitutional monarchy, but made no substantive contributions to the development of a modern Chinese higher education system. One possible explanation for lack of Japanese contributions to the Chinese higher education system was its inability to identify truly Chinese elements. European universities, for example, gave students the autonomy and academic freedom for self-study and self-motivated research. However, under the Confucian examination system, Chinese higher education was left without the core academic values that were prevalent in European universities. William Duiker explains in his study that the “conflict between China and the West was not merely a two dimensional culture clash between East and West, but rather centered around questions involving the nature of man, society, and the universe.”⁴³ Without China having clear core values in their education system, it was difficult for educational reformers to figure out exactly what was China’s ethos and vision of a modern university and how, if at all, a new university could survive alongside the Confucian examination system.

⁴² Ibid., 131.

⁴³ William J. Duiker, *Ts'ai Yuanpei: Educator of Modern China* (University Park: University of Pennsylvania, 1977), 2.

2.2 Liang Qichao, Zhang Zhidong, and the university ethos of Zhendan and Fudan

Though China's borrowed higher educational program from Japan was unsuccessful, progressive Chinese thinkers fueled the growth of modern learning in Chinese schools. Men like educational reformer Xue Fucheng argued that "not only do officials and scholars attend schools; everyone, whether soldier, worker, farmer or merchant goes to school."⁴⁴ The need to reform the Confucian examination system and in essence the higher education system in China was a high priority. Men like Liang Qichao and Zhang Zhidong were the two most prominent figures at the turn of the twentieth century who promoted educational reform.

Liang Qichao (1873-1929) was a Chinese reform scholar who inspired the literary reformation at the end of the nineteenth century into the early twentieth century. Liang Qichao was an excellent scholar as a child and embraced Chinese literature. After his failed attempt to obtain an imperial office in Beijing, and in the wake of the backlash against the Hundred Days reformers in 1898, he fled to Japan for the next fifteen years. This exile completely transformed Liang Qichao, and his "anti-Western racial feelings were replaced by a new outlook of a world community of equal nations."⁴⁵ Liang Qichao saw Japan as a modern nation state, the first that he had direct contact with. He was impressed with Japan's educational system and admired the freedom and independence that the Japanese press enjoyed. Liang Qichao's "follow Japan" and "learn from Japan" slogans highlighted his reform campaign and promoted the emulation of Western thought and ideas in China. Hiroko Willcock explains that Liang saw that "Meiji Japan

⁴⁴ Yunzhi Geng, *An Introductory Study on China's Cultural Transformation in Recent Times* (Heidelberg: Springer, 2015), 64.

⁴⁵ Philip C. Huang, *Ch'i-ch'ao and Modern Chinese Liberalism* (Seattle: U of Washington Press, 1972), 54.

provided a rich and already cultivated soil with a syncretic mixture of traditional and Western thought, and Liang Qichao selected, nurtured and promoted revisionist ideas from Japan.”⁴⁶

Liang Qichao’s experience in Japan was vital in his development as an intellectual and a radical reformer. He embraced the Social Darwinist view of the survival of the fittest that permeated China in the early twentieth century. Phillip Huang explains how Liang believed that nations were living entities that were torn by internal strife, and those that were unfit would be destroyed. At the core of this idea was the belief that for a nation to be strong and united, it needed its citizens, both male and female to flourish. Liang Qichao agreed that the nation should be home to citizens and not merely subjects. Huang cites Liang’s strong belief that “if nationalism was the precondition for power, it must be developed amongst the Chinese people in China to survive and maintain her sovereignty.”⁴⁷ Liang Qichao essentially believed that China’s weakness was their passivity to the Western powers and their lack of competitive instinct. In order to develop Chinese nationalism, China first needed to establish a constitutional form of representative government.

Liang Qichao’s greatest achievement in Western reform was his contribution to literacy and journalism. Liang Qichao would start “a revolution in poetry, literature, and fiction.”⁴⁸ He would lay the groundwork for literary critics during the May Fourth Movement that would flourish within China in the next twenty years. Although his vision of a true literary revolution was more modest than his later counterparts, he supported literary criticism in the modern sense. While his followers had no reservation about departing from the classical Chinese style, Liang

⁴⁶Hiroko Willcock, “Japanese Modernization and the Emergence of New Fiction in Early Twentieth Century China: A Study of Liang Qichao,” *Modern Asian Studies* 103, (1995): 840.

⁴⁷Philip C. Huang, *Ch’i-ch’ao and Modern Chinese Liberalism*, 58.

⁴⁸Bonnie S. McDougall and Kam Louie *The Literature of China in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Columbia UP, 1997), 37.

Qichao was hesitant to write in free verse and did not hesitate to mix elements of traditional writing with modern Western writing. Chen Duxiu said of Liang “only when we read of Liang Qichao did we suddenly realize that foreign political principles, religions, and learning had much to offer.”⁴⁹ Liang Qichao’s simplicity was reflected in his writing and wide appeal to the Chinese citizenry. Even when he wrote in classical Chinese his prose was “simple and clear” and gave intense feelings that made the reader follow him. Willcock’s explanation of the literary movement under Liang Qichao provides an optimistic view of the literary movement as an agent of social change:

Fiction in China in the early twentieth century became an active agent of reform and revolutionary movements. Just as literary views of the writers of the Meiji political novel were essential to the emergence of modern literary theories, so did Liang’s literary philosophy that were largely inspired by the Meiji political model to help mold the growth of modern Chinese literature. Fiction was the spirit of the nation.⁵⁰

In Liang Qichao’s famous 1902 essay “Renovation of the People,” he proposed the “renewal” of the citizenry in a reform movement for intellectual and social reform. Liang’s essay read, “if we wish to make the nation strong, we must investigate the methods followed by other nations in becoming independent. We should select their superior points and appropriate them to make up for our own shortcomings.”⁵¹ Liang Qichao inspired a revived view of literacy in China, which saw a surge after 1900 when the growth in public literacy was unprecedented in the history of Chinese literature. While the citizenry initially viewed literature as a meaningless and trivial endeavor, they no longer viewed fiction in this regard. Rather, the role of fiction was to influence politics and society through its artistic quality. Liang Qichao’s literary mantra

⁴⁹ Philip C. Huang, *Ch’i-ch’ao and Modern Chinese Liberalism*, 7 .

⁵⁰Hiroko Willcock, “Japanese Modernization and the Emergence of New Fiction in Early Twentieth Century China: A Study of Liang Qichao,” *Modern Asian Studies* 29, no. 4 (1995):838.

⁵¹Cited in Theodore de Bary and Richard Lufrano, *Sources of Chinese Tradition: From 1600 Through the Twentieth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 291.

“revolution of ink, not a revolution of blood” embodied the spirit of the modern fiction movement in the nation.⁵² Willcock described this early twentieth century literary movement as “no longer an idle pastime of retired literati composed to entertain a small circle of their friends, or written by a discontented recluse to vent a personal grudge through a brush.”⁵³

Liang Qichao’s journal titled *New Citizen*, published in 1903, enjoyed a circulation of nearly 10,000. Liang Qichao’s concept of the “New Citizen” required China to adopt a new system of values that was not guided by the Confucian tradition. He believed that individuals must trust in their own morals and convictions and actively seek the good for themselves. An active citizenry would then serve as the foundation for a liberal democracy to prosper and for China to build a strong nation. This idea of the “New Citizen” would no longer be strictly classified as being a public servant (as expected under the Confucian-educated man) but rather embraced the concept that individuals would contribute to his or her occupation and social life in an independent and meaningful fashion.

Liang Qichao’s contribution to the literary movement continued in his journalism career once newspapers became a popular medium throughout China. The newspaper was extremely important in its ability as a medium to introduce ideas to the citizenry. Huang describes the newspaper as being important because it “gathers virtually all the thoughts and the expressions of the nation and systematically introduces them to the citizenry, it being irrelevant whether they are important or not, concise or not, radical or not. The press, therefore, can reject, produce, as well as destroy everything.”⁵⁴ It is with this assumption that we see the earliest notion of public

⁵² Philip C. Huang, *Ch’i-ch’ao and Modern Chinese Liberalism*, 59.

⁵³ Hiroko Willcock, “Japanese Modernization and the Emergence of New Fiction in Early Twentieth Century China: A Study of Liang Qichao,” *Modern Asian Studies* 29, no. 4 (1995):817.

⁵⁴ Philip C. Huang, *Ch’i-ch’ao and Modern Chinese Liberalism*, 68.

relations in China and the impact of the unfiltered mass media on the population. Despite the lack of infrastructure in China that made it difficult to distribute printed materials, and the relative illiteracy of the masses, Liang Qichao's ideas in *Renewing the People* (1902-1905) highlighted revolutionary thought for the youth of Chinese nationalism. Liang Qichao said

Our people have been established as a nation on the Asian continent for several thousand years, and we must have some special characteristics that are grand, noble, and perfect, and distinctly different from those of other races. We should preserve these characteristics and not let them be lost.⁵⁵

Liang Qichao's idea, did not, however, diverge from traditional Confucian beliefs as much as he thought. He advocated freedom from the group, which was in many respects vastly different than freedom for the individual. Liang Qichao explained that "men must not be slaves to other men, but they must be slaves to their group. For, if they are not slaves to their own group, they will assuredly become slaves to some other."⁵⁶ It was, nevertheless, Liang's promotion of literary reform that opened China's consciousness to the impact of newspapers and critical essays.

Zhang Zhidong (1837-1909) was the other important reformer in the late Qing. He gained attention for his objection to conceding Taiwan to Japan after the First-Sino Japanese War. Zhang Zhidong viewed this defeat as an embarrassment for China, which needed to develop its military defense industries and desperately needed to reform its education system. Zhang Zhidong was influential in creating the Guangdong Military and Naval Officers Academy, where German tacticians were brought in to instruct Chinese students. Zhang Zhidong brought in the

⁵⁵ Cited in Theodore de Bary and Richard Lufrano, *Sources of Chinese Tradition: From 1600 Through the Twentieth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 291.

⁵⁶ Duiker, William J. *Ts'ai Yüan-p'ei, Educator of Modern China*, 32.

Germans because their recent reunification and strong military leadership under Otto von Bismarck impressed him.

While Zhang had success in his military career, he also played a prominent role in education after he drafted the legislation from 1902-1903 that borrowed ideas from the Japanese system of higher education. His promotion of the principle of “*ti-yong*” embraced the notion that Chinese learning was to be used as the “essence” (*ti*) while Western learning was to be implemented for “practical use” (*yong*). It was this cultural position that empowered the Chinese to make wise decisions after the Sino-Japanese War and the failed Hundred Days Reform. He introduced this theory in China to determine which areas of Western ideas were appropriate to specific areas of Chinese study and which disciplines would not be beneficial to the Chinese curriculum. It was then China’s responsibility to allocate resources accordingly in implementing new Western ideas that would be useful in practice. Zhang Zhidong’s program did not compromise the “national essence” of Chinese traditions but determined that it was crucial to integrate Western learning. Zhang concluded, however, that “Confucian texts must still remain the basis for modeling the moral character of students.”⁵⁷

Zhang Zhidong’s openness to Western educational methodologies encouraged higher education reform at the dawn of the twentieth century to centralize curriculum by the Ministry of Education. The Ministry of Education was extremely disjointed in its views and there was no clear-cut direction for education after the failed Hundred Days Reform. Zhang Zhidong proposed a curriculum that blended both Western and Eastern elements through relatively conservative reforms. Though he was educated in the Confucian classics, his dedication to creating a unified yet modernized China was built on the notion of discontinuing the Confucian examination

⁵⁷ Ibid., 42.

system, acquiring knowledge from foreign sources, and fusing study abroad programs and foreign curriculums into the national educational platform. Zhang Zhidong justified his educational reforms by asserting that “the aims of education were to provide for the general enlightenment of the population and not turn out candidates for the examination.”⁵⁸ He was critical of the careerist motifs of individuals using the examination system to elevate their social status while disregarding the value of education in itself. He despised the concept of education as a means to an end and disliked the notion of individuals using knowledge for social mobility. Zhang Zhidong rather wanted people to treat education as an end in itself. Suzanne Pepper questioned Zhang Zhidong’s philosophy of education being an end in itself, noting “education could be analytically distinguished as both a means and an end. Education was therefore valued, both for the individual and for the larger society, not only as a basic human right and a measure of progress, but also as a pre-requisite for economic development.”⁵⁹

Zhang Zhidong’s famous collection of essays *Exhortation to Learning* and his essay “China’s Only Hope” nevertheless promoted Western learning only as long as it did not conflict with Confucian tradition. *Exhortation to Learning* reinforced his allegiance to Confucianism, but highlighted his desire for obtaining Western knowledge. Daniel Bays concluded that *Exhortation of Learning* elaborated on the use of Western ideas and tools to retain national power. Bays’s assessment of *Exhortation of Learning* agreed that it was an impressive work to provide justification for why China needed to be strengthened to stave off foreign aggression. Thus, the work as a whole was a conscious political restatement of the famous “ti-yong” dichotomy, and did much to popularize the slogan. Chinese learning for the essence, Western learning for

⁵⁸Ibid., 42.

⁵⁹ Suzanne Pepper, *Radicalism and Education Reform in 20th Century China: The Search for an Ideal Developmental Model*, 5.

practical use. Zhang Zhidong's call for educational reform was to be fueled by Chinese nationalism. In his essay "China's Only Hope" he said

"In no period of China's history has there arisen an emergency like the present. It is a time of change, and His Imperial Highness, the Emperor of China, has accepted the situation by altering somewhat the system of civil and military examinations and by establishing schools. The Conservatives are evidently off their food from inability to swallow, whilst Liberals are like a flock of sheep that have arrived at a road of many forks and do not know which to follow. The former does not understand what international intercourse means, the latter are ignorant of what is radical in Chinese affairs. The Conservatives have failed to see the utility of modern military methods and the benefits of successful change, while the Progressionists, zealous without knowledge, look with contempt upon our widespread doctrines of Confucius. Thus, those who cling to the order of things heartily despise those who even propose any innovation, and they in turn cordially detest the Conservatives with all the ardor of their liberal convictions. It thus falls out that those who really wish to learn are in doubt as to which course to pursue, and in the meantime error creeps in, the enemy invades our coast, and, consequently, there is no defense and no peace. The present condition of things is not due to outside nations, but to China herself. It has ever been true that the number of our ablest men has been proportioned to the good qualities of the government, and that morals are gauged by the conduct of the schools.⁶⁰

Zhang Zhidong reached the height of his career in 1904 and 1905. Not only had his ideas for reform been influential in the passage of educational reforms in 1902 and 1903, but he improved the quality of military academies and reorganized the provincial education system.

Liang Qichao and Zhang Zhidong both played a prominent role in the reform efforts of Chinese education but came up short in how these reforms should be implemented on a large scale at the university level. The early twentieth century was the age of self-discovery for China to find a newly styled Chinese university that would keep pace with Western universities and develop an ethos of innovative learning by putting an emphasis on technical skills. Ma Xiangbo's founding of Zhendan (L'Aurore) University in Shanghai in 1903 drew elements from both missionary and revolutionary schools. Ma Xiangbo was a Catholic missionary who had

⁶⁰Samuel Woodridge, *Chang Chih-tung, China's Only Hope: An Appeal* (New York, Columbia UP, 1900), 26.

been educated in the Chinese classics but also had first hand exposure to both American and European Universities. Ma produced a pioneering work on applying Western grammar to the analysis of classical Chinese. This work entitled the *Mashi WenTong* (Ma's Grammar) was published in 1900 and was used as an educational reader. Zhendan University embraced an informal education style that departed from the traditional Confucian examination system. Ma Xiangbo encouraged personable and open relationships between educational administrators and students. He promoted independent study for students and self-initiated research. Ma Xiangbo's selection of the student body was also flexible to be an inclusive community of diverse learners from all different socio-economic backgrounds. Hayhoe described Ma's leadership at Zhendan by stating that he "accepted students from all backgrounds and convictions, and was eager to help mature students who wished to gain an understanding of western thought."⁶¹

After a rift with Jesuit leadership over how curriculum should be properly handled at the university, Ma Xiangbo left Zhendan University and established Fudan University in Shanghai in 1905. Ma Xiangbo's energy and enthusiasm as a pioneer of education would follow him to the newly established Fudan University in 1905. Hayhoe describes Fudan's spirit "as one of creativity, bringing in new things to life out of nothingness, the forward looking spirit of a pioneer, a spirit of exalting, the Chinese nation and race, and finally a spirit of self- sacrifice."⁶² Fudan University would embrace radical ideas and become a symbol of the future May Fourth Movement. The establishment of these two universities assured the belief that educational reforms and reformation efforts were still extremely popular in spite of conservative backlash. Furthermore, the replacement of twelve of eighteen provincial directors of education

⁶¹ Ruth Hayhoe, "Towards the Forging of A Chinese University Ethos: Zhendan and Fudan 1903-1919," *China Quarterly*, no. 9 (June 1983): 331.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 341.

demonstrated a commitment to Western style learning at the university level and began the first step towards a democratic system of education. Bays argued that these two universities “paved the way for the overthrow of the imperial government and the abandonment of the Confucian examination system.”⁶³ Though the twentieth century’s promises had not materialized, there was finally a consensus that China needed to reconstruct their government and their institutions of higher learning and system of education.

2.3 The abolition of the Confucian examination system and China’s growing diploma disease

Before educational reforms could seriously be considered in higher education, the timeless Confucian examination system needed to end. The Confucian examination system that would survive until 1905 dated back from the beginning of the Sui Dynasty (A.D. 581-618) under Emperor Wen Di. Confucian learning was used as the standard to justify the imperial appointments made by the ruling dynasty. Knowledge was held in the highest regard, and one’s score on the test ultimately established one’s reputation. Emperor Zhenzong (986-1022) of the Song Dynasty emphasized education for students in his “Urge to Study Poem” by stating “to build a house you need not set up high beams, golden mansions are to be found in the books. To find a wife you need not worry about having good matchmakers, maidens as beautiful as jade are to be found in the books. When a man wishes to fulfill the ambition of his life he only needs to diligently study the six classics by the window.”⁶⁴ Under the Song and Tang dynasties the examinations were used as an instrument of the state in recruiting officials for the imperial

⁶³Daniel H. Bays, *China Enters the Twentieth Century: Chang Chih-tung and the Issues of a New Age*, 131.

⁶⁴Yuan Feng, " From the Imperial Examination to the National College Entrance Examination: The dynamics of political centralism in China’s educational enterprise," *Survival* 375, no. 4 (1994): 731.

bureaucracy. Emperor Tai Zong observed “all the heroes of the empire are in my pocket!”⁶⁵ The emperor, however, had all the authority to not only summon intellectuals but also to restrict their pursuit of academic freedom. Ruth Hayhoe questions this traditional Chinese view of education, stating that education “should not be an instrument of the state, but it should create the state in the sense that it was to form citizens capable of self- government.”⁶⁶ The imitation of foreign models encouraged emancipation from the uniformity of the traditional examination system and opened up freedom of intellectual thought that was quelled under the Confucian system. Suzanne Pepper explains how “Confucian learning, imperial power, and bureaucratic authority were mutually bound together in a relationship that would dominate Chinese intellectual life until the abolition of the exams in 1905.”⁶⁷ These elements essentially strengthened each other and were intertwined with the success and failures of the previous Chinese dynasties.

Liang Qichao’s early twentieth century Social Darwinist views of natural selection can also be seen in the functioning of the imperial bureaucracy. The examination system was used as a mechanism by the imperial bureaucracy to filter out undesirables from the intellectual elites. Teachers and students were the pawns in this bureaucratic escapade that only cared about the scholars who reached the *jinshi* (“presented scholar”) exam level. The exams started out as a simplified two-tier system and evolved into a complex testing network. Yuan Feng’s report of the examination system validated that its “initial purpose was to reduce the privileges of the

⁶⁵ Ibid., 5.

⁶⁶ Ruth Hayhoe and Marianne Bastid, *China’s Education and the Industrialized World: Studies in Cultural Transfer* (New York, M.E. Sharpe, 1987), 11.

⁶⁷ Suzanne Pepper, *Radicalism and Education Reform in 20th Century China: The Search for an Ideal Developmental Model*, 54.

hereditary aristocratic families that threatened the imperial autocracy.”⁶⁸ The examination was a manifestation of the chaotic disarray of the centralized government under the control of manipulative bureaucrats. It is because of this politically rooted system that true public education in China would not become a reality until after 1905.

The examinations administered by the Imperial Court tested one’s knowledge of the Confucian Four Books and the Five Classics. The Four Books were traditionally studied before the Five Classics and consisted of *The Great Learning, Analects, Mencius, and the Doctrine of Men*. The Five Classics followed which consisted of *The Book of Documents, Book of Odes, Book of Rites, Book of Changes, Spring and Autumn Annals*. Along with knowledge of these classics an examinee would have to have thorough knowledge of Confucian concepts of “morality, filial piety, and correct conduct in interpersonal relationships, as well as basic information about China’s historic past.”⁶⁹ Hayhoe explains how the imperial examination system was a force in China that dominated traditional higher education for centuries and inhibited any reform attempts that tried to change it. She explains that the examinations were, in reality, about financial stability and one’s pursuit of personal wealth. “The examinations created a class of intellectuals who climbed the ladder from local to provincial and finally capital and palace examinations... the thought of rebellion was barely unthinkable as people succumbed to the power of the institution.”⁷⁰

Miyzaki Ichisada’s *Examination Hell* likewise chronicles the abusive system with the respect to the mental health of exam candidates and their strict study schedule. Potential officials,

⁶⁸Yuan Feng, " From the Imperial Examination to the National College Entrance Examination: The dynamics of political centralism in China’s educational enterprise," *Survival* 375, no. 4 (1994): 9.

⁶⁹ Suzanne Pepper, *Radicalism and Education Reform in 20th-century China: The Search for an Ideal Development Model*, 53.

⁷⁰Ruth Hayhoe, *China’s Universities and the Open Door* (New York, M.E. Sharpe, 1989), 55.

for example, had to study the Four Books and the Five Classics in addition to composing poems and writing essays.⁷¹ The exams were structured in three sequenced distinctive levels and standards of academic achievement were more rigorous as candidates moved up the series of exams. Exams were extremely strict in how they were administered and officials who oversaw them had to preserve the silence and prevent irregularities. If the director of the exam spotted any infractions, he would stamp a seal on a test taker's exam. Simple infractions included humming, dropping a paper, or gazing around the room. Exam administrators looked for any reason to disqualify someone because the process was so selective that it was yet another obstacle that one had to navigate to be successful. Those who passed local prefectural exams were awarded the honor of *sheng yuan* ("budding scholar") given every two years. These scholars were then administered the provincial exams, which were given every three years in the provincial capital. Shengyuan who successfully completed this level became *juren* ("elevated scholars"). The third level of exams was given in the imperial palace. These "presented scholars" who passed this challenging ordeal held the most desirable status amongst the most dedicated academics. The examinations were successful in maintaining a stable intellectual elite while at the same time limiting the power of corrupt aristocrats who attempted to manipulate the government. People had a faith in the system because it seemed fair and put everyone on a level playing field. People's good judgment was shaped by the Confucian tradition and people held in good faith the intentions of filial piety and the Five Relationships.

Yuan Feng's assessment of the imperial exams called these tests psychologically damaging. There were many flaws with the Confucian Examination system that discouraged ambitious scholars to join the imperial ranks. Yuan Feng called the Confucian exams a "blind

⁷¹ Miyazaki Ichisada, *China's Examination Hell: The Civil Service Examinations of Imperial China* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1981), 109.

obedience to and dependency on a central power in Chinese society where Western learning was unwelcomed.”⁷² First, the exam questions tended to be those that could be routinely memorized when studying and were perfected by repetitive testing. Pepper claims, “cramming for the examination would prove to be the surest quick means of obtaining the desired results and were therefore the preferred means of instruction.”⁷³ Excerpts taken from the writings of Hongmou Chen (1669-1771) detailed the challenge of studying the Confucian texts and the difficulty encountered if one could not meaningfully interact with the text. Hongmou Chen said that “students do not prepare for the practical policy questions... instead, they quickly cram for them as the examination approaches by memorizing standardized book answers.”⁷⁴ Hongmou claimed that studying was a task of repetition that required no critical thinking or active participation from the individual. He said that

Scholars merely unthinkably copy over the words of the past, and their vacuous phrasings have absolutely no connection with real life affairs. Few, indeed, can even adequately explain the basic meaning of the sages’ words. They simply repeat the empty conventions and the world rewards them with success in the examinations.⁷⁵

The Chinese system was based purely on rote memorization and nothing else. The placed priority on the success of a student being measured by test scores, and consequently the performance of teachers and schools is judged by the number or percentage of students admitted to prestigious universities. Unfortunately, those who failed were often forced into a life of poverty and unemployment. The system left no room for failure. Miyazki Ichisada concluded

⁷² Yuan Feng, " From the Imperial Examination to the National College Entrance Examination: The dynamics of political centralism in China’s educational enterprise," *Survival* 375, no. 4 (1994): 13.

⁷³ Suzanne Pepper, *Radicalism and Education Reform in 20th-century China: The Search for an Ideal Development Model*, 19.

⁷⁴ Cited in Theodore de Bary and Richard Lufano, *Sources of Chinese Tradition: From 1600 Through the Twentieth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 159.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 160.

that due to China's economic inefficiencies "it had no way of providing for the uneducated that did not succeed in the route of the examinations."⁷⁶

The motivation for learning in Chinese culture clashed with the desired goals of the imperial bureaucracy. In traditional Confucian culture, the main motivation for learning was for intrinsic value, where one learned for the sake of self-development and enrichment. Once an individual became learned and was properly conditioned, then he could become engaged in society. The Confucian examination system, however, valued an extrinsic motivation for learning. Competition was fierce with the promises of elevated social status and wealth. This was especially true for scholars who came from the rural provinces, since intellectual achievement was prioritized over inherited status in a system that promoted some form of social mobility. People's goals were to become government officials because it was viewed as the most honorable profession in society. The rewards of the examination system were to escape the humble lifestyles of the masses, so this became enticing for commoners. "It opened the door to all qualified applicants regardless of their social backgrounds. Anonymity provided equal opportunity to the examinees. It distributed the composition of the elite and was a royal grace to people in less developed regions."⁷⁷ European models, conversely, used competition for the betterment of the university rather than a force to keep scholars apart. European schools used oral rather than written examinations to more accurately test students and compare their different abilities.

⁷⁶ Miyazaki Ichisada, *China's Examination Hell: The Civil Service Examinations of Imperial China* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1981), 109.

⁷⁷ Yuan Feng, "From the Imperial Examination to the National College Entrance Examination: The dynamics of political centralism in China's educational enterprise," *Survival* 375, no. 4 (1994): 12.

Thirdly, the Confucian examination system rejected any notion of individual creativity that diverged from the traditional canon. Yong Zhao agreed that these examinations “discouraged individual enterprise, flexibility, and were solely focused on objective qualifications, structure, conformity, and no derivation from the norm.”⁷⁸ Confucianism emphasized the need for conformity and discouraged an individual’s personal interests and talents. Human relationships were the most important concern, and because of this the uniqueness and beauty of each individual was swallowed up in this imperial system. For example, an examinee would be degraded if he liked math and science or wanted to be creative in musical or written compositions. One’s servitude was for the betterment of the group and their own personal interests were viewed as selfish and harmful to society. Glen Peterson wrote that under the Confucian examination system “one was compelled to feel ashamed of one’s egoistic assumptions, a human being thus had no chance to express his or her individuality.”⁷⁹ Benjamin Elman’s explanation for the failure of the examination system went further than poor testing methods. Elman says, “the exam failed because it fell behind to meet the demands of a more advanced world. It marked awareness of a massive reconfiguration of a public education to the masses.”⁸⁰ The imperial view that social and political authority could be maintained with the indoctrination of Confucianism was a last feudal attempt to subjugate the masses. With this in mind, Hayhoe notes how “China had launched itself into a new journey of change that involved radical experimentation with a range of Western models. It was an overt rejection of the

⁷⁹ Glen Peterson, Ruth Hayhoe, and Yongling Lu, *Education, Culture, and Identity in Twentieth-century China* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University, 2001), 33.

⁸⁰ Elman, *On Their Own Terms Science in China*, 11.

Confucian heritage as an anti-ethical system to modernity.”⁸¹ While few governing institutions have the longevity of the Confucian examination system, its legacy ultimately was its inability to adapt to modern times in China and accept responsibility for its backwardness. The Confucian examination system would crumble as China began to westernize at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Chinese education fever was a polarizing force in the Confucian examination system that was ingrained in Chinese culture for over 2,000 years. Lan Yu explains, “under the surface of education fever, high-stakes examinations have been and continue to be the hidden driving force. Education fever in China is in fact fever for success on exams.”⁸² Ronald Dore’s *Diploma Disease* describes the shortcomings of the Confucian examination system and how it inadequately prepared job candidates to fulfill high profile bureaucratic positions. Ronald Dore agreed with Zhang Zhidong’s view of education not being used as a means to an end, but rather being an end in itself. Dore further analyzed that “not all schooling is education, but rather doing school. Instead, much of it is mere qualification earning. Education is associated with learning, schooling implies sorting preferred jobs and the polishing of skills. If education is learning to do a job, qualification is a matter of learning in order to get a job.”⁸³ Dore’s explains how the Confucian examination system distorted people’s ideas of prioritizing their need to get a job over the pursuit of acquiring new knowledge to equip them to prepare for a job. Dore categorizes qualification earning as being destructive to curiosity, ingenuity, and imagination. In short, it

⁸¹ Ruth Hayhoe, *China through the Lens of Comparative Education the Selected* (London:Routledge, 2014), 94.

⁸² Lan Yu, “Historical and contemporary-exam driven fever in China. *Korean Educational Development Institute (KEDI) Journal of Educational Policy*,” 2, no. 1 (2005): 29.

⁸³ Ronald Dore, *The Diploma Disease: Education, Qualification and Development* (Berkeley: University of California, 1976), 9.

was anti-educational because qualification earning was tedious and is similar to the modern practice of teaching to the test.

With the level of qualifications for jobs rising over time, a job market is often flooded with job seekers. As a result, you have vigorous competition in such a broad base of potential candidates. As Dore explains, “the problem with the Confucian examination system was that the pupil is not concerned with mastery, but with being certified as having mastered.”⁸⁴ The higher education system in China before 1905 favored the urban areas and the literate population, while those who were illiterate in mostly the rural areas were automatically at a disadvantage. Dore’s suggestion for how the Chinese might have overcome this ‘diploma disease’ during the times of the Confucian examination system was to emphasize the benefits of vocational education. By advocating vocational education programs at an early age, a student could cultivate his interests in a particular field and adjust his educational program accordingly. His second recommendation requires deep analytical questions for examinations. Students must then provide extensive knowledge and demonstrate their application of knowledge rather than merely the rote memorization of certain facts. He promotes a system based on a student’s aptitude and their ability to learn new skills and actively engage in education. By 1910, China was borrowing from Western models in the United States, Great Britain, France, and Germany, which spurred optimism from Chinese intellectuals who intended to adopt the most beneficial aspects of Western education. China would, however, also explore its own divergent path for educational reform that was an independent from both East and West. While not totally negating tradition or advocating wholesale westernization, China struggled to find a path for national educational development that worked for both conservative and radical reformers. Over the next two

⁸⁴ Ibid., 8.

decades, “China would be seen as a laboratory where European, American, and Soviet educational values interacted with the displaced Confucian tradition.”⁸⁵

⁸⁵ Ruth Hayhoe, *China through the Lens of Comparative Education the Selected* (London: Routledge, 2014), 91.

CHAPTER THREE

POLITICAL CHAOS, THE NEW REPUBLIC AND THE MAY FOURTH MOVEMENT

3.1 The Missionary movement: The wake of anti-foreign sentiment in China in the early twentieth century

Before exploring the foundation of the new republic in China and the effects World War I had on rebuilding China, it is important to look at the roots of the Christianity missionary movement and the development of schools of education. The Opium Wars and the subsequent ‘unequal treaties’ with China opened up opportunities for both Catholic and Protestant missionaries to seek evangelization of the Chinese populace. Initially, Protestant missionaries made evangelical conversion their primary objective, but later turned to their primary efforts towards educational work. Ruth Hayhoe explains that after the unequal treaties “both Protestant and Catholic missionaries turned to educational work gradually as they faced difficulties and discouragement in evangelical efforts.”⁸⁶ Protestant and Catholic missions prospered after religious mission societies in both North America and Europe advocated stronger reform efforts in China. China’s weakness was viewed as an opportunity for Christianity to succeed.

The establishment of Christian missionary schools was only one of the many ways which foreign missionary efforts would influence China. Working alongside the efforts of the SVM

⁸⁶ Ruth Hayhoe and Marianne Bastid, *China’s Education and the Industrialized World: Studies in Cultural Transfer* (New York, M.E. Sharpe, 1987), 57.

(Student Voluntary Movement) created in the 1880s, missionaries helped recruit the young and educated to continue evangelical efforts by college educated American students. Daniel Bays saw this cooperative effort as an important event, where Western intellectuals were using the missionary movement as a means to promote Western-style education and thereby win new converts. Bays explains how “between 1890 and 1920, over 33,000 young people signed the pledge card of the SVM stating ‘It is my purpose, if God permit, to become a foreign missionary’. About a quarter of them, over 8000, actually took up missions posts, and more went to China than to any other mission field.”⁸⁷

The most important facet of these Christian-based movements in relation to educational development was that the schools established by reform-minded intellectuals presented an opportunity for women to find their way into the ranks of higher education. Under the Confucian examination system, women were denied opportunities for education. Missionary schools opened up educational opportunities for women that were non-existent before the end of the examination system in 1905. Hayhoe describes how many women felt excluded from the examination system, noting “there are stories of women who disguised themselves as men in order to take exams, but the notion of a woman becoming a scholar-official was unthinkable within the Confucian order.”⁸⁸ The establishment of these missionary schools from the mid-nineteenth century into the twentieth century was far removed from the Chinese tradition. As teaching gradually shifted from the Chinese language to English, many teachers at these missionary institutions were adamant about imposing westernization into Chinese culture. Arthur Smith (1845-1932), who

⁸⁷ Daniel H. Bays, *China Enters the Twentieth Century: Chang Chih-tung and the Issues of a New Age, 1895-1909* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1978), 72.

³ Ruth Hayhoe, *China's Universities 1895-1995: A Century of Cultural Conflict* (New York: Garland Pub, 1996), 34.

was an American missionary in Shandong province, wrote in the conclusion of his book *Chinese Characteristics* (1890) that China needed a new life in every individual soul, in the family, and in society. Bays argues that these “mission schools were important in raising the cross-cultural awareness of many students, and expanded the horizons of their life choices.”⁸⁹

Ironically, after the Boxer Rebellion of 1900, the missionary movement was strengthened over the next two decades and foreign missions in Chinese Christian communities prospered.⁹⁰ After the death of Yale graduate Horace Pitkin during the Boxer Rebellion, there was a spirited increase in missionary applicants from East Coast Colleges in North America who wanted to continue the legacy of the Yale mission in China. This effort continued to build off of the successes of missionary efforts in the nineteenth century and saw the opening of North China’s Women College in Beijing and Ginling College For Women in Nanjing. Bays explains how by “1915 there were almost 170,000 students in mission schools (as opposed to 17,000 in 1889). In the mid 1920s the figure had reached almost a quarter million.”⁹¹ Missionary institutions would account for over eighty percent of Chinese educational institutions. The Chinese government sponsored only one national university (Peking), one provincial university, and five private universities. In contrast there were sixteen missionary colleges and universities in all of the major Chinese cities. The Chinese Protestant movement was also instrumental in establishing the YMCA and the YWCA. The movement led anti-foot binding campaigns and opium suppression societies.⁹² The YMCA would rapidly grow after 1900 and become the main beneficiaries of SVM activism on US campuses along with medical care institutions.

⁸⁹ Daniel H. Bays, *China Enters the Twentieth Century: Chang Chih-tung and the Issues of a New Age*, 94.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 93.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 94.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 95.

With the May Fourth protests reaching their climax in the late 1910s–early 1920s, mass demonstrations erupted from the student population, who were resentful of foreigners whose educational policies and beliefs went unquestioned in Chinese institutions. While Chinese nationalism soared after China’s disgrace after the Treaty of Versailles, which ceded Chinese territory to Japanese control, residual anger toward foreigners and the pursuit of science and democracy would take “a dead aim at Christianity, its institutions, its believers, and the missionary movement.”⁹³ With the building momentum of the Guomindang (Nationalist Party) in the 1920s and the dominance of the Chinese Communist Party in the 1930s, the missionary efforts in China after the 1920s would decline in reaction to the political turmoil of the era.

3.2 World War I and the May Fourth Movement

Following the end of the Confucian examination system and the collapse of the Qing dynasty in 1911, China was intrigued by the rise of the new republics, rise of women’s suffrage, and industrial democracy provided the stimulus. Many Chinese were hopeful that the end of the Qing Dynasty in 1911 would open opportunity for educational reform and democratic initiatives. However, educational reforms were only slowly implemented in China following the overthrow of the Qing and the short-lived republic. After Sun-Yat Sen was forced to vacate the presidency by Yuan Shikai in 1913, “China would sink into a dark domestic political scene after Yuan Shikai anointed himself Emperor of China in 1915.”⁹⁴ The result was that China did not embrace drastic educational reform following the fall of the Qing dynasty in 1911 because most citizens were victims of an oppressive ultraconservative and ruthless government after Yuan Shikai’s seizure of political power.

⁹³ Ibid., 108.

⁹⁴ Chow Tse-Tung, *The May Fourth Movement: Intellectual Revolution in Modern China*, 11.

World War I further aggravated the political chaos in China between 1914 to 1918. Nationalistic sentiment and democratic initiatives under Woodrow Wilson inspired Chinese citizens to modernize and build a republic in spite of Yuan Shikai's military dictatorship. Chow Tse-Tung explains that "Woodrow Wilson's political idealism, and his guarantee of political independence of small states and self-determination had great appeal to the Chinese."⁹⁵ Jonathan Spence claims that many Chinese citizens thought that aligning with the United States, France, and Britain would benefit China economically. Spence explains, "that if the Germans were defeated, then strategically important German concession areas in Shandong could be reclaimed by China."⁹⁶ China hoped that these small concessionary gains that were recovered from the Germans could help stimulate their economy.

After China saw hope in aligning with the United States and other Western nations after China's relationship with Japan had weakened since the student exchange program peaked in the late 1900s. Hayhoe explains how in 1915 "China had begun to turn away from Japanese educational patterns towards more emancipatory patterns of America and Europe."⁹⁷ China was extremely insulted after Japan issued the Twenty-One Demands on China was extremely insulted. Japan's intentions were to expand their advantageous use of the railway in Manchuria and capitalize upon access to economic and commercial rights in Inner Mongolia for raw materials. In response to this, the Chinese then encouraged the use of native goods by boycotting Japanese goods. Chinese hostility was expressed in nationwide anti-Japanese rallies. China had completely turned away from the Japanese model in the wake of their imperialistic impositions.

⁹⁵Ibid., 9.

⁹⁶ Jonathan D. Spence, *The Search for Modern China* (New York: Norton, 1991), 290.

⁹⁷ Ruth Hayhoe, *China's Universities, 1895-1995: A Century of Cultural Conflict*, 18.

After the end of World War I, when the Allied victors met at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, the Chinese felt as though they were neglected in the treaty negotiations after World War I. China refused to sign the Treaty of Versailles in 1919 that transferred control of the province of Shandong from German control to Japanese control. China believed that they should have been rewarded autonomous control of this region. Chow Tse-Tung points out that following the disappointments of World War I, China fell into “deep despair, and nationalistic feelings ran higher than ever before.”⁹⁸ Spence explains that this period of World War I “was a period of political insecurity and unparalleled intellectual self-scrutiny and exploration in China. World War I had shattered China’s hope for recovery and autonomous territorial control. All of Germany’s Shandong rights were transferred to Japan.”⁹⁹ The ensuing protests expressing China’s dissatisfaction with the Treaty of Versailles would ferment into what was known as the May Fourth Movement. The May Fourth Movement would materialize into a nationalistic outpouring of a coalition of students, urban workers, merchants, students, and industrialists. Such an intellectual inspiration had not been seen in China for over two thousand years, and China would now be open to exploring the ideas from both the East and West to formulate positive educational policies. Through the shattered hopes of the Paris Peace Conference, the Chinese were prompted to be brought into the modern age. The May Fourth Movement and the reforms at Peking (Beida) University prompted the call for Chinese educational reform.

⁹⁸ Chow Tse-Tung, *The May Fourth Movement: Intellectual Revolution in Modern China*, 10.

⁹⁹ Spence, *The Search for Modern China*, 269.

3.3 The reforms efforts of Peking University: Cai Yuanpei

After the death of Yuan Shikai, China entered the Warlord Era. The Warlord Era, which lasted from 1916-1928, was a period where a lack of strong centralized government meant there was opportunity for experimentation in educational reform. It was also during this chaotic era that educational institutions would gradually develop and mature. These universities were finally able to achieve a balance between Chinese nationalism and their ability to be successful in the modern world. Beijing University would emerge as China's preeminent institution in education for its innovative philosophies. By 1919, Beijing University would include schools of engineering, law, literature, science, and history. In 1998, one hundred years after its opening in 1898, Beijing would be "presented as a sacred place of the spirit integral to the soul of the Chinese nation."¹⁰⁰ In May 1898, it was known as Imperial University. It was a central hub for cosmopolitan intellectuals to gather and maintain their elevated status as the privileged academics in China. It was then closed during the Boxer Rebellion and did not open up again until 1901. In 1912, the name of the University was changed to "The National University of Peking." The President of Beijing University during the Post World War I Era, Cai Yuanpei, would be the ambassador of westernization in Chinese higher education and pioneer inclusive strategies that appealed to a large student body. His assembling of staff at Beijing University played a significant role in the May Fourth Movement. May Fourth ultimately embraced the notion of introducing China to a new Western culture based on science and democracy and modernized China after the embarrassment of the Shandong incident at the Paris Peace Conference.

¹⁰⁰ Timothy B Weston, *The Power of Position: Beijing University, Intellectuals, and Chinese Political Culture, 1898-1929* (Berkeley: U of California, 2004), 1.

Cai Yuanpei was a Hanlin Academy scholar who had earned his *jinshi* degree in 1890. William Duiker explains how Cai Yuanpei was “a product of Confucian scholarship. He represented his conduct and beliefs under the finest conduct and standards of the Confucian gentleman.”¹⁰¹ He refused to accept, however, the Confucian obligation of an individual being a passive member rather than an active participant in society. He criticized the belief that students had to read the traditional texts and found the Confucian examination system a failure. In his book *Xuetang Jiaoke Lun (On School Curriculum)* Cai Yuanpei said,

“My childhood was wasted by being entirely committed to becoming a successful candidate in the imperial examinations. My youth was devoted to pedantic learning, a scholasticism confined to explaining the classics and annotating historical works. I began to discover its limitations at the age of thirty.”¹⁰²

He strongly encouraged social action and wanted individuals to be empowered for social change. Cai Yuanpei believed in the efficacy of self-motivated social actions to improve the conditions in which we live. He cultivated the progressive views of his faculty and students and encouraged them to become conscious of Western educational institutions. Cai Yuanpei strongly believed that instructors should have independence in their own classrooms. He believed that each classroom should be instructed differently based on their needs. After serving as superintendent of the Shaoxing Chinese Western School until 1902, he served in other various administrative educational positions. After playing a leading role in an active student protest, Cai Yuanpei mobilized students who were expelled after the protest and founded the Patriotic School. This protest, that challenged the policies of the Nanyang Public School, showed that people were alienated from the Confucian tradition, and the legitimacy of the Qing Dynasty was

¹⁰¹ William J. Duiker, *Ts'ai Yuanpei: Educator of Modern China* (University Park: University of Pennsylvania, 1977), 2.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 139.

strongly weakened in the eyes of the Chinese citizens. Cai Yuanpei's advocacy of anti-imperialism and anti-Qing beliefs would only grow. He would then assume a position at the South Seas School in Shanghai to teach Japanese. Duiker explains that this was an important hub for Cai Yuanpei because it was the "place that radicals were congregating in a bustling metropolis and distress at conservative administration were growing."¹⁰³ Cai Yuanpei would join the *Tongmenghui* in Paris in 1905. This "Revolutionary Alliance" embraced Sun Yat Sen's three principles of democracy, nationalism, and livelihood. Inevitably, Cai Yuanpei's educational philosophy would be shaped by the three objectives of the *Tongmenghui*. The academic integrity of educational institutions was important to Cai Yuanpei to keep students "energy focused and concentrated on the university's essential mission – pure research in the humanities and natural sciences."¹⁰⁴

Cai Yuanpei's time in Germany and France as a student and visiting scholar from 1906 to 1913 would ultimately shape his educational philosophy. He attended the University of Leipzig in Germany in 1907. It was here that he would be exposed to experimental psychology, comparative culture, and anthropology. Cai Yuanpei became an advocate of the Neo-Kantian movement in Germany, and Kant became the foundation for his theoretical principles by "avoiding the extremes." He accepted Peter Kropotkin's theory of mutual aid, which refuted the popular Social Darwinist belief at the time. This theory claimed "social progress was not achieved through a simple weeding out through natural selection of primitive societies, but through the process of cultural exchange and blending of each social group."¹⁰⁵ Cai agreed with Kropotkin's proposal that restricting cultural exchange mistakenly denied the West and East an

¹⁰³ Ibid., 9.

¹⁰⁴ Timothy B. Weston, *The Power of Position: Beijing University, Intellectuals, and Chinese Political Culture, 1898-1929*(Berkeley: U of California, 2004), 122.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 19.

opportunity to learn from each other. Duiker explains that if this relationship had been more open “the divide between the Occident and Orient might therefore not exist, or at least the gap between the inherent differences not so apparent.”¹⁰⁶

Cai Yuanpei accepted the role of Minister of Education in 1911. He believed that “establishing a republican education should serve the needs of the individual and society as the whole that was absent under Confucianism.”¹⁰⁷ He agreed with the French Revolution’s concepts of liberty, equality, and fraternity and integrated these concepts into his educational philosophy. It was from this view that Cai Yuanpei proposed a more unified yet wholesome approach to education. Cai Yuanpei explained that:

Education is to help to the teach and obtain the abilities to develop the intelligence of mind, and perfect personal traits that contribute to the culture of humankind; but education is not to make the taught a special instrument used by others who have some other kind of purpose. On that ground, the enterprise of schooling should be entirely given over to independent educators, uninfluenced by any political party or church.¹⁰⁸

This educational philosophy would help cultivate a new system of Chinese education that was sensitive to artistic pursuits, while enthusiastically accepting Western relations while remaining conscientious about China’s national quest for sustainability. Cai Yuanpei explained that the aims of this educational approach were to assimilate foreign knowledge and provide for the general enlightenment of the population, not to turn out candidates for the examination.

Cai Yuanpei’s resignation from his position as Minister of Education in 1912 allowed him to once again study in Germany. During his trip to Germany, he compiled his “History of Chinese Ethics” translation and worked on a reform approach to reconfiguring the curriculum. Hayhoe explains how “Cai undertook the reorganization of the education system with republican

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 21.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 145.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 177.

principles, revised textbooks, and the suppression of classical Chinese teaching.”¹⁰⁹ Cai took his experimental views with him in 1913 when he went to study French and assisted in the organization of the Sino-French Educational Association. It was here that Cai’s progressive student-centered approach grew from the admiration of Ma Xiangbo’s progressive views. Ma had mentored Cai since his tenure at Nanyang Institute in Shanghai. Ma was Cai Yuanpei’s teacher who took up efforts to persuade Yuan Shikai’s government to construct a modern university modeled after the innovative examples at both Zhendan and Fudan. Cai Yuanpei would take up this effort to establish an independent university in 1917 at Peking. After the death of Yuan Shikai in 1916 had softened political tensions during Cai Yuanpei’s second study abroad tenure in Germany, he returned to China and ascended to the chancellorship at Beijing and thus established China’s first modern university in 1917.

After his appointment to President of Beijing University in 1917, he proposed an academic model that synthesized the French University and added a university constitution that was borrowed from the German model. Beijing University was a university that deviated from both the traditional Confucian centered schools and the foreign inspired missionary schools. This approach was founded on the belief that “student aims should be the pursuit of pure learning, not the acquisition of wealth or official promotion.”¹¹⁰ These remarks clearly define Cai Yuanpei’s dissatisfaction with the Confucian examination system and his support of Zhang Zhidong’s importance of education as an end in itself. Cai’s commitment was to protect scholars, both radicals and conservatives, and to create a university that was conducive to public platforms. Hayhoe explains how Cai Yuanpei “wanted a university where any viewpoint, provided it was

¹⁰⁹ Ruth Hayhoe, *China's Education and the Industrialized World: Studies in Cultural Transfer* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1987), 85.

¹¹⁰ Chow Tse-Tung, *The May Fourth Movement: Intellectual Revolution in Modern China* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1960), 52.

based on scholarship could be viewed, aired, and discussed.”¹¹¹ He strove for Beijing University to be a center of free speech, where toleration of different perspectives was embraced. in higher institutions of learning. Chow Tse-Tung observed that Beijing University had been transformed and under Cai Yuanpei’s leadership “advocated an atmosphere of a public forum between old conservative scholars and new intelligentsia which made a new alliance of intellectuals.”¹¹²

During Cai Yuanpei’s tenure at Beijing University, he highly praised the high-level scholarship and academic research. He believed that self-initiated research and self-study were powerful tools to stimulate intellectual thought in modern Chinese universities.¹¹³ Self-initiated research was one principle that China’s higher education lacked under the Confucian examination system. Cai Yuanpei’s implementation of the three-point policy at Beijing was to emphasize academic research while protecting one’s academic freedom. China’s intellectuals, scholars, and academics enjoyed substantial academic freedom. These groups now had the approval and encouragement from the administration to freely express their ideas and the permission to congregate in political circles (conservatives, liberals, revolutionaries, socialists, anarchists, traditionalists). Chow Tse-Tung explains that the three-point policy “aimed at getting rid of bureaucratic corruption of administration. A spirit of equality was introduced into the institutions. Barriers between students and professors were removed to a certain extent.”¹¹⁴

However, not everyone praised Cai Yuanpei’s liberal efforts in higher education. Lin Shu, who was a Neo-Confucian traditionalist, attacked Cai Yuanpei’s liberal efforts to create a modernized institution for higher education. In a letter to Cai Yuanpei dated March 18, 1919, Lin charged

¹¹¹ Ruth Hayhoe, *China's Universities, 1895-1995: A Century of Cultural Conflict* (New York: Garland Pub, 1996), 44.

¹¹²Chow Tse-Tung, *The May Fourth Movement: Intellectual Revolution in Modern China*, 53.

¹¹³ Glen Peterson, Ruth Hayhoe, and Yongling Lu. *Education, Culture, and Identity in Twentieth-century China* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University, 2001), 163.

¹¹⁴ Chow Tse-Tung, *The May Fourth Movement: Intellectual Revolution in Modern China*, 51.

Cai Yuanpei with “the destruction of Confucianism and the five virtues of ethical relations.”¹¹⁵

Cai was seen as a traitor amongst conservative intellectuals for his criticism of traditional Confucian society. Chow Tse-Tung explains how “Cai Yuanpei symbolized a new wave of thinking where radicals across the spectrum were expressing their outright beliefs of the traditional system under his protection.”¹¹⁶

Cai was seen as a threat to advocates of a Neo-Confucian revival, but was embraced by students at Peking University for his advocacy of greater student self-regulation and individual academic freedom. Cai explained his view of academic freedom in an article where he emphasized that

Regardless of what schools of academic thought there may be, if their words are reasonable and there is a cause for maintaining them, and they have not yet reached the fate of being eliminated by nature, then even though they disagree with each other, I would let them develop in complete freedom. With regard to professors, their knowledge is the main thing. When they give lectures in the university, the only limitation on them is that they do not contradict the first policy (reasonableness).¹¹⁷

Beijing would embrace these notions of academic freedom and prosper from a revised curriculum by Cai Yuanpei that prioritized the dual nature of arts and science. Chow Tse-Tung explains that it was through this liberal arts agenda that “Beijing became an instrument of feverish intellectual activity in the young republic. A center of progressivism and the vanguard of change.”¹¹⁸ It was this intellectual vanguard of change that would ultimately inspire Chinese youth to advocate further educational change during the May Fourth Movement. Cai believed students were natural leaders in society. Students indeed had a duty to assume the role of moral

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 68.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 65.

¹¹⁷ “Ts’ai Yuan-pei’s policy for Peking University,” in John Fairbank and Teng Ssu-yu, *China’s Response to the West: A Documentary Survey* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1954), 238-239. (Document 58).

¹¹⁸ Chow Tse-Tung, *The May Fourth Movement: Intellectual Revolution in Modern China*, 55.

exemplars for the nation. They were men of self-respect and righteousness. However, it was students' disenfranchisement from the Confucian tradition that highlighted the failures of the Republic. Students strove to make changes in the literary language, family system, and traditional subordination of women that were harmful to the nationalistic spirit in China. The family system was a destructive factor in traditional Chinese society and one that must assuredly be overturned. Chinese reformer Han Yi said

“The family is the origin of all evil. Because of the family, people become selfish. Because of the family, women are increasingly controlled by men. Because of the family, everything useless and harmful occurs. People now often say they are embroiled in family responsibilities while in fact they are just making trouble for themselves, and so if there were no families, these trivial matters would instantly disappear. Because of the family, children—who belongs to the world as a whole are made the responsibility of a single woman. Children should be raised publicly since they belong to the whole society, but with families the men always force the women to raise their children and use them to continue the ancestral sacrifices. These examples constitute irrefutable proof of the evils of the family system.¹¹⁹

It was Beijing University that provided the center for holding a mass demonstration on National Humiliation Day (the four year anniversary of Japan's Twenty-One Demands Ultimatum) in 1915. At 1:30 pm on the afternoon of May 4th, 1919, over 3,000 students from Peking and other schools from Shanghai, Tianjin, Harbin, and Hangzhou marched in a massive political protest in Tiananmen Square. The protestors even constructed a written manifesto that demonstrated their devotion to a modern literary revolution and an allegiance to a clear-cut vernacular Chinese writing system. However, Cai Yuanpei ignored these actions and pleaded with his students to refrain from political activism in the May Fourth demonstration. Cai Yuanpei informed his students how “you have the opportunity of receiving education and a chance to partake in pure scientific research, so that you can lay the foundation for a new

¹¹⁹ Cited in Sources of Chinese Tradition: From 1600 Through the Twentieth Century, compiled by Wm. Theodore de Bary and Richard Lufrano, 2nd ed., vol. 2 (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 394-395.

national culture for China and participate in worldly scholarly activities.”¹²⁰ Cai viewed attending Beijing University as a privilege that some students clearly did not understand. As a result, despite his belief that student interest in the protests was genuine, Cai Yuanpei resigned his position at Peking on May 9, 1919. He took responsibility for his student’s behavior believed their political participation in the May Fourth protests rejected the “true spirit of Beijing.”¹²¹

Had the demonstration on May 4 ended without consequence, the protests could simply be seen as an unruly student mob, but in the subsequent days as the movement spread like wildfire to cities like Shanghai, Tianjin, and Harbin, the call for patriotic students, merchants, and workers who summoned together in their joint socio-political protest. May Fourth stirred up a national awakening and drew international attention to China’s formal rejection at the Paris Peace Conference. Cai Yuanpei’s concepts of science and democracy symbolized the direction that Chinese education would evolve from following the May Fourth movement and the ideal they would strive towards by keeping China’s spirited youth involved in the movement.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 355.

¹²¹ Duiker, *Ts’ai Yüan-p’ei, Educator of Modern China*, 74.

CHAPTER FOUR

EXPANSION OF THE NEW CULTURE MOVEMENT: THE LITERARY REVOLUTION AND WESTERN INFLUENCES

4.1 Reform Efforts at Peking University: Chen Duxiu

Cai Yuanpei's parable of the "Floods and Beasts" embodied the revolutionary thought of the May Fourth Movement during the political chaos of the Warlord Era. The May Fourth Movement, like the parable, symbolized the new ideas and policies that overwhelmed society like a flood. Yet, as Cai Yuanpei explained, "the flood is not a negative force, for if rivers were dredged and the obstruction removed, the force would benefit the people in irrigation."¹²² Cai Yuanpei referred to the warlords as the "beasts" who needed to be tamed and safely isolated from society.

In order to keep this flood of new ideas freely flowing throughout China, it was essential for China to completely part with its educational conservatism and to begin implementing an all out Westernization effort. In order for China to be fully committed to Westernization, they utilized the pillars of science and democracy as their philosophical blueprint in order to justify their new educational pedagogy. China underwent an extensive overhaul of old periodicals and expanded their publications for the middle and lower classes. Journals such as *New Youth*, *Young*

¹²² Chow Tse-Tung, *The May Fourth Movement: Intellectual Revolution in Modern China* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1960), 173.

World, Young China, The Citizens, and *New Tide* were effective at stirring up Chinese nationalism amongst students and promoting further social action and political reform.

Chen Duxiu (1879-1942) was able to arouse Chinese students' thirst for national political activism and mobilization through the appeal of mass media. Chen Duxiu, who had failed the provincial level exams in 1897, spoke out against the shortcomings of the old Confucian examination system. His founding of the journal *New Youth* in 1915 was instrumental because it was published in the Chinese vernacular while at the same time embracing a full Westernization under the concepts of science and democracy. Chen Duxiu's writing urged for the abandonment of the classical Chinese language by favoring "Mr. Democracy" and "Mr. Science" as substitutes for the Chinese to modernize their educational practices as well as to inspire political revolution. Chow Tse-tung explains how the *New Youth* journal was, however, "directed towards the reformation of youth rather than a launching pad for political criticisms."¹²³

Chen Duxiu argued in *New Youth* that in order to build a new Chinese nation, "the basic task is to import the foundation of Western society, that is, the new belief in equality and human rights. We must be thoroughly aware of the incompatibility between Confucianism and the new belief, the new society, and the new state."¹²⁴ *New Youth* was important in the sense that it supported the belief that conservative Chinese traditions and an ambitious Chinese future could not coexist at the same time. While the popularity of the Shanghai based *New Youth* journal gained popular support amongst the middle class and student populations, Chen Duxiu continued to write and publish articles that were critical of the flaws of China's past. He proclaimed that Confucianism was holding China back because it was prohibiting new scientific innovations and preventing democratic reform. The ideas of science and democracy were more than empty

¹²³ Chow Tse-Tung, *The May Fourth Movement: Intellectual Revolution in Modern China*, 45.

¹²⁴ Jonathan D. Spence, *The Search for Modern China* (New York: Norton, 1991), 315.

slogans but rather were essential cultural values that would play a key part in reinvigorating the nation. Chen Duxiu claimed how “science was not necessarily a scientific study, but rather a culture of experimentation and skepticism. Democracy was limited suffrage for the educated elite.”¹²⁵ These two concepts were broken down to their core beliefs in arguing that science would be interpreted as discipline, while democracy was closely associated with the organization of society at large. Chen Duxiu fully understood that the successful pursuit of a modern Chinese nation could not possibly succeed without a social revolution headed by the youth. His focus was geared toward the youth because he knew they had a broad social base and that the movement would only be successful with the collective efforts of the student population. Chen referred to the youth as early spring. “Youth is like early spring, like the rising sun, like the trees and grass in bud, a newly sharpened blade. It is the most valuable period in life.”¹²⁶ Chen Duxiu’s “Letter to The Youth” emphasized six challenges to the youth of China. He believed China needed to be independent and not enslaved, be progressive and not conservative, be in the forefront, be internationalist and not isolationist, be practical and not rhetorical, and be scientific and not superstitious.¹²⁷ Chen believed in order for China to escape its feudal traditions that the Chinese needed to be independent, progressive, and more open to internationalization. He argued that China would thrive through practical and scientific pursuits rather than in historical and obsolete Confucian traditions.

In his article entitled “Our Final Awakening” (1916) published in *New Youth*, he stressed that without a new culture being summoned, a new political system and educational system had

¹²⁵ Bonnie S. McDougall and Kam Louie *The Literature of China in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Columbia UP, 1997), 61.

¹²⁶ Chow Tse-Tung, *The May Fourth Movement: Intellectual Revolution in Modern China*, 46.

¹²⁷ Alan Lawrence, *China Since 1919 - Revolution and Reform: A Sourcebook China Since 1919 Revolution and Reform: A Sourcebook* (London: Routledge, 2004), 3.

no opportunity to succeed. Chen Duxiu's resolution to this cultural-political divide was the adoption of the new family system. Chen Duxiu understood the importance of women in a democratic society and fully embraced their further active participation by allowing women to become more visible in Chinese social and political lives. Women were now attending higher universities and contributing to society beyond the home through their independent educational endeavors. The new family system's objective was to free women from their traditional bondage and to fully emancipate them by making them active members of society. The new family system looked to overturn the isolated social relations of women and men who were treated so unequally in Chinese society. Chow Tse-Tung explains that largely because of Chen Duxiu's advocacy of the new life system, "traditional roles of passive and financial dependence were shattering and practices of foot binding were becoming obsolete."¹²⁸ Women were granted more liberty in their affairs, leading to a more socially equal labor force and loosening the traditional restrictions of the patriarchal family. After the failure of the Chinese Republic following the Nationalist Revolution of 1912, there was marked disenchantment with the traditional Chinese language, the family system, belief in Confucianism, and the subordination of females. These conservative institutions were deemed detrimental to the development of a new China and were seen retrospectively as factors behind how the Confucian examination system ultimately failed.

Chen Duxiu's publications had spoken to Chinese society in a way that mobilized the middle class and student populations almost simultaneously. In his article "The True Meaning of Life" he illustrated that society is the collective life of individuals. Chen Duxiu compares the Chinese people to cells in the body of an organism. He explains that new cells will always replace old ones. Chen explained that the social revolution in China would experience both its

¹²⁸ Chow Tse-Tung, *The May Fourth Movement: Intellectual Revolution in Modern China*, 257.

trials and tribulations but this is a natural course of development in any revolutionary experience. Chen explains that “new ones replace old ones, this is as it should be and it should not be feared. One should devote his efforts to happiness and not live in fear of struggle or suffering.”¹²⁹

4.2 Literary reform efforts at Peking University: Hu Shih

Cai Yuanpei’s administrative reforms at Peking University along with the literary efforts of Chen Duxiu and Hu Shih culminated in the Literary Revolution in China. The charismatic Hu Shih had studied in Western schools in Shanghai and later traveled to study in the United States in 1910, where he attended both Cornell and Columbia Universities. Hu Shih was a strong believer in advocating the use of the Chinese vernacular in ordinary writing. Influenced by John Dewey, Hu Shih’s exposure to Western educational models and thinking led the way to his pragmatic approach in seeking an ever-enduring process of perfecting rather than seeking perfection. The Literary Revolution was inspired by the belief that rote memorization of thousands of Chinese characters and adhering to an outdated style of literary composition were symptomatic of the shortcomings of the Confucian examination system. The Chinese language was extremely difficult to learn and the only way for an individual to master the written language was the mere copying and systematic repetition of Chinese characters and classical literature. Before the Literary Revolution, the Chinese language was too difficult for students to master in their first six years of schooling. As a result of this, literary deficiencies plagued many Confucian examination hopefuls at the university level. Hu Shih knew that rote knowledge and traditional styles of literary composition crammed into the heads of students would not be of much use in the modern era. Much like Cai Yuanpei, Hu Shih was an advocate of knowledge through self-

¹²⁹ Bary and Lufrano, *Sources of Chinese Tradition: From 1600 Through the Twentieth Century*, 344.

study and independent research. Hu Shih believed that the ability to study independently was a primary requirement for academic scholarship to flourish.

Hu Shih began his tentative suggestions for the reform of Chinese literature in 1917. Much like Chen Duxiu, Hu Shih understood the importance of a “living” vernacular to communicate to the masses and also as a medium for social revolution. Hu Shih explained how “literature written over the last two thousand years is dead literature written in a dead language. A dead language cannot produce a living literature...if China needs a living literature, we must write in the vernacular, in the national language.”¹³⁰ Hu Shih explains that the talent of many Chinese scholars has simply withered away because they could not adapt to modern times.

Hu Shih’s advocacy for writing in the vernacular was intended to create a modern realistic Chinese literature that could be part of China’s present and future. The Literary Revolution in China was a critical part of the May Fourth Movement and changed the course of Chinese thinking. People with little education could now have more access to literature and politics. During the Confucian examination system, only scholars who understood classical Chinese had access to this information, but by opening up the mediums of communication to the masses, there was now a larger platform for revolutionary ideas. Hu Shih’s printing of Henrik Ibsen’s *Doll House*, for example, became a cultural symbol for young Chinese women. Women now had their feet unbound and began their struggle for basic educational rights.¹³¹ Hu Shih viewed literature as an end that had beauty in and of itself. New publications in the Chinese vernacular were not only instrumental in enhancing literary appeal, but were also important in discouraging discrimination against women.

¹³⁰ Ruth Hayhoe, *China's Universities, 1895-1995: A Century of Cultural Conflict* (New York: Garland Pub, 1996), 47.

¹³¹ Jonathan D. Spence, *The Search for Modern China*, 318.

Furthermore, Hu Shih's policy of the "eight don't isms" emphasized the literacy practices that would inspire writers to move away from the stale and ancient practices of the past. The "eight don't isms" conditioned writers to not use clichés, to avoid classical allusions, to not imitate the ancients, to not write without substance, to pay attention to grammar, to avoid colloquial phrases, and to avoid couplets and have your writing have a spirit in its purpose. Chow Tse-tung explains that Hu's achievements influenced almost all "magazines, newspapers, and literary writings that began to change to the new literary medium."¹³² These literary achievements paved way for the creation of a phonetic Chinese alphabet in 1918, which was eventually abandoned since it would be difficult to adopt to modern use. Hu Shih's literary and lingual insights helped to establish vernacular Chinese as the official literary language in 1921.

From the Literary Revolution sprang up revolutionary Chinese literature. The newly established official Chinese vernacular coupled experimentation with the new phonetic alphabet led to the creation of literary societies. Societies like Popular Drama Society, Unnamed Society, and Contemporary Review Group flourished in the 1920s and led to the growth of a mass media to "provide writers with ready outlets for their creative and theoretical work."¹³³ Hu Shih developed the literary society known as the Crescent Moon Society (1923-1931), which was named after a poem by Rabindranath Tagore. This literary society promoted Western liberal thought and evolved into a social club with unrestrictive expression of personal feelings and uninhibited freedom of speech. The individuals in this Crescent Moon Society were determined to break away from traditional Chinese models of literary expression and embrace truly Western styles in their written language.

¹³² Chow Tse-Tung, *The May Fourth Movement: Intellectual Revolution in Modern China*, 279.

¹³³ Bonnie S. McDougall and Kam Louie, *The Literature of China in the Twentieth Century*, 21.

The May Fourth Movement challenged and criticized the long-standing Chinese traditions and political conservatism associated with Confucianism. The literary optimism that evolved during the May Fourth Movement embraced the creation of publishing houses, journals, literary societies, and literary circles at private colleges and public universities. The Chinese vernacular that evolved from the Literary Revolution provided a platform for widespread Chinese reading and writing to educate the masses and move toward a democratic society. The Literary Revolution was essentially the backbone of the May Fourth Movement and supported the gradual introduction of Western social and political ideas in China, which included democracy, republicanism, self-determination, equality and spirited individualism.

4.3 Borrowed ideas of Western Education: The influence of John Dewey and Bertrand Russell

The success of the May Fourth Movement triggered involvement from the Chinese masses and the middle class to actively challenge the country's political and social injustices. It was through the May Fourth Movement that a push towards internationalization revealed China's intentions to adopt a Western style of education. China's educational philosophy was shaped by borrowing the most successful principles of Western education to guide their own way toward a successful educational model. Chinese educators engaged in a free discourse evaluating both the successes and failures of different educational practitioners and theorists. After a well-attended Educational Conference in Guangzhou (1921), Chinese scholars explored a study of various school systems to analyze the weaknesses and strengths of different nations. The Guangzhou Conference provided the catalyst for young learners to develop their individual personalities and revitalize educational reform for uneducated Chinese commoners. This concept of "Democratic

Education” was the central principle behind the practices of the renowned American educator and philosopher John Dewey.

John Dewey’s concept of Democratic Education spread throughout the early 1920s in Chinese cities after his visit to China in 1919. Dewey had lived nearly a year in Peking and taught several courses, traveled and lectured widely, and later wrote an influential account of China’s intellectual life during the May Fourth Movement. Dewey’s primary focus was experimental problem solving, where he said, “books are tools, just like a hoe. Democracy is more than a form. It is the primary mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience.”¹³⁴ Dewey’s tenure at Columbia University, during which he worked with Hu Shih, prepared him to lecture in China, and Zhixin Su explained how “China was the foreign country in which Dewey exercised his greatest influence, particularly in the field of education.”¹³⁵ Dewey’s visit to China was extraordinary in that he was the first major Western philosopher to lecture at Chinese universities, which was a privilege seldom awarded to other Western scholars.

Upon returning from America, Hu Shih also influenced the spread of modern educational concepts throughout China, well before Dewey’s lectures and visit to Peking. Chinese audiences were enlightened by John Dewey’s description of the importance of “reflective thinking and reasoning in constructing human intelligence, of lively inquires, and of education rooted in Science and Democracy.”¹³⁶ The themes of John Dewey’s lectures in China were drawn from his books, such as *The School and Society* (1899), *Democracy and Education* (1916), and *Reconstruction in Philosophy* (1920).

¹³⁴ Ruth Hayhoe and Marianne Bastid, *China’s Education and the Industrialized World: Studies in Cultural Transfer* (New York, M.E. Sharpe, 1987), 125.

¹³⁵ Zhixin Su, “A Critical Evaluation Of John Dewey’s Influence On Chinese Education,” *American Journal Of Education* 103, no. 3 (1995): 29.

¹³⁶ Mei Wu, “John Dewey’s Legacy To China and The Problems In Chinese Society.” *Journal For the International Association For The Advancement Of Curriculum Studies*, no.1 (2006): 25.

Chinese intellectuals were split on how they viewed John Dewey, although even those that approved of his theories viewed him as a compelling figure nonetheless. Some praised Dewey as a saint, while others condemned him as an enemy of Chinese culture. The Chinese were unsure of his true aims and worthiness in their changing social picture. Supportive intellectuals viewed him as the epitome of westernization and a symbol of modernization. At the height of John Dewey's popularity, it was argued that he was "likened to Confucius."¹³⁷ John Dewey promoted the idea that education is society, education is life, and learning by doing is the most successful methodology for success in the world of Chinese education. Dewey strongly intertwined teaching, learning, and doing as associative concepts that embraced the idea of life education, which was a life-long process of teaching and self-learning. Using this principle, education was not viewed as learning strictly confined to a classroom, but it was also considered a process for individuals to better society. These concepts were optimal for the long-term goal of life-long learning and continuous improvement. Ultimately, Dewey believed that a well-educated population would be the chief motivation of Chinese advancement. Dewey believed that in order for China to reverse its misfortunes, they needed to have people participate in the processes of democratic life.

Dewey believed that democracy needs to have a grass-roots social basis. It must be a part of the fabric of the lives of people and begin in every village and in every city block. The fundamental concept of not only a democratic political theory, but also an educational democratic theory was the consent of the governed. Dewey's lectures always favored the common good over a revolutionary class struggle in China. John Dewey said "a democratic

¹³⁷ Zhixin Su, *A Critical Evaluation Of John Dewey's Influence On Chinese Education*, 307.

society depends for its stability and development not on force, but on consensus.”¹³⁸ John Dewey’s educational theories were meant to cause gradual progress by promoting common educational interests while limiting revolutionary action of the masses through non-violent measures. He believed that moderation was essential to Chinese education because if we teach today’s students as we taught yesterday’s, we rob them of tomorrow. This belief was important in showing how the Confucian examination system hindered Chinese education for centuries and restricted scientific innovation and advanced learning. Dewey believed that by means of free and open communication, people would seek unselfish cooperative relationships.

The Chinese Communists strongly opposed John Dewey’s Democratic educational and political initiatives. Marxist theory was widely discussed among university professors and students after the Russian Bolshevik Revolution in 1917, and that provided an alternative model for the budding Chinese Communists. The Chinese Communist Party in the 1920s contested that Dewey’s “experimentalism” in China was largely a failure. John Dewey’s educational beliefs clearly clashed with the ideas of the Chinese Communists. This prevented Dewey’s democratic movement from becoming a Chinese reality in part due to many scholars being won over by the promises of Marxism and the Chinese Communist Party in the 1920s. The Chinese Communist Party also claimed that Dewey’s ideas and educational philosophy did nothing to structurally reshape political power. Mao Zedong even referred to Dewey as “a militaristic imperial aggressor.”¹³⁹ John Dewey’s pursuit of freedom of thought and the formation of a democratic society in China symbolized the height of Chinese assimilation of Western practices in their society.

¹³⁸ John Dewey, *Lectures in China 1919-1920* (Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1973), 93.

¹³⁹ Barry Keenan, *The Dewey Experiment in China: Educational Reform and Political Power in the Early Republic* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1977), 5.

Like John Dewey, the British scholar Bertrand Russell was a liberal educator and philosopher who lectured in China and Japan in 1921. Bertrand Russell's visit to China never enjoyed the same praise as that of John Dewey, but he did appeal more to the more radical elements of Chinese politics. Liang Qichao had invited Bertrand Russell to China in 1921 following his visit to the USSR. Bertrand Russell condemned American Education for trying to replace Chinese traditional culture with American culture. Russell was also critical of America's imperialistic "invader" role played on the international stage following World War I. Bertrand Russell advocated the pursuit of modern education that encompassed more modern discourses that were ignored in the traditional Confucian examination system. He strongly advocated the idea of education as a tool to reconstruct society and cultivate human innovation. Bertrand Russell said, "the issue between citizenship and individuality is important in education and politics."¹⁴⁰ Russell believed that the ideal natural path for China was to pursue a Marxian educational system to resolve their inherent political and social backwardness.

Bertrand Russell's *Education and the Good Life* (1926) became his central text during his lectures in China. Unlike Dewey, who advocated social interactions through democratic education, Russell believed that democracy needed boundaries. Bertrand Russell thought that schooling must intervene directly in the educational development of children and he was an avid supporter of what children learned over how they learned. Conversely, Dewey championed how children learned differently and how to teach to accommodate these differences instead of teaching in a uniform fashion. Ultimately, Bertrand Russell held the belief that true democratic education was an impossible mission that John Dewey had embarked upon. Russell said, "where a bulk of the population cannot read, true democracy is impossible. Education is a good in itself,

¹⁴⁰ Cited in Zheng, Wei-Ping, "Bertrand Russell on Chinese Education" *Journal of Education* 5, No. 9(2008): 14.

but is also essential for developing political consciousness.”¹⁴¹ Bertrand Russell felt that for China to be taken seriously in their efforts to modernize and westernize the Chinese needed to stop dwelling on the past. He believed that “China, like Italy and Greece, is frequently misjudged by persons of culture because they view it as a museum. The preservation of ancient beauty is important, but no forward looking man is content on being a mere curator.”¹⁴² Unlike Dewey, Russell’s educational philosophy was shaped more upon altering the political landscape of the nation. The aim of education is to acquire the ability of governing the country. Bertrand Russell believed that once China laid the foundation for a solid political foundation then as a result, industrial and economic development would flourish thus naturally helping the spread of education to the masses. Russell’s philosophy appealed to the Communist faction in China because his educational approach was based on the belief that Western nations only had imperial motifs and that any Western nation attempting to modernize China would bring Capitalism to China, which would consequently hinder any Chinese growth in their attempts for social reform. John Dewey and Bertrand Russell had come into China with a Western view and tried to reverse the struggles of a nation they had little knowledge of. While their intentions were good, their impact was minimal in short-term educational development.

4.4 Conclusion

This thesis has argued that the development of China’s modern higher education system can trace its roots back to China’s humiliating defeat during the Opium Wars. China’s main inspiration moving forward after being dominated by the Western powers was to attempt to reform their political structure and modernize their educational philosophy and practices. This

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 55.

¹⁴² Ibid., 214.

thesis demonstrated how the political authority of the Qing Dynasty was losing legitimate power in the wake of the “unequal treaties” imposed upon China. China’s domestic policies were greatly influenced by its inability to rival the Western nations in their technological and military capabilities. China tried at that time to adopt Western technology and practices to meet the challenges of the major powers. Many Chinese realized that the feudal traditions of Chinese society were incapable of existing in a globally modern and technologically driven world. The failures of the Opium War in the 1840s pressured China to reassess their learning practices and pursue gradual educational reform to better keep pace with Western nations.

This thesis has aimed to show how the Chinese adjusted their educational practices beginning in the 1850s by sending pioneering Chinese scholars to the West to study their ideas and customs. These scholars served as the catalyst for gradual educational reform in China and embodied the potential for Western learning. China’s first steps toward experimenting with Western reform and modernization of their education system began with the era of ‘self-strengthening,’ which witnessed the construction of shipyards, arsenals, and the Office For the Management of the Business of All Foreign Countries (known as the *Zongli Yamen*). The Chinese were more inclined to cultivate Western learning once they saw the possibilities that Western institutions could provide. Institutions of Western learning, such as the *Tongwenguan*, *Guangfangyanguan*, and the *Eluosi Wenguan*, were revolutionary in that these were hybrid institutions that introduced foreign language and international academic disciplines into China that had never been seen before. The newly synthesized curriculum of these institutions saw the adoption of foreign curriculum that centered on the study of mathematics, chemistry, geology, mechanics, and international law, with foreigners as the instructors. The success of the first

pioneering Western schools ignited a desire for the opening of new Western sponsored language schools in the cities of Canton, Shanghai, Fuzhou, and near other treaty ports.

China then began to direct its interests to the successes of Meiji Japan following China's defeat after the Sino-Japanese War. But, China's conservative political authorities were a barrier to implementing a modern educational and political reform in China. Old Chinese traditions such as the Confucian examination system nevertheless began to lose their legitimacy and worthiness in the minds of many Chinese scholars and intellectuals. Men like Liang Qichao and Zhang Zhindong's reforms led to the belief that openness to educational methodologies was central to the principle that education needed to provide for the general enlightenment of the population and simply not turn out candidates for the Confucian examination.

This thesis concludes that it was after China's humiliation at the World War I Paris Peace Conference in 1919, coupled with the political chaos of Yuan Shikai's tenure as China's leader that the May Fourth Movement arose in China. This nationalistic outpouring of a coalition of students, urban workers, and merchants had not been seen in China for over two thousand years. This thesis pinpointed the reforms that China began to explore at this time from both the East and West to formulate a new model of higher education.

This thesis examines the earliest reforms of Beijing University to pave the way for pure research and academic freedom and integrity in both studies and Western curriculum. Men like Cai Yuanpei believed that education should be an independent enterprise tailored to each individual and should be more rewarding than the mere memorization of facts and the learning of useless and outdated knowledge. Other reforms, such as those espoused by Chen Duxiu, used the concept of media and published essays to spread Western ideas across the whole populace of the Chinese nation. This thesis argues that contributions from men such as Hu Shih were

instrumental in inspiring the Literary Revolution in China. These reformers inspired self-study and independent research and changed the landscape of the Chinese higher education system since the end of the Confucian examination system.

With educational philosophers and educators like John Dewey and Bertrand Russell visiting China in the 1920s, it is evident that China was moving quickly toward an educational reform. Dewey introduced China to his philosophy of the life-long process of teaching and self-learning. The Chinese Communists however strongly opposed John Dewey's democratic educational and political initiatives. Unlike Dewey who had no concept of how to change the political landscape of China, Bertrand Russell's educational philosophy was highly effective because he had focused more upon improving China's system of political authority. Russell believed the aim of education is to acquire the ability of governing the country. Russell's philosophy appealed to the Communist faction in China because his educational approach was based on the belief that Western nations only had imperial intentions and that any Western nation attempting to modernize China would bring Capitalism to China, which would consequently hinder any Chinese growth in their attempts for social reform. However, both Dewey and Russell's openness to educational liberalism and modern discourses opened up China in the sphere of education to progressive reform and the adoption of a national education system.

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